

LIVING MEDICINE CENTRE

The vision for a great World Garden of Food & Herbs in central London

January 2009 Newsletter

Dear all,

Welcome to a Living Medicine update! Here, attached, you can see a **wonderful vision** (<http://livingmedicine.org/downloads/lm-garden.pdf>) of our World Garden and Centre. Many thanks to **Richard Carman**, the architectural illustrator, and **Carolyn Steel**, the architect and author (see below) for this. As our ideas have grown, he has developed Carolyn's original inspired sketch, which gave our vision a form to continue dreaming with, how our great urban, sustainable World Garden might look, with its Herbal Human, cascading recycled water, and plant beds on all surfaces.

We are working on two main aspects of our vision:

1. to find a central London site for our **Living Medicine Centre** and its 2.5 acre **World Garden** of food and herbs for visitors and the community
2. to start a **pilot** for a web of **community healing gardens nationwide**

Sites for the Living Medicine Centre & World Garden

We are planning to assess three sites for their suitability. **New Covent Garden Market** (NCGM) in Battersea is one, as its 57 acres are to be redeveloped. We are also looking at other sites to compare with NCGM, including The Power Station and Falcon Park in Battersea.

Pilot Living Medicine Community Garden in Battersea

We are planning with Wandsworth Council and Groundwork the first **Living Medicine community garden** in Battersea. This will be a pilot for the flexible model of community medicinal garden that the Living Medicine Centre will promote nationwide. With herbal, nutrition and gardening expertise, we will be aiming to attract all of Battersea's diverse cultures in creating a true community medicinal garden that shares skills and knowledge from around the world.

Along with the many local cultures and schools, we plan to involve the local NHS surgeries and Westminster University BSc herbal medicine students. Our trustee Arthur Potts Dawson wishes to send his Acorn House restaurant trainees to work in the garden and publicise the first Living Medicine salad! Carolyn Steel, trustee, is to advise on the design of a stylish, yet vandal proof garden shed in a kit DIY form – complete with indoor/outdoor kitchen, learning, composting and tool space - that can be used in any community garden around the country.

New Trustees

We are delighted to gain two new trustees with infectious vision and energy: **Carolyn Steel**, as above, the architect and author whose book *Hungry City: How Food Shapes our Lives* is fast influencing thinking on food and cities, and **Arthur Potts Dawson**, pioneering chef-restaurateur who created the first sustainable, training restaurants, Acorn House and Water House, and was originally behind Jamie Oliver's Fifteen.

Food retailer partner for Living Medicine Centre

It's become clear that **Britain's first "super-market in a garden"** would offer a myriad of new **educational** opportunities, as well as financial support. So we wish to include a prototype super/wholefood market-of-the-future that shows our food as it grows, champions local food, sustainability and recycling practices and encourages us consumers to be contributors. We will also include a farmer's market and other more 'affordable' markets to reach those on lower incomes.

Business and design support

We are fundraising for a **2-year post for a top-class project manager** who will develop our business plan, galvanise political and public support and drive this national project forward. Meanwhile, we expect to start this month on the business/design plan and site options assessment for Living Medicine with MBAs from **Imperial College and The Royal College of Art**. We hope that Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, may also be working with us.

Management Committee

We are currently assembling a management committee with top-class finance, business, legal and management expertise to steer us over the next development phase and in the appointment of the project manager.

Food/herb workshops with Centrepont and Food Up Front

Last year, we continued with education pilots. These included delivering a workshop for **Centrepont** on Health through Food & Herbs for young homeless people, and a food/herb workshop for **Food Up Front** (<http://www.foodupfront.org/>), another excellent organisation, which helps people to grow food on their windowsills, back gardens and balconies.

Website database

We now have, thanks to Rachael Yokoo Laurence and Helmut Berns, a database of visitors to our Living Medicine website, <http://www.livingmedicine.org/mail>. This allows us to start gathering volunteers and skills for both the main World Garden & Centre and the community pilot garden.

SustainCare

Our partner **SustainCare** – see <http://www.sustaincare.net/> - is a new network for sustainable self-care. It will link sustainable healthcare and NHS Self-Care projects, learning programmes, community medicinal gardens, food/cooking activities, to independently verifiable herbal remedies and the **PlantMedicine database**. This network emerged from a series of meetings in 2007 and 2008 at Schumacher College in Devon with healthcare academics, medical and health professionals and others. All passionately wished to discover – and have a network to share - sustainable health care solutions for their own and future generations, to relearn the arts of looking after ourselves, of living and dying.

Schumacher Certificate in Sustainable Health

SustainCare and **Living Medicine** are delighted to be associated with **Schumacher College's Certificate in Sustainable Health**, starting in February 2009. This inspirational programme addresses the future of healthcare and wellbeing with an international and holistic perspective. The role of community medicinal gardens and how to harvest, cook and use foods and herbs for healthy living will be part of the course. For more information, see <http://www.schumachercollege.org/courses/schumacher-certificate-in-sustainable-health>.

So, finally, a big thank you to all those who have helped keep the Living Medicine fire burning brightly – much more will be happening this year! Anyone who wishes to get involved, please contact me as below.

Best wishes, Alex

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