

OSU President Gordon Gee visits Stanard Farm

CLEVELAND (August 5, 2011) – President Gordon Gee of the Ohio State University visited our Stanard Farm in the St. Clair Superior neighborhood of Cleveland today.

OSU’s Extension Service has partnered with the Cuyahoga Board of DD to develop the site and has provided master gardeners to train men and women who have developmental disabilities for careers in urban farming.

With the manufacturing economy, a traditional source of jobs for people with developmental disabilities, shrinking, the Cuyahoga County Board of DD has turned to entrepreneurship as a new avenue to employment opportunities for this segment of the labor force. Cleveland Crops, a joint venture between the Cuyahoga County Board of DD and its nonprofit division, SAW, Inc., was born in 2010 with Stanard Farm on the site of the one-time Stanard Elementary School.

Cleveland Crops has added to its acreage by committing to several other sites that are in various stages of development, including an acre in Ohio City, another plot in the E. 105th-St. Clair area and, most recently, land in South Euclid, secured through an agreement with the city and University Hospitals.

As important as providing employment, produce from the farms is sold to area restaurants concerned with providing fresh, locally grown produce to their customers. Visitors also can buy fresh produce at the locations.



Noni Casino (left), staff member from Cleveland Crops, presented Dr. Gee (center) with an herb wreath, created by the men and women who work the Stanard Farm. Dr. Terrence M. Ryan (right), superintendent of the Cuyahoga County Board of DD, announced at the event that OSU’s Cleveland Extension Service would be moving its offices into a building on the farm grounds that will be renovated to provide space for education and training of individuals with developmental disabilities preparing for careers in urban farming.



Dr. Gee toured Stanard Farm with members of the crew who work the farm.



Cleveland Councilman Joe Cimperman (left), who was instrumental in getting the land for Stanard Farm donated to the Cuyahoga County Board of DD, was on hand to make Dr. Gee an honorary city councilman, even though he lives “in that suburb to the south [Columbus].”

