Proposal Summary
The Emerson Avenue Community Garden Club (EACGC) intends to raise $150,000 to improve accessibility to the Emerson Avenue Community Garden (EACG). The funding would be used to complete the land development plans of EACG, which include upgrading components of the property such as entry gates and walkways to be ADA compliant. Added benefits to the community include improving the appearance and use of the property, through improved lighting, seating areas, and gardening facilities.

Organization Description, History, and Background
In February 2011, EACGC was incorporated as a non-profit 501c3 Corporation. Since that time, tremendous progress has been made in fulfilling its mission to develop an acre of neglected land into a self-governing, sustainable, organic community and school garden, the ultimate goal being to bring people of diverse areas and cultures to the garden for their appreciation of a cultivated natural setting and continued learning experience.

EACGC encourages and promotes community participation in gardening activities that benefit the community, as well as in growing plants for food. In the area of organic gardening, alternatives to chemical pesticides and fertilizers are promoted, encouraging everyone to consider organic horticultural methods used to grow the food that is eaten. With the full development of the garden, the results will show in reduced family food budgets, neighborhood beautification, social interaction, conservation of natural resources, and opportunities for relaxation, recreation, exercise, and education.

The history of EACGC began in 2006, when a group of community members and teachers at the Orville Wright Middle School (OWMS) formed a liaison with a local environmental group to achieve the goal of revitalizing an area of property adjacent to OWMS, owned by the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD). The (approximate) one acre of land was once used in an OWMS agricultural program, but over time, the program was discontinued, and the land deteriorated into a derelict site for the storage of unused equipment and dumpsters. Efforts to improve the area into a pocket park failed due to resource issues.

The direction changed to develop the land into a healthy and blossoming shared green space, with community plots to grow food. By 2010, the land was cleaned up, landscape architectural plans were drafted, and a long-term land use agreement was initiated with LAUSD.

The partnership between EACGC, LAUSD, and OWMS has developed into a strong alliance with all parties dedicated to seeing the goal of promoting a shared school and community green space. Other organizations which have contributed in various ways toward the attainment of the goal are Drollinger Corporation, Westchester City council, Westchester Chamber of Commerce, Loyola Marymount University, UCLA, Boeing Corporation, Sony Corporation, Otis School of Arts, United Methodist Church of Westchester, Holy Nativity Church of Westchester. The Westchester Arts and Music Festival is an outgrowth of this collaboration as EACGC had proudly hosted this event for the prior 3 years.

EACGC is an all-volunteer organization with over 1000 supporters, and over 260 adults and young people involved in actively working to make this effort a success. Over 10,000 volunteer hours have been logged toward seeing the completion of the land development plan.
Project Description

The financial support being sought will be used to complete the development plans for the land. It is the most significant part of the project as it connects the community food garden to the urban community through a park-like atmosphere featuring safe walking paths, seating areas, lighted areas, and facilities. The project is well-defined, landscape architectural plans have been drawn and kept current, estimates have been obtained, and a timeline has been formulated. The general aspects are:

- Preliminary Grading: Grading the land will remove weeds and level the soil in preparation for the implementation of a walking path, and re-installation of garden beds.
- Survey: This details the elevation of the entire site and will determine the quantity of soil that needs to be added or removed. The ideal elevation should provide positive draining of 1% slope to a catch basin.
- Final Grading: Achieve proper elevation for runoff and drainage by adding or removing soil. It also prepares for the installation of the walking paths, and defines boundaries of the garden plots.
- Pathway Installation: Installation of decomposed granite and base, to form an ADA compliant walkway along the perimeter and interior of the garden. This includes installation of header boards to delineate garden plots.
- Gateway Installation: Installation of ADA Compliant gateway.
- Lighting: Installation of solar-powered/conventional lighting units at strategic areas of the garden.
- Facilities: Improvement/replacement of current storage facilities.
- Seating: Installation and renovation of seating areas at prime spots throughout the garden.
- Project management: A general contractor responsible for the day-to-day oversight of the construction site, management of vendors and trades, and the communication of information to all involved parties throughout the course of the building project.

Funding and Development Progress to date

Since 2011, EACGC has raised over $30,000 in private, city, and corporate grants, focused on completing infrastructure projects. EACGC has received matching services worth over three times that amount. With this funding, and volunteer resources, the following accomplishments have been made:

- All trash, unwanted trees, weeds, and brush have been removed from the property.
- The property has been tilled to reduce weeds.
- The soil has been tested to ensure harmful elements do not exist.
- New native and fruit trees have been planted, and sick trees have been restored to good health. There are now over 50 healthy trees which are homes to many birds and small animals.
- Irrigation was installed servicing all areas of the garden.
- 38 Community gardening plots were created.
- A butterfly garden was built which annually gives birth to over 50 monarch butterflies (based on caterpillar count).
- A 32 plot school garden was developed for teachers and their students at OWMS, with the goal of teaching students about food production and sustainability. In addition to biology and ecology, mathematics and chemistry disciplines are involved.
- A California native garden was built including over 100 species of native plants, showing how plants requiring low water can be used to create beautiful spaces, provide a habitat for beneficial and pollinating insects. This area is especially useful for student with attention or...
anxiety issues (a current goal is to qualify for the National Wildlife Federations Wildlife habitat status).

- A mulching and composting program to manage recyclable green waste was developed. Traditional and worm composting bins are both managed on-site, providing information and guidance to students and members of the community on the value of using “garden gold”.
- A 26-foot diameter outdoor seating area was built from recycled materials. This provides an area in which lectures, entertainment, and educational events are conducted. (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gnpTbZUdlq4)
- Acquisition of a storage container where tools and materials used to maintain the land are kept
- Signage describing the garden and its spaces
- Seating benches have been built

**Project Timeline - Estimated duration: 5-7 months**

**Step 1: Preparation (1-2 months after funding is obtained)**
- Set timeline to clear property of existing materials
- Hire project manager
- Seek bids and select contractual services

**Step 2: Land preparation (2-3 months after Step 1)**
- Secure temporary storage
- Clear property
- Disconnect irrigation
- Complete Preliminary Grading
- Complete Survey
- Complete Final Grading

**Step 3: Land Development (1 month after Step 2)**
- Install Pathway
- Reconnect irrigation
- Install Gateway
- Install Lighting Units

**Step 4: Facilities Development (1-2 months after Step 2)**
- Improve/replace storage facilities
- Install/improve Seating

**Budget**

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