PLANTS & POVERTY

University of Illinois
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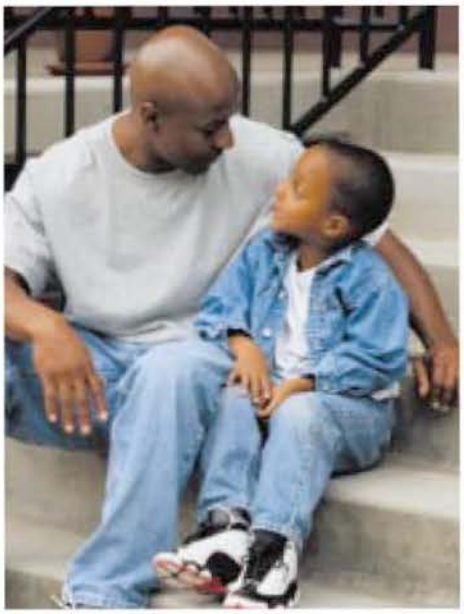
How adding more green makes life more manageable.

Crowding, noise, and danger can all contribute to chronic mental fatigue.

Green views and access to green spaces in urban areas may, in fact, help restore attention and relieve the everyday pressures of living in poverty.



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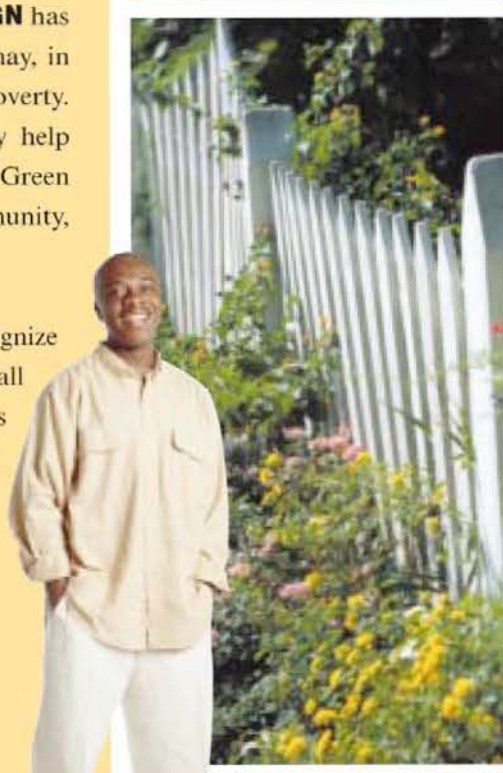
For people living in poverty, everyday challenges can seem overwhelming. Crowding, noise, and danger can all contribute to chronic mental fatigue – leaving people less able to cope with major life issues. It's a common problem for many people living in low-income urban areas, but there *is* hope.

A scientific study by the **UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN** has demonstrated that green views and access to green spaces in urban areas may, in fact, help restore attention and relieve the everyday pressures of living in poverty. By making life's demands more manageable, natural settings can actually help inner-city residents cope with the many stresses associated with poverty. Green spaces also contribute to a healthier environment and foster a sense of community, making them particularly valuable in inner-city neighborhoods.

For all of their social benefits, it's extremely important that urban planners recognize the value of green spaces in cultivating healthier communities. We must all work together toward building, protecting, and maintaining natural settings in our urban areas so we can improve the quality of life for the many people who live there.

Coping with poverty: Impacts of environment and attention in the inner city. *Environment & Behavior, 33(1)*, 5-34. Kuo, F.E. (2001).



College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences

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Green spaces contribute to a healthier environment and foster a sense of community, making them particularly valuable in inner-city neighborhoods.

For more information about this and other surprising studies, visit www.lhhl.uiuc.edu, or contact the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Landscape and Human Health Laboratory, at 217-244-0930.

Study conducted in partnership with NUCFAC.

Cover picture of Chicago's Lincoln Park by Jason Lindsey. www.perceptivevisions.com