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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Michigan Community Resources Launches Greenfill Development Project with Mack Alive

DETROIT – July 10th, 2015 – This past year, Michigan Community Resources (MCR) was awarded a Kresge Innovative Project Planning Grant to fund a planning process for repurposing a group of vacant lots within the Lower Eastside Action Plan (LEAP) area boundaries.

The grant addresses the critical need to develop coherent, long-term strategies for repurposing land in environmentally and financially sustainable ways. The focus of the project explores creative adaptive re-use options beyond community gardens and pocket parks; more specifically, the production of non-edible crops that generate money while improving the soil and reducing stormwater runoff.

MCR announced today that Mack Alive has been selected to participate in the 2015 Greenfill Development Project, which is supported by the Kresge Foundation. The Greenfill Development Project helps identify how community groups can grow crops on vacant land and generate enough money to not only pay for the taxes, insurance, and long-term maintenance of the lots, but also supplement other community program costs.

“We are very excited about this collaboration,” said Jill Ferrari, chief executive officer of Michigan Community Resources. “MCR’s Greenfill Development Project will help community groups repurpose vacant land in creative, sustainable ways. Revenue-generating crops can help ease the financial burden these groups often face when maintaining vacant lots in the City.”

MCR will partner with Keep Growing Detroit to provide the planning and technical assistance necessary to create a step-by-step plan that will guide Mack Alive in the implementation of a revenue-generating Greenfill Development Project on six lots on Fischer Street across from their Community Resource Center. The plan will be presented to neighborhood stakeholders and community partners at the conclusion of the planning process.

The plan will also be used to apply for a Kresge Innovative Project: Detroit Implementation Grant in 2015 with the goal of obtaining funding for implementation to make the plan a reality. Additionally the plan will serve as a helpful resource for other community groups seeking to carry out neighborhood-scale projects that involve repurposing vacant lots in sustainable ways.

“The potential for revenue-generating strategies that neighborhood and community groups can use to address vacant land across the city was one of the major reasons we supported this planning grant in our pilot round of Kresge Innovative Projects: Detroit,” said George Jacobsen, a Kresge Detroit Program officer. “MCR has a deep understanding of community engagement and participatory planning, not to mention a rich knowledge of Detroit’s lower eastside. We hope the work here can serve as a model for groups citywide.”

Jacobsen said that Kresge anticipates a strong field of applicants for planning and implementation grants in the second round of Kresge Innovative Projects: Detroit. Details on the application process and the competitive process will be released in the coming weeks, with grants to be awarded in early 2016.

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About Michigan Community Resources

The mission of Michigan Community Resources is to support and empower nonprofit community organizations in Michigan that serve low-income individuals and communities, with an emphasis on community economic development, by providing pro bono legal services and technical assistance. Founded in 1998, its programs include legal assistance, educational trainings & publications, urban planning services, and community outreach. MCR helps community organizations build their capacity, accomplish blight mitigation and neighborhood improvement activities, and improve quality of life. Learn more at mi-community.org.

About Keep Growing Detroit

Keep Growing Detroit (KGD) exists to promote a food sovereign city where the majority of fruits and vegetables Detroiters consume are grown by residents within the city's limits. KGD's talented and experienced staff operates a number of established and nationally recognized programs, including the Garden Resource Program (GRP) and Grown in Detroit (GID). Our organization's strategic approach to achieving our mission facilitates beginner gardeners becoming engaged community leaders and food entrepreneurs, addressing the immediate needs of the community while promoting sustainable change in our food system.

About Mack Alive

Mack Alive is a 23-year old nonprofit organization dedicated to the upward mobility of residents in the city of Detroit with a particular focus on residents of the eastside. This neighborhood, formerly described as "dying and the best thing to do is to move residents out to other areas", is a beacon of light to the community. Mack Alive provides a safe environment and serves as a positive change agent for neighborhood growth and revitalization.

This mission of Mack Alive is to enhance the growth and development of the east side of Detroit through comprehensive programs and services that educate, empower and elevate the entire community. Through the advancement of our mission, we envision a safe community that is economically sound, healthy and vibrant.

About Kresge Foundation

The Kresge Foundation is a \$3.5 billion private, national foundation that works to expand opportunities in America's cities through grantmaking and investing in arts and culture, education, environment, health, human services, and community development in Detroit. Its Detroit Program uses a comprehensive strategy to promote long-term economic opportunity in the foundation's hometown. The strategy includes major efforts to revitalize neighborhoods and build a vibrant Woodward Corridor, along with support for arts and culture, regional transit, early childhood education and the enhancement of civic capacity. Kresge's Detroit investments, including Kresge Innovative Projects: Detroit, support the Detroit Future City strategic framework, a long-range plan informed by a multiyear research and community-engagement effort, which was funded by the foundation.

About The Lower Eastside Action Plan (LEAP)

The Lower Eastside Action Plan (LEAP) is a community-driven project designed to engage people in a process to transform vacant land and property into uses that improve the quality of life in our neighborhoods and surrounding areas. The LEAP area runs from I-94 to the Detroit River and is bounded by Mt. Elliott to the West and Alter Road to the East.

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