

For Immediate Release:

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**ORLANDO STUDENTS HELP GROW ONE MILLION TOMATOES
FOR COMMUNITY GARDENS AND FOOD BANKS**
Local Garden Puts 28,000 Pounds of Donated Compost to Work

ORLANDO, FL— On January 26th, local nonprofits, students and compost producers will kick off a new gardening project in downtown Orlando, as part of a nation-wide collaborative effort to build healthy soil and grow healthy food for community gardens and food banks. Volunteers and local youth will lay down compost at Downtown Credo's community garden and plant tomatoes and other vegetables at a community garden located at the New Image Youth Center in Parramore. The event is all part of the U.S. Composting Council's Million Tomato Campaign, which brings together compost producers, chefs, community gardens and food banks from all over the nation to help build healthy soil and produce sustainably grown, local food for our communities.

At the planting event, the U.S. Composting Council will teach students about how to compost, and how compost builds healthy soil. The garden at New Image Youth Center is part of Downtown Credo's gardening program where in addition to growing vegetables, youths will sell the produce at the farmer's markets and learn to cook fresh food from the garden.

Other partners in the project include C&C Peat, located in Okahumpka, Florida, who will donate 28,000 pounds of compost; Apenberry's who will donate plants and seeds and Filtrex who will donate GardenSoxx mesh growing containers.

"We're so excited to see this campaign getting off the ground in Orlando," said Michael Virga, Executive Director of the U.S. Composting Council. "By working together to build healthy soil and grow healthy food, we can offer meaningful ways for kids to learn about improving their local environment and their own health."

Compost builds healthy soil, may reduce the need for chemical fertilizers and allows soil to hold more water, reducing irrigation needs and runoff. All of the compost producers participating in the Million Tomato Compost Campaign produce Seal of Testing Assurance (STA) certified compost, which certifies that their compost meets federal health and safety standards and has passed stringent testing measures, which ensure ongoing quality and safety.

"This project is a prime example of how hands-on stewardship can help solve problems by reducing waste and beautifying our communities," said Matt McKenna, president and CEO, Keep America Beautiful. "We're looking forward to seeing how other projects across the country contribute to the goal of growing one million tomatoes."

For more information, go to www.buycompost.com, www.filtrexx.com/gardensoxx.htm and www.cityoforlando.net/kob

WHO:

U.S. Composting Council's Million Tomato Campaign
Keep America Beautiful, Inc
Keep Orlando Beautiful, Inc
Downtown Credo

WHERE:

New Image Youth Center
212 South Parramore Avenue

WHEN:

Saturday, January 26, 2013
10 a.m.-11:30 a.m.