

# 2016 Jail Best Practices Award

## OFFICIAL ENTRY FORM

*This form must be attached to all entries. Entrants must complete all sections for the entry to be considered complete. A copy of this official entry is available electronically at <http://www.humanities.org/Programs/Services/Pages/CriminalJusticeSystemBestPractices.aspx>*

County Name Shuman Center County Class Detention Center (Large)  
 Address 7150 Highland Drive City Pittsburgh Zip 15206  
 Contact Name Earl Hill Title Director  
 Department Allegheny County Phone (412) 665-4114  
 Fax (412) 661-2048 Email earl.hill@alleghenycounty.us

### Project Information

Title Suman Community Garden Start Date 5/2005

Each application must be submitted with two signatures. Place appropriate signatures on two of the lines below:

Chair of the Board of County Commissioners \_\_\_\_\_  
Maria Rivera  
 Chair of the County Prison Board

  
 County Chief Executive Officer

### Program Narrative

A separate program narrative document must be attached to this form that answers the following questions in the order presented. This must be typed in a Word document, Times New Roman, 10-point type.

- **Need:** a description of the identified need and the background including what programs were in place before the current project, if any, and how it led to this effort
- **Program/policies:** a description of how the project enhanced general operations programs policies, treatment, and custody
- **Approach:** a description of the project, including any evidenced-based approaches to jail diversion, community involvement strategies, formation of stakeholder groups, county-wide planning strategies, etc.
- **Evaluation:** a brief description of how the project was evaluated and any lessons learned
- **Stakeholders:** a brief description of the community, including a description of key stakeholders, organizations, and county departments that were involved in the project
- **Processes:** a description of how the activities or processes utilized in this project were altered or will be continued based on experience, including plans for leveraging additional resources
- **Costs:** a description of any costs associated with the project and how it was funded; cost savings, if any and any change in community acceptance, reductions in insurance costs, or inspection improvements that resulted from the program

Scoring will be based on the elements as described above.

Please attach supporting documents, forms or other information that support the award entry. Entries must be received by close of business on February 12, 2016. Winners will be announced during the CCAP Spring Conference, March 13-16, 2016. More information: Brinda Carroll, [hpem@hpaonline.org](mailto:hpem@hpaonline.org) or (717) 526-1010

COUNTY OF



ALLEGHENY

RICH FITZGERALD  
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

February 8, 2016

Dear County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania Selection Committee:

I am writing this letter to nominate Mr. Raymond Robinson for the Juvenile Detention and Alternative Programs Best Practice Award. Mr. Robinson has established an ongoing relationship with **Grow Pittsburgh** to teach Shuman Center residents about growing food and promoting healthy benefits from gardening. Numerous residents had the opportunity to work with **Grow Pittsburgh** staff to learn how to aerate, fertilize, and weed the soil as well as harvesting and eating the vegetables. Future garden programming will continue in the spring.

If you need additional information, or seek further clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Earl Hill".

Earl Hill  
Director  
Shuman Juvenile Detention Center

### **Best Practices Award: Shuman Community Garden**

**A program of Shuman Juvenile Detention Center, with Grow Pittsburgh (Jake Seltman & Courtney Thrall)**

Many of the youth in detention have unhealthy diets that lack necessary fruits and vegetables. Youth often have poor eating habits, and have limited knowledge of healthy eating. Additionally, our youth are unsure where to find fresh fruits and vegetables in their communities. Over the past 4 years, Shuman Center youth have planted gardens on the grounds with varying success. Those initial gardens were largely presented as recreational activities that allowed youth to get out and get fresh air, add some color to the grounds, and do some hard work and get their hands dirty. In 2015, Grow Pittsburgh, an urban agriculture nonprofit, approached the county offering support in creating a program to teach youth about growing food and to promote the health benefits of gardening.

Staff from Grow Pittsburgh worked with Shuman Residents throughout the summer to help start and maintain our garden. The initial session had residents aerating and fertilizing the soil. They also transplanted some summer crops and planted flowers in the smaller beds. They ended the first session with some pre-chopped examples of what they planted so the residents had an idea of what they were planting.

The recreation staff worked with residents between sessions with Grow Pittsburgh staff to water and weed the garden. As herbs and vegetables were coming up, Grow Pittsburgh staff taught residents how to harvest the various items, and gave ideas on how to use them. Residents made their own Caprese salad and their own ranch dressing. They then pulled some carrots and cucumbers to dip in the ranch. The recreation staff worked with the food service staff to include some of the produce in meals for residents. The tomato basil soup that accompanied grilled cheese sandwiches was a hit!

The Grow Pittsburgh staff later returned with a trellis to assist with some of the plants. At one point this summer we were harvesting cucumbers, tomatoes, and beans daily. In addition, we had ground cherries, mouse melons, zucchini, squash, broccoli, carrots, peppers, and several types of kale. On the herb side of the garden, we grew several types of basil, chocolate mint, pineapple sage, chives, thyme, lemon verbena and rosemary. The courtyard smelled amazing all summer.

By the time fall came around, numerous residents had an opportunity to work with the Grow Pittsburgh staff. Many more had an opportunity to work in the garden with the recreation staff. In addition to teaching residents about gardening and healthy eating, they also got to get fresh air and get their hands dirty. We also used the garden as a tool to help with some of our more troubled residents, taking them outside to water the plants while talking about what was troubling them. The Grow Pittsburgh team recently came up to close up the garden, by showing residents how to weed the garden, and insulate the soil with straw to prepare it for next year. To close out the garden, they also had the residents plant garlic which will be harvested this spring.

While most of the residents welcomed the opportunity to participate in the garden, and listened attentively while the Grow Pittsburgh staff educated them about health eating, many were still hesitant to eat the food they had grown. Shuman youth still felt more comfortable eating store bought fruits and vegetables. Future garden programs will look to track residents' eating habits to see if residents who participate in the program incorporate what they learn into actions with their diets.

Grow Pittsburgh supported the garden in 2015 while Shuman Center plans to look for additional support for future gardens.