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For Immediate Release:

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## County library seeks crowd-funding for community garden

**Newton, NC, July 21, 2014:**

The Catawba County Library is engaging the community to raise more money to better “seed” its new garden at the main library in Newton. Partnering with Citizinvestor, a crowd-funding and civic engagement platform, the project seeks local residents willing to invest in the community garden.

Mary Furtado, assistant county manager, said that the library project marks the first-ever crowd-funding campaign launched by a Catawba County Government agency. The goal is to raise \$4,500 to cultivate plants—and people—through gardening, she said. The garden, an eco-friendly learning space owned by the county, has been started with private donations and support from the Friends of the Library; and now additional funding is being sought to further its development. The crowd-funding campaign will run through late September.

“The garden is a collaboration of people working together to grow healthy local foods, encourage learning, and provide fruits and vegetables to citizens in need,” according to Suzanne White, library director. “Produce will be donated to the Corner Table soup kitchen and to Eastern Catawba Cooperative Christian Ministries to feed needy families. “

The library garden began in May behind the Main Library in Newton. A weed-infested lot was tilled and transformed into a productive space to grow produce for needy families and to enhance the Summer Reading program for young readers.

“We are already using the space for children’s programming,” White said, “now we are seeking additional help to enhance the space further, to promote environmental education and offer a pleasant reading space for all ages.”

Tax-deductible donations will help purchase materials, supplies, and plantings to fully bring this garden to life, which will include vegetable, fruit, herbs, and flowers and materials needed to build, contain, and maintain the garden area. Youth and volunteers will continue to tend and share the plants in the community, connect to the garden through literacy programs, and learn about organic gardening, composting, stewardship, healthy eating and the natural world.

“Our vision is to host a healthy and engaged community with a garden that will connect children and adults to the wonders of nature and, at the same time, discover the joys of sampling the food they have grown,” White said.

Donations can be made in person at any library location or on-line through the crowd-funding website, <http://www.citizeninvestor.com/project/growing-plants-and-lives--library> . For further information, contact Suzanne White at the library, 465-8660.

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**About:** *The Catawba County Library System, headquartered in Newton, NC, serves the citizens of Catawba County with seven branches throughout the county and is a year-round, integral provider of early literacy and lifelong learning. In addition to traditional services, the system provides a full complement of computer and digital services, classes and support to bridge the digital divide, empower job seekers, and enhance community quality of life and economic health.*

