



CELEBRATING 5 YEARS

# Growing with God

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COMMUNITY GARDEN NETWORK

QUEENIE HEWITT

## *Greetings!*

It's almost 5 years since I accepted my role with A Rocha Canada in 2011 July as Community Garden Network Coordinator. I was a recent graduate in Sustainable Food Systems and eager to make a difference in our relationship to God's Creation. Excited about the opportunities with my role at A Rocha, I first traveled to all the major cities in Canada to lead Community Gardening workshops, then returning to Vancouver to connect with local Christian groups and activities at our Brooksdale Environmental Centre. These included programs like "Fun on the Farm" which hosted low-income families and refugees for food and cooking education. It was by year 3 that I learned how to drive our "new to us" stick-shift car, that I would enable me to visit more Community Garden sites and support more Christian Community Garden coordinators (ironic environmentally, that I needed a car for my work, but I appreciate it a lot!).

God has been faithful in growing in me a sensitivity to where He needs me. In the last 2 years I have found life-giving joy supporting Christian groups in setting up new Community Gardens. Which has included the privilege of working with low-income seniors, people in transition from recovery, to new gardeners seeking refuge in Canada from conflict places. I am not as young as I was 5 years ago but still eager to honor God's calling on my life and excited to continue to impact the world through my work at A Rocha.

*"We care for only what we love. We love only what we know. We truly know only what we experience. If we do not know our place know it in more than a passing, cursory way, know it intimately and personally then we are destined to use and abuse it. So we need to experience our home place firsthand."*

- Steven Bouma-Prediger, For the Beauty of the Earth, A Christian Vision for Creation Care

The garden as a way to experience our home firsthand. Restoring relationships, starting with ourselves as humanity becoming caretakers, with each other as we work together, to get to know God as the loving Creator and the value of God's Creation itself, that is proclaimed very good.

## *About A Rocha*

Mission: Environmental Stewardship

A Rocha is an international Christian organization which, inspired by God's love, engages in scientific research, environmental education, community-based conservation projects and sustainable agriculture.

Vision: Transformational Engagement

The transformation of people and places by showing God's love for all creation.

Restoring salmon habitat, training young scientists, inspiring school children, feeding low-income families-A Rocha is transforming people and places through hands-on conservation projects, environmental education programs and sustainable agriculture initiatives.



In this coming year, Michael's work has taken us to live in Tel Aviv, Israel for a year. I am grateful to be able to continue my role at A Rocha, working remotely. His company is paying for regular return trips home throughout the year so we are planning trips back.

This year my goals are:

- Planning events, meetings and teaching for our return trips home
- Growing the Salvation Army Rooftop Garden program
- Developing new Community Garden sites
- Setting up a Community Garden Network Growing Fund to give financial assistance to faith-based Community Gardens
- And responding to new opportunities to share the vision of faith-based environmental stewardship

In Israel I hope to be exploring new gardening techniques and immerse myself in cooperative and socially minded Kibbutz communities. And I am also exploring potentially a Masters program in Environmental Studies at Tel Aviv University.

I've sent this letter to you as a thank you! Thank you for your joyful support as good friends, and the body of Christ. Grateful to be in this with you together and to nurture more Community Gardens in our cities and transforming people and places.

Faithfully and growing,

*Queenie Hewitt*

