

Loss (continued)



Standing on the rise above the old garden, we can see the urban jungle that has taken its place. It is a reminder of just how relentless nature is and how much of a struggle it was to hold those forces at bay. Likewise, our daily lives of work and family, paying bills, and nurturing children is a tremendous undertaking. To do so in the eye of a global pandemic is testament to our personal resilience, and for this, we should all give ourselves credit.

We knew that with the loss of the garden we would not be able to meet the expected demand for produce, so we leaned into our partner farmers and gardeners to help us meet that demand. After the anxiety-fueled rush of 2020 where bad news, like weeds, have intruded into our lives every day, 2021 will be a year when many of us, crisis-fatigued and weary, will need to lean into family, friends, and community.

With the loss of land and volunteer labor, we could not know how well our remaining garden would grow in 2020. We shifted schedules to accommodate the loss of volunteers. We developed protocols to reflect CDC working guidelines. We created a produce supply chain to our partner farmers, on the fly, out of thin air. And we persevered, masked and socially distanced. And something remarkable happened. In the midst of the COVID crisis, the 6th Street & Monticello Avenue garden became the little garden that could.

Having survived and flourished in the first year after the loss of the Friendship Court garden, 2021 looks much brighter. The challenges of finding new garden space remain. We both mourn the loss of our former garden while celebrating its history, and the people who nurtured it into existence. But with purpose and in partnership with community, we approach the new year with hope in our hearts, and a garden fork in hand.