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**The following letters were written by fourth-grade students at Mundo Verde Public Charter School at the conclusion of the unit “Community Care through Climate Justice” in spring 2022**

**Antonio H.**

Dear DCHA,

Did you know that Columbia Heights is one of the hottest parts of DC? Well it is but the garden helps the heat get a little cooler. You should let Boe back in because it also can help climate change and the environment. Also the residents really like the garden. Also it really helps the community. Also in my opinion this is why you should reopen the garden.

Well Mr. Boe Luther is also trying to help Columbia Heights be the one of the coolest parts of DC. How? You may ask. Well he helps by making gardens around columbia, and plants produce oxygen and take in co2 which really helps the environment for example plants produce oxygen and take in co2. For instance we also think the garden should open because the food supports healthy, affordable and tasty food that most grocery stores don't really have. Another example is he teaches and helps people how to make a vertical garden.

And in addition, it helps Columbia Heights have more green spaces. Another example of why Boe should be aloud back into the garden is because he teaches people how to help the environment and how to make vertical gardens with stuff that most people would throw away and now this will really spread the news of how to keep Columbia Heights a cool place and a place that ISN'T as hot as an oven. For example, to help Mr. Bow you can let him stay in Garfield terest to let him keep the garden alive or else it will be as dead as a rock, and Columbia Heights will still be as hot as an oven. In addition DCHA, why are you trying to make people homeless just for more money? That sounds like you don't care about elders and your own kind witch is pretty racist to be honest, you're also supporting gentrification.

Also residents and Boe quotes “The residents liked the garden and they liked to just look around and be outside with a nice view.” But the problem is he's locked out because of you, in addition the residents can't fully enjoy the garden as they did when Boe is there because now the garden might end up dead and not giving us the oxygen which we need to live. Also this Garden is not only the residents liking it, some of them need it to eat Healthy and to stay alive.

Also you can help You can actually help Boe by protesting for the garden and help spread the message. Also everyone is stronger together, like one voice isn't enough to stop anything but a voice so loud that no one can act like they're deaf to fix this community. Another example of as way to help is to actually make more Gardens in columbia heights/ward 7 so you can change the climate there, because we have noticed that most of these heat islands don't have as much trees as the west part of DC, and thats kinda like segregation in a city showing that racism isn't over.

So in conclusion Boe should be let in because of these examples. Of how he helps and the garden helps the environment. Also as you can see it really helps climate change and the community. Another thing is that the residents do like it and use it to survive.

**Emma P.**

“The garden is a way of life,” says **Boe Luther**, a helper in **Garfield Terrace**, a public housing place in Columbia Heights. He has been working in Garfield Terrace for a few years and he has really enjoyed it. The best part is the rooftop garden. Filled with plants and happiness for the seniors, it was very joyful and fun.

Unfortunately, DCHA is locking Boe out of his garden because of gentrification. Even though gentrification is a totally unfair reason to lock him out.

We need to stop destroying gardens and kicking people out because of gentrification and start realizing how gardens are very important for the environment. They keep residents healthy, help in places like Columbia Heights which is a heat island, and is the first rooftop garden in public housing in the country! (And not to mention the garden has a great view.)

Columbia Heights is a place called a **heat island**, which means there is a lot of CO<sub>2</sub> (Carbon Dioxide) in the air, which makes it a hotter place. Plants can absorb CO<sub>2</sub> to some extent, but not all of it. If we keep planting more gardens, more and more heat will be absorbed, to make it a cooler place.

You can help by protesting against the government, planting a garden in your own house, meeting Boe, etc. There are so many ways that we can help because after all, “We have to learn the importance of standing up for what is right,” says Kendrick Jackson, a friend of Boe who is protesting against the government as well.

The residents/seniors liked it. The elders living in Garfield Terrace really liked it. They could be able to plant flowers and delicious fruits and vegetables for free! Being able to access the rooftop was a nice view of the city also.

It is the first rooftop in public housing in the country which is kind of special. If we keep it there and it works out for the elders, then more people could get inspired and build more rooftop (or just normal) gardens in any place.

This is why we should keep the garden, and not only because of the view, or because of the CO<sub>2</sub>, it’s because “The garden is a way of life,” that can not be taken away from us, no matter what.

**Diego D.**

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Have you ever wanted to garden but nobody you know has learned how to garden? Well, Boe Luther has a rooftop garden, but he's been locked out and he needs your help to get back the garden.

DCHA has blocked Boe and the Garfield terrace residents from their garden. They should let Boe back in the garden because it's good for the community, fights climate change and keeps the residents healthy.

It's good for the community because the plants have oxygen in them and that helps elders with breathing problems and diseases, for example elders with bronchitis and lung problems and since it's in a heat island elders are at more risk of getting heat illnesses, GT residents also enjoy the garden because it's the first rooftop garden in Columbia Heights and enjoy the view.

The garden also fights climate change. It fights climate change because the garden is in Columbia Heights, a heat island. Heat islands are very warm out and the plants create some cold that helps make the island much cooler and if we don't help Boe get back the garden the plants will die and Columbia Heights will keep getting much warmer. Do you want the world to get warmer and hurt elders with diseases, well if you don't want that to happen then reopen the garden.

The garden helps keep the GT residents healthy while staying cheap because it has fruits in there and that lets the residents get food and having to go to a market to get food which probably costs much more money. For example a GT resident may not have much money and is not really healthy, if he goes to his neighborhood market the food may cost too much and he can't buy it, but if he goes to the rooftop garden he can get some food and it doesn't cost so much, do you want your elders to die of hunger, well if you don't want that to happen you should reopen the garden.

#### **McKenzie W.**

"A garden is a delight to the eye and a solace for the soul" Hi my name is McKenzie, and today I am going to talk about why I believe we should reopen the Garfield Terrace Garden and we need to reopen the garden because the elders love it and it lowers the residents health risk and plants create oxygen and without someone to take care of it the plants will die of heat.

That and living in a heat island doesn't only put the garden at risk but the elders as well. Have you wondered about what you could do to help with climate change, how about starting a garden? You can get fresh produce but if the garden has no life what's the point. Boe Luther has an amazing garden but sadly the DC housing is closing down Garfield terrace because of tell.

With Boe Luther being forced out and living in a heat island the building is not in good condition and the garden will die and plants absorb CO<sub>2</sub> which creates oxygen which makes all the elders in the building at risk.

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The garden is a really important part of this heat islands ecosystem because the plants can make it cooler and plus with the plants around it put most of the elders health conditions at low risk and with the garden here the plants purify the air and also the seniors can get fresh produce so please for the sake of the seniors and boe please reopen the garfield terrace roof garden.

D.C.H.A please reopen the garden. This garden is very important to Boe and the elders. So for the sake of the elders' health please reopen the Garfield terrace garden.

**Kira B.**

Dear DCHA Manager,

Boe Luther's garden is the first rooftop garden that he planted. He is doing something big for the community. Boe is a very nice person who likes to reuse things that others threw away. For example, he made a bench out of wood people threw away and also reused milk cartons by putting dirt and a seed inside the milk carton to grow plants. Now the garden is closed and I ask DCHA to re-open it.

The garden is essential for the local community. Boe is helping to solve the heat island problem, which is typical in large cities like ours. He grew up loving gardens in wart 7. The apartment that he grew up in had a big garden. Boe planted his garden in Garfield Terrace apartments to make his community better. He likes to help people with disabilities. The residents at Garfield Terrace enjoy the garden because they want to get outside and watch the plants grow. Not only do the residents enjoy the garden but also other people from the neighborhood like the garden and get fresh vegetables.

It is very important to keep Boe's garden open because it's very good for the environment and you can grow your own fruits and vegetables. Plants absorb CO2 and release oxygen. The garden is good for the community because it helps people to maintain a healthy diet while helping the environment. The garden helps the elders get food and stay healthy. The garden is important for everyone. Please, reopen the garden.

**Catherine E.**

Boe Luther has an amazing garden for people like you to visit! You can get fresh fruit and vegetables. The sad thing is, he's being kicked out by gentrification! He is lacking more people to help him in his current situation, will you help him?

Boe Luther is a kind, creative person who wants to help his community by growing a garden. He helps low-income neighbors and elders. His garden is the first rooftop garden in public housing in the US and he is teaching others to expand the work.

Plants help produce oxygen which can help take some carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere.

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Carbon dioxide is bad for the environment because a lot of it makes the atmosphere really hot and it makes climate change more severe.

The residents of Garfield Terrace love the garden because they love going up for fresh air, fruits, vegetables, and the nice view. These are the reasons why we should reopen the garden and help support Boe's protest.