## **Alex Malinsky**

Owner, RawGuru INC.

Tampa/St. Petersburg, Florida Area

Current • Owner at RawGuru INC.

Connections 2 connections

Industry Health, Wellness and Fitness

## Alex Malinsky's Experience

Owner

RawGuru INC.

(Health, Wellness and Fitness industry)

Currently holds this position

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### Faith makes fruits, vegetables sprout on five acres

#### Miracle Garden

By <u>LYNNETTE CURTIS</u> LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL

Spend a morning in the garden with Rosalind Brooks, and you may just come away a believer.

It's contagious, her unshakable belief in this unlikely idea: a lush community garden on a dusty lot in the middle of the city, in the middle of the desert, in triple-digit heat.

"This is the miracle garden," Brooks, 42, said while strolling among beds of ripe squash, onions, strawberries and lettuce, maybe the only living things not wilting under the excruciating July sun.

"Look how healthy it looks in 110 degrees," said Brooks, a trim vegetarian with a passion for raw food.

She launched her Tonopah Community Garden on five donated acres at 711 N. Tonopah Drive, near Bonanza Road and north Rancho Drive, four months ago through her nonprofit, Together We Can.

She figured a community garden, designed to bring people together and produce nutritious, pesticide-free local food, would sprout plenty of supporters in a neighborhood that went years without a grocery store.

The former schoolteacher with little gardening knowledge invested thousands of dollars of her own money and, with the help of dozens of volunteers, completed her first planting in March.

Her first spring harvest produced 40 pounds of fruit and vegetables, which Brooks donated to the Las Vegas Rescue Mission.

But initial enthusiasm for the project drooped, a perhaps not-so-surprising development in a state with a low volunteerism rate and in a transient city oft-criticized for having no sense of community. She has managed to find just one sponsor for an individual plant bed, of which there are 25 in the garden.

"They all say they are city folks," Brooks said. "They say it's too hot. Those are basically just excuses."

Brooks, who grew up in Southern Nevada, admits she was disappointed and a little frustrated.

"It took me months to get over the shock," she said. "I was going, 'This town sucks. I'm picking up my five acres and moving to Seattle.'&thinsp"

But the fledgling urban gardener persevered, vowing to till away until the garden becomes selfsustaining, producing enough food to sell at a local farmers market, donate to homeless shelters and help feed the neighborhood's needy families.

She also envisions an oasis where schoolchildren can learn about agriculture and healthy eating.

"It's too important a project" to give up, Brooks said. "We all need healthy food."

City Councilman Ricki Barlow, in whose ward the garden grows, believes it will slowly but steadily gain support.

"It's a matter of educating the community, getting them excited about what they eat," he said. "We're not farmers. This isn't a part of our lives. It takes time."

West Las Vegas, generally bordered by Bonanza Road, Carey Avenue, Rancho Drive and Interstate 15, had to fight for years to land a single grocery store after Vons closed its Edmond Town Center store in 2004. Buy Low Market opened in the former Vons in 2008.

The community needs all the sources of healthy food it can get, Barlow said, especially food "without chemicals and pesticides."

The garden "gives the community the opportunity to be a part of natural growth in the inner city."

Former Las Vegas City Councilman Frank Hawkins, who now is president of the local NAACP, owns the land on which Brooks' garden is planted. He offered the land to her for \$1 a year because he had long envisioned a community garden there. He even pays the water bill.

"A garden brings people together," Hawkins said. "It can eventually feed hundreds, and it educates young people. Growing up as a kid in the desert, nobody ever introduced me to a garden."

Hawkins believes that as long as Brooks persists, support for the garden will bloom.

"The longer it's there, the more people believe it's going to be there," he said. "If they stop once, they'll come back again."

Brooks, who managed to put together a core team of 10 committed supporters and volunteers, spends four mornings a week at the garden, where she plucks weeds and harvests ripe produce in a skirt.

"If I'm going to be a gardener, I'm going to be a pretty one," she said.

Other days she spends drumming up donations, recruiting volunteers and trying to get the word out. She offers her phone number to anyone interested in the garden: 281-7031. The garden even has its own Facebook page.

On Sundays, Brooks heads to church. She prays for the garden and credits those prayers for inspiring someone to donate a pickup, labor to build a shade structure and other help.

"Anything I need, I just ask God, and, I kid you not, it just comes," she said. "When you have that going on, it's hard to quit."

Brooks has big plans for the garden, which now covers a small portion of the five acres. She wants to plant more fruit trees, install beehives, create a children's area and build a walking path. She wants to bring chefs in to teach people how to make recipes using raw food.

Her long-term plans are more ambitious.

"I really think if you have a good team of people, you could go lot to lot and within 60 days have a food source for communities" around the city, she said.

But for now, Brooks said she has more immediate concerns.

"I'm praying next for a tiller and a backhoe."

Contact reporter Lynnette Curtis at lcurtis@reviewjournal.com or 702-383-0285.

#### Find this article at:

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### MIRACLE GARDEN: Faith makes fruits. vegetables sprout on five acres

Written by LYNNETTE CURTIS LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL Monday, 19 July 2010

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Title of Work: Faith makes fruits, vegetables sprout on five acres

Completion/Publication -

**Year of Completion:** 2010

**Date of 1st Publication:** July 19, 2010 **Nation of 1st Publication:** United States

Author

■ Author: Stephens Media LLC

Author Created: text

Work made for hire: Yes

Citizen of: United States Domiciled in: United States

Copyright claimant -

Copyright Claimant: Righthaven LLC

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Address: 9960 West Cheyenne Avenue

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Certification

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Name: Steven A. Gibson

Date: September 9, 2010

**Applicant's Tracking Number:** 0002063

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**Service Request #: 1-484453828** 

**Application Date:** 09-09-2010 21:13:41

## Correspondent

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Name: Steven A. Gibson

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### **Mail Certificate**

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