

Interview with Viris Neufville

Conducted by Jordan Scott at Liberty Grace Church, Baltimore

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Viris Neufville: My name is Virus Neuville. I am a mother, a grandmother, and I'm also a widow. And I'm retired. I was born in Jamaica in the hills of St. Andrew. That's near the Blue Mountain peak.

Jordan Scott: So, when did you first start attending Liberty Grace Church?

Viris Neufville: It was, I think. Okay, let's see. It's about 2005. My husband and myself. We were looking for a church and he called me one day. He said to me, 'I found a church.' We were living nearby here and he said to me, shall we go, Sunday? I say, okay. And we came and I liked the church. The people were friendly and so I'm here.

Jordan Scott: What was the process of starting the garden here like?

Viris Neufville: Okay. I remember one Sunday the pastor's son, whose name is Terris King, Jr., we had a little meeting of the church, and he said to us, there are a lot of things around that we could be involved in. And I said to myself what can you do? And what could you do? And I had liked plants growing plants wherever I live. I always have a garden.

Jordan Scott: So what is growing food for this church community like?

Viris Neufville: Well, for me. I love it. I have a passion and there are few people here that has a passion for it, and we feel like whatever is going on around us, we need to be focused because now more than ever it's best that each of us plant something that we can be able to feed ourselves. If not even fully feed ourselves, help to feed ourselves, and teach our children and grandchildren to plant things.

You know it's a shame most children doesn't know where food comes from. They think it's from the supermarket. What I realized. We are so conscious. Most of us are so conscious of our fingernails and our hair. You know, we just we don't want to mess with the ground, but outside in the garden it's therapy. It relaxes you. Yes.

Jordan Scott: So I'm wondering what the reaction or response was from church members to the garden.

Viris Neufville: Well, first I started to plant flowers because, the truth is, flowers is my first passion. And yeah so the reaction of the flowers, some like it, some liked it, some did not.

Jordan Scott: So when you started planting other things, how did they think about it then?

Viris Neufville: And then, after a while, they've. Black Church Food Security Network came in. And then, now you know, we begin to focus more on the vegetables and things. And my goal for this garden is that when someone comes here, they see something new that they have never seen before. Like, oh, I'm from Jamaica, I'd like to them to experience a plant, or a vegetable. or a herb that is grown there, you know. Yes.