

# Grown in Detroit

Nature is taking over the city and a new generation is taught to harvest its profit.

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### Rev. Jesse Jackson Honors Dutch Documentary 'Grown in Detroit' with NCRC 'Community Empowerment Film Award'

WASHINGTON D.C., March 13, 2010—Dutch filmmakers Mascha and Manfred Poppenk have captured the interests of educators, community organizers and social activists around the world. Their recent documentary *Grown in Detroit* shines light on an incredible effort that is currently taking place in a city often discredited as one of decay and despair. For this, they received the Community Empowerment Film Award from the National Community Reinvestment Coalition. Reverend Jesse Jackson presented the award to Mascha Poppenk during the annual NCRC conference on Friday, March 12 in Washington D.C.

**"We are honored that *Grown in Detroit* received this prestigious award from the Coalition," said Mascha Poppenk, filmmaker. "It's a powerful, uplifting story about the rebirth of the city told by the actions of teens and their educators. The message they teach us applies to the world, not just the residents of Detroit. The award is for the people of Detroit, CFA in particular. It's their story, we were privileged to capture it."**

*Grown in Detroit* features urban organic farming efforts organized by the Catherine Ferguson Academy, a public school of 300, mainly African American, pregnant and parenting teenagers. In Detroit alone, there are more than 3,000 pregnant teenagers who drop out of high school each year, nationwide more than 500,000.

The passionate educators at the Catherine Ferguson Academy in Detroit are working to make a better future for the young women by using their natural resources. The school is one of only three like it in the United States. As part of the curriculum, pregnant teens are taught agricultural skills at the farm next to the school. The young mothers, often still children themselves, learn through organic farming to become more independent and knowledgeable about the importance of nutritious foods. Many of the teens initially dislike farm work but the aversion disappears as they see their crops growing and being sold for profit.

While Detroit may have a reputation as one of the most impoverished and dangerous cities in the U.S., this award winning documentary exposes a different side; the side about residents who are emerging by using their resource and creating unique solutions.

Ironically, after the destruction of many abandoned homes, nature has taken over and the city. Detroit is literally greening from within. Satellite images speak for themselves; more than one third of the city has become green again, just as it was before the industrial era. This new landscape is creating opportunities and hope for the city and its residents. Land that was used for farming a century ago has again been cultivated, this time by the urban farmer, out of necessity and resourcefulness.

This "back to the roots" concept is a simple, yet effective solution for a city that has to start all over again and perhaps a lesson to be learned for the rest of the world.

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**NOTE:** Online film preview for the press is available by e-mailing [mascha@filmmij.nl](mailto:mascha@filmmij.nl) and requesting log in information. Photos are available below and upon request.

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left to right: NCRC President & CEO John Taylor, Filmmaker Mascha Poppenk, Reverend Jesse Jackson (picture by rhphotos)

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### Awards

2010 'Community Empowerment Film Award' National Community Reinvestment Coalition | Washington, DC | United States

2010 'Honorable Mention' Texas Black Film Festival | Dallas | United States

2009 Award for 'Best Documentary' Austin Film Festival | United States

2009 Special Jury Award for its social values Urban TV Festival | Madrid | Spain

2009 Award for 'Best Documentary' Formula Mundi Film Festival | Baden Wuerttemberg | Germany

### Festivals

2010 Official Selection Texas Black Film Festival | Dallas | United States

2010 Official Selection Cinema on the Bayou | Lafayette, LA | United States

2009 Official Selection Sichuan TV Festival | China

2009 Official Selection Austin Film Festival | United States

2009 Official Selection Urban TV Festival | Madrid | Spain

2009 Official Selection International Millenium Festival | Brussels | Belgium

2009 Official Selection New Kingston Film Festival | United States

2009 Official Selection 2009 Planet in Focus International Environmental Film & Video Festival | Toronto | Canada

2009 Official Selection Formula Mundi Film Festival | Baden Wuerttemberg | Germany

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