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By *Jenga Mwendo*

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Jenga Mwendo

Director, Backyard Gardeners Network
New Orleans, LA

 [Jenga Mwendo250.jpg](#) [1]

Jenga Mwendo is an urban agriculture community organizer in New Orleans' Lower Ninth Ward and founder of the Backyard Gardeners Network – a burgeoning not-for-profit organization whose mission is community building, neighborhood revitalization and cultural preservation through urban agriculture. A Lower Ninth Ward native, Mwendo left New Orleans after high school in 1995 to pursue a career in computer animation. She is the graduate of the School of Visual Arts/New York and has years of experience in the animation industry, where she worked on multiple films, including the Oscar-nominated film “Ice Age.” Mwendo decided to permanently return to her hometown of New Orleans with her young daughter to help rebuild the city after Hurricane Katrina. Since 2007, Mwendo has worked to strengthen the Lower Ninth Ward community – organizing neighbors to revitalize and create gardens, planting trees, and developing support systems to encourage and support the culture of growing in the neighborhood. She is the winner of the 2010 Cox Conserves Heroes award for her work developing community outdoor spaces. She was also awarded a 2010 TogetherGreen Fellowship (www.togethergreen.org [2]) to focus on community-building around the two gardens. She currently works with the Center for Sustainable Engagement and Development on food security research and planning for the Lower Ninth Ward community. Mwendo also serves on the board of the Holy Cross Neighborhood Association. She works very closely with New Orleans Food and Farm Network, Parkway Partners, the Lower Ninth Ward Village Community Center and HandsOn New Orleans. Mwendo lives in the Lower Ninth Ward with her 7-year-old daughter and their dog. She also runs a personal catering business, providing delicious raw vegan cuisine to clients throughout New Orleans.

Education

B.F.A. Computer Art, School of Visual Arts
Graduate of the Small Farmer Agricultural Leadership Institute, Southern University at Baton Rouge

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Additional Web sites

[Backyard Gardeners Network on Facebook](#) [4]

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Links:

[1] http://www.foodandsocietyfellows.org/sites/default/files/img_user/Jenga_Mwendo250.jpg

[2] <http://www.togethergreen.org>

[3] <mailto:backyardgardeners@gmail.com>

[4] <http://www.facebook.com/backyardgardeners>