

Thelma Gardner

Ms. Thelma Gardner was born in Baltimore and then spent the first 14 years of her life in North Carolina. She remembers from that time that her grandmother was strict and thoroughly emphasized church and prayer. While she spent a lot of time working in the fields, “we had a lot of fun because there were 19 of us together” in her extended family.

When Ms. Thelma moved to Baltimore, she attended Booker T. Washington Middle School and Douglass High School followed by classes at CCCB and then Catonsville Community College. She then worked in the nursing field for 25 years, mostly at nursing homes including the Sandtown-Winchester Nursing Home. Retiring from nursing in 1999, she served as the receptionist for the Lillian Ross Daycare Center on North Avenue. And in June of 2005 Ms. Thelma began working for EDEN Jobs as the receptionist.

Ms. Thelma found out about EDEN Jobs through Dr. Chen who she met through utilizing New Song Health Center. She now has the privilege of working with Antoine Bennett about whom she says “I knew him when he was a little kid on Lanvale Street.”

Ms. Thelma moved into her Nehemiah house in 1992 where she lives with her husband and two of her grandchildren including Saprina who helps lead worship at New Song on Sunday mornings. (NOTE: Saprina attends St. Frances Academy and will attend her junior prom in May.) And Ms. Thelma has been a consistently supportive grandmother of New Song Academy where she has had three children enrolled, Saprina, Travell and Teontay.

Some of the things Ms. Thelma likes: traveling (although that’s greatly limited nowadays by her grandchildren), singing, and coming to work each day at EDEN Jobs. And she loves seafood. Dislikes include most of television and rap music and many vegetables including carrots and squash.

Ms. Thelma considers herself a caring person (we agree!) who tries to be kind to everyone and to give back to the community. She says “New Song has been good to me, so I try to give back.” About her relationship with God she says “Everything I hold dear comes from God. I believe in him with my whole heart and love the Lord. He has been with me through all of my trials and struggles, and I wonder where I would be without him. I wake up in the middle of the night and thank him!” Finally, Ms. Thelma has four sons (her daughter passed). And guess what? She has 25 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren!