

COMMUNAL TABLE

An abandoned supermarket is transformed in West Philly

by NATALIE HOPE MCDONALD

THE SUPERMARKET ON 48th Street (between Spruce and Pine) has been vacant for almost a decade. But, thanks to \$1.5 million in federal grants, the Enterprise Community Development Corporation is ready to break ground on the Center for Culinary Enterprise, the first food incubator of its kind in the nation, dedicated to training and employing local chefs starting in high school.

Philadelphia's Friday Architects has been charged with designing the project. The longtime eyesore in this increasingly prominent business and education corridor will become the city's latest LEED-certified building.

Currently, asbestos tiles are being carefully removed from the former grocery, a storage tank is being lifted out of the basement and shelving with rotted food is being stripped out to make room for a full-service kitchen, classrooms, retail space and a public restaurant, Little Louis' BBQ, that will provide hospitality instruction with paid, on-the-job experience. The center, estimated to cost \$5 million, will train at least 100 high school juniors and seniors as burgeoning food entrepreneurs.

"It'll be the most comprehensive food incubator ever built," says Enterprise Center managing director Greg Heller. "Young people will be growing food [at the Walnut Hill Mini-Farm eight blocks away] and selling it on the table. It's a green project that will transform the regional food system."

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