Dear COGdesign friend,

Thank you for your continued commitment to COGdesign. These are extraordinary times. The pandemic, policy brutality and the growing protests against violence have made clear the challenges we face coming to terms with systemic racism and reaching racial equity. They have also illuminated the power and value of parks and other green spaces like community gardens which provide us with space to grow organic food, space to protest, space to simply enjoy a respite from the pandemic and fresh air to rejuvenate our bodies and our souls.

Even though Boston has wonderful parks, the pandemic has shown us the unequal access we have to those spaces to enjoy the benefits of nature. In fact, greater Boston includes many cities and towns in which access to those parks, community gardens and other green spaces is not distributed equitably. We hope you will donate to COG today to help remedy this situation.

A Latino-majority community at the epicenter of Massachusetts’ COVID-19 crisis, Chelsea is a densely packed city of 40,000 occupying only 1.8 square miles; almost half the population are recent immigrants. The city struggles every day to care for the health and safety of it’s residents, the majority of whom have low-wage jobs now considered ‘essential;' they are delivery drivers, cashiers, manufacturing and health care workers, who are at the highest risk for getting sick. But we want to share some good news. In 2017, COG took on a project to design an extension for the community farm run by Chelsea-based nonprofit GreenRoots.

Meet three-year-old Eduardo. He and his Salvadoran family volunteered at GreenRoots community farm all last summer. They received armfuls of produce in exchange for their volunteer work often returning the following day having prepared a meal to share. This year GreenRoots was able to pivot quickly from selling farm produce at local farmer’s markets and distributing CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) shares...
towards addressing Chelsea residents’
desperate need for food during the
pandemic.

At the beginning of June, the farm began a
weekly donation of 50 pounds of fresh
produce to the local food pantry at Revival
Church, feeding 70-80 Brazilian immigrant
families. On behalf of all those nourished by the food from GreenRoots’ farm, Revival’s Pastor,
Elaine Sosa, expressed her deep gratitude to COG for our role in the design of the space.

Chelsea continues to struggle. It bears a disproportionate share of the negative
environmental consequences resulting from industrial operations, like the storage of jet fuel
for Logan airport among other industries. The whole city is in fact categorized as an
‘environmental justice community’ thus meeting the main criteria that COG uses to determine
project eligibility. GreenRoots’ extended community farm provides a sorely needed green
space for this hard-pressed community to experience a bit of nature, to grow food together, find
respite from oppressive urban heat and let children dig in the dirt.

“The farm is our answer to our food insecurity. Our partnership with COG provided it
with the momentum to get off the ground more quickly,” says Roseann Bongiovanni,
Executive Director of GreenRoots.

We are proud that COG’s mission continues to align so clearly with the movement to
address the disparity in access to green space and the critical health benefits those spaces
represent. This year we have taken on a broad range of projects from schoolyards in Dorchester
and the North End to community gardens in Roxbury, Lowell and Dorchester to parks in
Charlestown, Hyde Park, Waltham and Jamaica Plain/Roxbury. Please visit our website to learn
more about our current work.

The urgent need for green space has never been more clear. It is critical that we continue this
work through and after the pandemic crisis. Please help us deepen our partnerships with
supporters, volunteers and community clients by donating to COGdesign today. Together we
are making a difference in people’s lives.

Thank you and be well,

Jennifer Kimball
Executive Director

Hadley Berkowitz
President of the Board

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