

# GARDEN GIRL FOODS OPENS

## AT LOUISVILLE CENTRAL COMMUNITY CENTER



Welcome to Garden Girl Foods – one of the growing number of restaurants in Russell (see “Something’s Cooking in Russell”, Issue 27/January 2022 issue for more information about other neighborhood eateries). Moving from her former location in Old Louisville to the Louisville Central Community Center in March of this year, owner/operator Whitney Powers is proud to be offering a variety of healthy food options. Powers increases access to healthy foods in Louisville’s urban neighborhoods by serving food grown in her garden and sourced from local farms and markets. In addition to selling locally grown food that has been canned and preserved at their Grocery Market, Garden Girl Foods serves lunch for dine-in and carryout, featuring daily specials, and provides catering services that can help make your special event an occasion to remember. Cooking classes are also available for aspiring chefs of all ages.

*Garden Girl Foods Grocery Market and lunch counter are open Monday thru Friday from 10:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at 1300 W Muhammad Ali Blvd, inside the Louisville Central Community Center. For more information, see: <https://www.gardengirlfoods.com>*

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# Russell

## Choice Neighborhood Initiative

# Newsletter

## A New Vision for St. Peter’s Church

The limestone towers atop St. Peter’s United Church of Christ have overlooked Louisville’s Russell community for about 175 years. The church and its magnificent gothic structure stand proudly at 1407 W. Jefferson St., but according to St. Peter’s Senior Pastor, Dr. Jamesetta Ferguson, it is “not doing much” else. However, under her careful guidance, Dr. Ferguson is helping St. Peter’s evolve from what she calls a “museum church” with little to no activities throughout the week, into a staple in the community.

Like the Russell neighborhood around it, St. Peter’s is transforming. The church, founded in 1847, is rooted in German history. The German population declined significantly following recorded events like urban renewal and white flight. “By the time I got there in 2006, their thousand-member congregation had gotten down to about 15 active members,” Dr. Ferguson added. Now a multi-racial establishment, St. Peter’s serves around 400 people weekly through its ministry, as well as its mission branch, called Molo Village.

Dr. Ferguson’s congregation made the difficult decision to relocate to a temporary site at 16<sup>th</sup> and Jefferson in the Russell Plaza in 2014 because of extensive maintenance and structural issues. After brainstorming what to do with such a large space, Dr. Ferguson eventually connected with the United Church of Christ (UCC), and St. Peter’s was named the first recipient of the denomination’s “Partners in Vision” Church Building

and Loan Fund. Dr. Ferguson said the program financially supports churches that have bricks and mortar but lack the financial ability to upkeep their ministry and mission. Through this opportunity, Dr. Ferguson received consulting services, development assistance, and advice on how to build a structure from the ground up.

With the help of the fund, St. Peter’s launched The Village @ West Jefferson - a 30,000 square foot, mixed-use commercial development at the corner of West Jefferson and 12<sup>th</sup> streets in the Russell neighborhood. St. Peter’s also partnered with agencies, including the Louisville Metro Government and Louisville Metro Housing Authority to help bring Dr. Ferguson’s vision to fruition. After receiving a Certificate of Occupancy (COO) in March 2021, The Village @ West Jefferson is now fully occupied by business tenants who are bringing vital services to the community.

The remaining piece of Dr. Ferguson’s vision is the renovation of the original St. Peter’s church. Dr. Ferguson’s team is still in the earliest stages of planning, however, as she leads the church into a new direction, she promises that the renovations will include a chapel and rental space for additional Village @ West Jefferson tenants, including potential retail. She also envisions multi-purpose rooms, allowing St. Peter’s to continue its mission work, which includes recovery services, food pantries, and a new cabinet-making apprenticeship program.



The renovations will not be completed overnight. St. Peter’s is now seeking investors to help fund this \$2+ million initiative. Dr. Ferguson is excited about the many possibilities and potential partnerships ahead with the Beecher Terrace community, including the Baxter Community Center, Louisville Urban League Sports and Learning Complex, and the new park planned for the corner of 13<sup>th</sup> Street and Muhammad Ali Boulevard. Dr. Ferguson sees these initiatives, including her own, as an opportunity to connect with new families and continue her job as one of Russell’s most vocal champions. “We want Beecher (Terrace) residents to come back,” Dr. Ferguson added, “but what do they have to come back to? There has to be a continuous investment in this community.” To learn more about Dr. Ferguson, St. Peter’s Church, and Molo Village, visit <https://www.molovillagecdc.org/>.



# RESIDENT SPOTLIGHT: LATISHA TAYLOR

## Beecher Resident Joins Louisville’s Culinary Arts Community

Have you seen it? The new Beecher Terrace community along Roy Wilkins Avenue between West Muhammad Ali Boulevard and West Jefferson Streets continues to grow and thrive. So do the residents living there, including proud Beecher resident Latisha Taylor, who was featured in the March 4, 2022 issue of *The Courier-Journal*. In the highest circulated newspaper in Kentucky, Ms. Taylor is pictured standing next to her culinary arts instructor, Makeda Freeman-Woods, excitedly holding her new certification of completion for the *Common Table* Culinary Arts Program. Operated by Catholic Charities Inc., this free eight-week program provides participants with an equitable path of upward mobility through career training and opportunities for team building, leadership, and entrepreneurship.

Catholic Charities has partnered with Choice Neighborhoods People Lead Urban Strategies Inc. USI to assist Beecher Terrace residents and the broader Russell community with reducing poverty and investing in economic mobility. Cathy Gopaul, Ms. Taylor’s Family Support Specialist with USI, referred Ms. Taylor to the *Common Table* program. “I almost didn’t sign up for the class at first,” said Ms. Taylor, “but I just put all the excuses to the side and went for it.” Recognizing her need to balance this opportunity with daily responsibilities, including being a joyful mom of one, Ms. Taylor is thrilled with her accomplishments. “It was a great experience. My teachers were awesome, and I had great classmates. I really got a lot of hands-on teaching. We took field trips, had cheese tastings, and even did some catering.” Most importantly, Ms. Taylor believes she learned how to better help her community. Ms. Woods described confidence as the biggest takeaway upon completion of the program.

Understanding the major role that the culinary program plays in the food service industry pipeline, Catholic Charities works diligently to maintain an 81% job placement rate for graduates of the program. After completing the *Common Table* training program and earning a Louisville Metro Food Services Manager’s Certification, Ms. Taylor is confident that she has the necessary tools to find a position that she is qualified for and enjoys. “I’m looking forward to what the future holds.”



Latisha Taylor (right) proudly holding her Common Table Culinary Arts certificate

Are you interested in a career in the restaurant and hospitality industry? Have you dreamed of owning your own business or catering company? If so, please reach out to Urban Strategies at 502-384-0786 to be connected to the *Common Table* program. Or contact Program Director Laura Stevens at 502-873-2566 for more information.

**An upcoming Information Session is scheduled for June 9 at 10:30am.**

“Don’t decide that you can’t, before you discover that you can”

Latisha Taylor, Beecher Resident

# ARE YOU INTERESTED IN HOMEOWNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES IN RUSSELL?

## Renderings of some of REBOUND’s Homeownership Opportunities



JEFFERSON STREET 3-PLEX BAYUS DESIGN WORKS



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REBOUND is a community housing development organization that offers affordable housing opportunities and counseling that help individuals and families move towards their goal of becoming homeowners. Qualified low-income households earning less than 80% of Area Median Income can receive down payment assistance and home-buyer education from REBOUND and the Louisville Urban League to help make your dream of homeownership a reality.

REBOUND focuses on the construction and rehabilitation of single-family homes in Russell to create a positive

impact in housing and economic development while helping low-to-moderate income families access quality housing. REBOUND believes that by providing affordable, high-quality housing, and homeownership education, they can increase neighborhood revitalization and increase access to affordable housing to improve the quality of life for families in Russell.

In addition to their single-family housing program, REBOUND’s Duplex Initiative focuses on assisting families to purchase new construction duplexes, giving them the opportunity to own a home and cre-

ate wealth simultaneously. When a family purchases a duplex from REBOUND, they live in one unit and lease the other, which provides them with rental income that can be used to pay down debt, invest, and/or increase their principal mortgage payments.

For more information about how to qualify for REBOUND’s homeownership programs, visit <https://www.reboundinc.org>, or call (502) 566-3416.



RUSSELL DUPLEX DEDER STREET AT DR. W.J. HODGE STREET BAYUS DESIGN WORKS