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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Team Punta Gorda and Mosaic Team Up to Expand Community Gardens

PUNTA GORDA, FL, December 12, 2013 -- Hundreds of Charlotte County residents and students will be able to grow their own affordable fresh fruits and vegetables thanks to TEAM Punta Gorda and a grant from The Mosaic Company. TEAM's Community & School Gardens Initiative is being taken to new heights with a \$25,000 donation from Mosaic to build several new gardens in Punta Gorda, Port Charlotte and Englewood.

"I was impressed by a tour of the pilot garden at the South County Regional Park, by the dedicated volunteers, and by the strong public-private partnerships that are fueling this effort," said local resident, Kaley Miller, Mosaic's manager of communications. "As a company dedicated to nourishing crops at home and around the world, we knew this was a great opportunity to connect Mosaic's mission to the local community."

The pilot garden located at South County Regional Park in Punta Gorda was created with donations and funding from the Charlotte Community Foundation. This handicapped accessible site, operated by the Charlotte County Parks & Recreation, is a showplace for community garden projects.

With Mosaic's donation, the initiative will expand to six new sites this year, including:

- A new garden near South County Park on Florida Street in Punta Gorda.
- A garden behind the Public Safety Building in a cooperative effort with the City of Punta Gorda police and volunteer auxiliary.
- At least three additional school gardens at Peace River and East Elementary Schools, and L.A. Ainger Middle School.

Volunteers Mary Francis Adair and Clarisa Parodi who head up TEAM's Community Garden Committee are hard at work managing the myriad details necessary to implement these projects.

TEAM has welcomed the experience of the Volunteer Master Gardeners of Charlotte County to provide design services, seminars and coaching along the way. TEAM is also working with local teachers from the Charlotte County Health Department to connect the gardening initiative with a healthy diet curriculum for students.

The stage has already been set at the courtyard of Charlotte High School, where TEAM Punta Gorda received a grant from the Florida State Department of Agriculture for a student-grown vegetable garden.

Web Site: www.teampuntagorda.org • **E-Mail:** team@teampuntagorda.org



“We are so pleased at the collaborative effort that has emerged from this project with dedicated volunteers, local government, other nonprofits and partners like Mosaic,” said TEAM CEO Nancy Johnson. “We look forward to sharing the program’s success so more people can experience growing fresh, healthy food for their families.”

Community gardening has flourished across the United States as neighbors have banded together in recent years to create community plots. Gardening offers physical and mental health benefits as well. For more information about TEAM or the Community Garden Initiative, contact the TEAM office at 941-637-9326 or visit their website at www.teampuntagorda.org.

About Team Punta Gorda

TEAM Punta Gorda is an all-volunteer organization which was created in 2005 in the wake of the devastation from Hurricane Charley. TEAM’s initial efforts were to hire an urban planning specialist who supported the community in developing a visionary plan for rebuilding the community. The “Citizens’ Master Plan 2005” has served as a blueprint for the rebuilding of the greater Punta Gorda area.

In recent years, TEAM has focused on creating partnerships to enhance the community and make Punta Gorda a great place to live, work and play. In addition to community gardens projects, TEAM volunteers are involved in a variety of activities such as the creation of the Veterans Fountain of Freedom in Lashley Park in Punta Gorda, operation of the free loaner bicycle program and numerous projects to enhance the attractiveness of the community.

About The Mosaic Company and The Mosaic Company Foundation

The Mosaic Company is the world’s largest combined producer and marketer of concentrated phosphate and potash, two essential crop nutrients. Driven by its mission to help the world grow the food it needs, Mosaic is committed to strengthening global food security and protecting critical water resources. The Mosaic Company and The Mosaic Company Foundation make investments in and partner with best-of-class leaders in the focus areas of food, water and local community investments. More information about Mosaic is available at www.mosaicco.com/florida.

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