

NEXUS COMMUNITY GARDEN & URBAN FARM

The **NEXUS Community Garden and Urban Farm** is a collaborative learning and garden space located on Xavier University's campus and managed by Bellarmine Chapel in partnership with Brick Gardens.

MISSION: To serve as a collaborative growing space that brings together diverse stakeholders from St. Robert Bellarmine parish, Xavier University campus, and neighboring communities to grow genuinely transformative relationships, address food insecurity and hunger, educate around the importance of urban agriculture, and promote sustainability.

VISION: To grow a culture of encounter and mutual belonging amongst all participants, centered on organic gardening, healthy food, environmental justice, and the sacred connections we have to one another and the Earth.



Growing Community

The NEXUS garden space features 70 garden beds, including 25 beds supported by *Brick Gardens*, a Black-owned business working to combat food insecurity through urban gardening, and 30 beds rented to members of the Xavier community, neighbors from Norwood and Evanston, and Bellarmine parishioners. The remaining beds are used to grow for donation to area food pantries. Gardeners gather together for seasonal potlucks, cookouts, and volunteer days. Picnic tables in the garden also promote a quiet reflection or outdoor meeting space for community members.

Combating Hunger

Approximately 50% of the food grown at NEXUS is donated to area food pantries. Over 1,000 pounds of fresh produce was donated in 2021.

Fostering Sustainability

NEXUS is also home to a small hive of pollinator bees, kept by a Xavier Biology professor. Flowers are planted throughout the garden to support pollinator populations. A three-bin compost system, constructed by the student Sustainability Club, is available for gardener and small-scale community use.

Expanding Learning

Xavier courses engage with NEXUS in many ways, from immersive learning around food insecurity to student farm work opportunities. NEXUS is also used as a space for beehive demonstrations, outdoor class meetings, composting and urban gardening education, and more.

Operation and Collaboration

Bellarmino Chapel assumed management of the NEXUS garden space in 2021, and since has cleaned up and updated the space, including constructing a new shed, picnic tables, and several new community beds. Bellarmine facilitates the garden bed rental program.

Brick Gardens maintains the upper garden beds and grows produce for donation and sale through their farm stand.

One or more Xavier student interns assist with the ongoing mowing, watering, and maintenance, with support from Xavier Sustainability.

Quarterly, volunteers from Bellarmine's Active Discipleship Day and Xavier's Community Action Day assist with major garden cleanup. Volunteers from Xavier classes and clubs also assist with maintenance. Gardeners renting beds are required to contribute at least 5 volunteer hours in the garden space annually.

A rich network of collaboration makes growth at NEXUS possible and fruitful for our communities.



Bellarmino
Chapel

