

Community Garden Partnership, Lawrence University, the University of Wisconsin Fox Valley, and UW Extension.

Mission

Our mission is *“Growing food, people and communities.”*

Goals

To fulfill our mission we work to:

- Grow healthy food in our community and support people growing their own food.
- Grow people by providing education so that people can grow their own food and become more knowledge and responsible participants in our food system.
- Grow communities by creating an inclusive community environment that values diversity of culture and ideas, environmental stewardship, healthy life styles, sustainability, self-sufficiency, leadership and the joy of gardening.

Community Garden Partnership History and Current Activities

The first Community Garden in Outagamie County was a UW Extension pilot project developed in 1999 with a State Initiative grant and additional funding through the Community Foundation of the Fox Valley Region. In 2003 UW Fox partnered with Community Garden Partnership and opened a 3 acre site. In 2004, the CGP became a program of Goodwill Industries NCW, and in 2005 the student-run Sustainable Lawrence University Gardens joined CGP as a teaching garden. The Partnership was formed to address funding, resource sharing, networking, and collaboration building among emerging garden communities.

Since 1999, over 1050 gardeners from diverse cultures and age groups have participated in Community Garden programs. Our on-going programs include:

- 7 garden rental programs offer affordable plots for community members to grow their own food and grow food to donate to local food pantries. Plots are often free for community members unable to pay.
- 5 Teaching gardens are demonstration sites and active learning sites for community groups and schools.
- 1 market garden managed by Lawrence University students produces food for Lawrence's dining facility and acts as a teaching garden.
- The Community Herbs project teaches Appleton West High School at risk students how to grow and market herbs.

- A VISTA placement works on food-security and capacity building in low income neighborhoods.

Vision Narrative

Good, fresh food and a local food culture are essential to the good health, environmental stewardship, and food security of every community. GROWING POWER is an acknowledged leader in developing a “good food revolution” in order to facilitate the evolution of healthy, food-secure, and environmentally responsible communities. With GROWING POWER’s help we aim to lead our community into a better understanding of our food culture and into a more food-secure, healthy, and environmentally sound future.

The Fox Valley community has struggled with understanding that food security, the origin and transportation of our food, agricultural practices, our environment, and our health are all community issues. In order to bring about community-wide understanding and dialog about these issues we need to increase their visibility within our community.

In Collaboration with GROWING POWER and other Fox Valley community partners, we plan to:

- Develop multiple soil production/vermicomposting sites in the Outagamie/Winnebago County area,
- Develop initiatives aimed at poverty reduction through the creation of mentoring programs and green jobs within the community gardens and the greater community,
- Develop educational initiatives for adults and children that result in a better understanding of our food system and culture and the knowledge and skills required to grow good food using environmentally sound practices,
- Increase opportunities for people to grow their own food.

With the help of GROWING POWER we will develop the infrastructure and train staff and volunteers for soil production at two sites. The Sustainable Lawrence University Garden will host a small-scale operation that demonstrates the process and benefits of growing healthy soil. The UW Fox Valley Community Garden will host a large-scale operation that produces healthy soil for community members, community garden projects and eventually as a product to sell.

With the help of GROWING POWER we will offer annual “From the Ground Up” trainings, as well as our own urban/sustainable agriculture trainings and other educational opportunities. The Sustainable Lawrence University Garden will act as a working model of urban agriculture and will host educational opportunities for students and children. The other seven Community Gardens will host trainings, mentoring and other educational opportunities for gardeners, families, and other adults, and give them the opportunity to put what they learn into action

We believe that initiating these projects in collaboration with GROWING POWER will bring the aforementioned food system issues to the top of our community's agenda and create a constructive dialog that results in a more food-secure community.

Description of facility/site

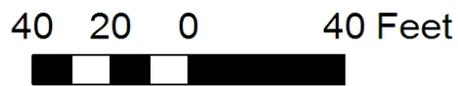
Projects and activities done in collaboration with GROWING POWER will happen at two sites:

- The UW Fox Community Garden is located behind the UW Fox Valley campus on Midway Road in Menasha WI. The garden is 6 years old and is a no-till site. The area is a little over 3 acres and is jointly owned by Outagamie and Winnebago Counties. There are currently approximately 20 individuals and families gardening at this site. The site has shelter facilities, benches, an access



road, water and porta-potty availability.

- The Sustainable Lawrence University Garden is located on the Lawrence University campus in Appleton WI. The garden is 5 years old and is managed by Lawrence students. The area is approximately a quarter acre and is on the campus of Lawrence University.



Both of these gardens are located near the center of the Fox Cities Communities we serve and are very accessible.

Description of Current Projects

Currently the Community Garden Partnership is:

- Collaborating with the Salvation Army to study the Health Impacts on food pantry recipients related to food security and local land policies.
- Developing the “African Bag Garden,” in conjunction with Salvation Army food pantry recipients, as a means for growing food where there is no access to land or space for gardening.
- Implementing green jobs through the Community Gardens through Workforce Development.
- Extending the growing season in the Community Gardens by building cold frames at two teaching garden sites. Additionally, plans are in place to build a greenhouse at one of the gardens and a hoop house at another.
- Developing a website to allow easier access to information and opportunities.

Five year Roll-out Plan

The focus of the first two years will be to develop the physical and community infrastructure necessary to produce compost, to educate the community about local food systems, and to increase the overall food security of the community by offering further opportunities to participate in the food systems.

Year 1

- Develop the infrastructure for sourcing, delivery and processing of the raw compost materials at the Lawrence and UW Fox sites.
- Build and populate worm depositories at the Lawrence and UW Fox sites.
- Begin training community members, and developing community educators, on the fundamentals of composting and worm care and establish a knowledgeable volunteer base to assist the composting operation.
- Continue to develop and expand demonstration and teaching gardens.
- Grow our base of educators to establish strong support and leadership for our projects
- Expand educational opportunities for K-12 students at the Teaching Gardens.

Benchmarks:

- 1) Train a minimum of 10 community members.
- 2) Source compost material suppliers.

3) Develop protocols for compost processing.

Year 2

- Use finished compost from site to strengthen the Community Gardens.
- Expand the Teaching Gardens at Wilson Middle School to strengthen K-12 programs.
- Construct a Teaching Greenhouse at the Goodwill Community Garden.
- Develop an evaluation system for the project and its educational goals.

The focus of the third year will be to expand community involvement through collaboration with local businesses and through extensions of existing educational programs, and to use the evaluation data to improve existing programs.

Year 3

- Develop a marketing strategy for finished compost – work with local businesses (e.g. landscapers and plant centers) to buy/sell compost. This will be a product of Community Garden Partnership to sustain the organization.
- Begin collaboration with Workforce Development and local businesses to create new jobs within the local food systems.
- Work with partner schools to involve parents in their children’s experiences at our Teaching Gardens.
- Use evaluation data to focus on goals we have not yet reached and work with local municipalities to establish the next steps toward policies that promote good, local food systems, environmental practices, and the development of green jobs.

○ Benchmarks:

- 1. Create a business plan for compost sales.
- 2. Identify local business partners to explore green job opportunities.
- 3. Hold student – parent garden events.
- 4. Create an evaluation plan of operations.

The focus of the 4th and 5th years will be to continue the development of green jobs, and to revisit and update the existing education, evaluation, and delivery models in response to policy changes, fiscal and structural challenges, and new developments.

Year 4-5

- Use finished compost to create a new community garden on abandoned commercial/industrial lot (K-mart or other).
- Evaluate the sustainability of the organization as a whole.
 - Benchmarks:
 - 1. Acquire an abandoned site.
 - 2. Prepare 5-year review report and develop future plans.

Overall Objectives

Through all of our projects and activities we hope to achieve a sustainable organization that is supported by an engaged community. We intend to achieve this by:

- Developing an urban garden product that is safe, accessible and environmentally sound
- Forging strong links between the urban agricultural community and universities to foster continued education, research, cross cultural exchange and to further strengthen our community's food security for future generations.
- Expanding the inclusiveness of our activities to address the needs of the whole community through a combination of strategies including growing food, harvesting, preserving, preparing and consuming food in and with a community that understands the significance of fresh, local food and food security.



February 12, 2010

Susan Richardson
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The Menasha Sustainability Board would like to extend its support for the Community Garden Partnership's programs operating in our community. In 2007, the City of Menasha established a Sustainability Board in order to promote and create sustainable practices within the community and to incorporate these practices into programs and services the city delivers to its residents. At its February 16, 2010 meeting, the Sustainability Board reviewed the Community Garden Partnership's proposal for food/soil production and education at sites across the Fox Cities. The Sustainability Board voted to offer its support and endorsement of the Community Garden Partnership's projects in the City of Menasha, including the soil production and composting demonstration project at the U.W. Fox Valley Community Garden and the creation of a Teaching Greenhouse at the Goodwill Community Garden. The board looks forward to future collaboration on food sustainability projects with the Community Garden Partnership.

Sincerely,

Linda Stoll
Chair
Menasha Sustainability Board