

CDC'S DIVISION OF COMMUNITY HEALTH SUCCESS STORIES

by: Christine Glaszcz

Community Garden in Germantown a Collaboration Success

SUMMARY

In 2010, Germantown (GT) Police Chief Peter Hoell established the GT Civic Group, a melting pot of all the non-profit organizations who work to improve the quality of life in GT. Through this group, Healthy People Project of Washington County (HPP) became the catalyst for the creation of a new community garden located in Dheinsville Historical Park. The garden, which opened for the 2012 growing season, was truly the collaborative efforts of the GT Historical Society, GT Park & Recreation Department, UW Extension Master Gardeners, and HPP.



Germantown Community Garden Groundbreaking

CHALLENGE

Community gardens are popping up all around us. They give residents the chance to grow their own produce in a plot that is typically rented from the organization running the garden. It sounds simple but getting a new garden up and running can be a challenging task. First, you need an adequate parcel of land whose owner is willing to turn the land into a community garden. You also need a committee or organization that will oversee the garden. The land must be tilled, sectioned off, and prepared for multiple users. Ideally the land will have a water source, be in a desirable location and have ground rules established for all gardeners to follow. The Village of GT Park & Recreation Director Brett Altergott had both the desire and the resources to make the garden happen. However, choosing a location, deciding on the number & size of plots, developing guidelines and recruiting a committee to manage the project remained a challenge.

YOUR INVOLVEMENT IS KEY

We encourage anyone who has an interest in developing a new community garden, school garden, or worksite Farmer's Market to contact HPP. For more information on how to "Go Green" in your own garden or how to become a Master Gardener please visit www.washington.uwex.edu. In 2013 HPP will also be working on improving the nutrition of school lunches in Washington County by helping schools launch school gardens, assisting with nutrition education, and implementing Farm to School programs.

"I cannot emphasize enough how supportive the Germantown Park & Rec was. Their enthusiasm to see this be successful was evident in everything they made happen - from prepping the land to providing the necessary tools and water."

- Cindy Helt, Master Gardener



SOLUTION

HPP formed the Community Garden Action Team (CGAT) in 2011. Comprised of public health, health care professionals, dieticians, Master Gardeners and local volunteers, its mission is to help develop new community & school gardens and support those already in existence. An environmental scan of existing gardens in the county revealed a gap in the GT area. Through the GT Civic group meetings, HPP was able to make connections with both the Historical Society and the Rec Department, who agreed this would be a great use of some of the land at Dheinsville Historical Park.

RESULTS

"Many hands make light work" was certainly true in bringing the GT Community Garden to fruition. Brett, who worked with HPP in 2010 on the creation of a Washington County Park & Trail map, toured the community garden in West Bend managed by Mary, a Master Gardener & CGAT member, who also went to GT to help choose the best location and provide technical assistance. Other Master Gardeners in the CGAT agreed to act as the oversight committee. A groundbreaking ceremony was held in the fall of 2011 so the land could be prepared for the 2012 growing season. In the spring, Brett and the Master Gardeners met with all the garden applicants to discuss the rules and offer their expertise. Despite the drought conditions of 2012, the garden produced an abundance of fresh vegetables as well as a waiting list for plots. In 2013, the garden will be expanded from 10 to 20 plots providing more families with access to fresh, affordable and healthy foods that they can honestly say, "We grew it ourselves!"

Contact

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FUTURE DIRECTIONS

HPP continues to explore additional sites for community gardens in Washington County. Each project will be unique to the community it serves. Potential garden sites could be schools, churches or even private businesses. HPP has the resources to connect and mentor those wishing to start a garden. In 2013 HPP will also be investigating ways to connect community gardens with local food pantries to provide clients with fresh produce during the summer growing season.