OUR SECOND GROWING SEASON

Each month from May to October, we had a variety of workshops and events.
Dear Gardeners and Friends,

Students will continue to visit the garden throughout the winter, but for most of us the growing season has come to a close.

It was a busy second year in the garden, as you may know, and as you’ll see in the following pages. Each month of the season, we hosted gardening and cooking workshops, potluck dinners, and shared work sessions. We had over 40 gardeners and many others visited during our events or helped with various projects. Students of all ages were in and out of the garden.

Over and over, we heard that visitors and gardeners enjoyed their time in the garden...working alongside new and old friends, learning and teaching, sharing food, being active, spending time outside, and relaxing. It seems that the garden has been a special place for all of us.

Whether you just learned about the garden today, or you helped to plan the garden from the beginning, you are always welcome!

In the meantime, enjoy slowing down during the next few months. We’ll see you in the spring!

— Kerstin Martin, Director of the Community Wellness Initiative
Taylor Hinton, Wellness Program Coordinator

THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO HELPED US THIS YEAR!
HOW TO GET INVOLVED AT THE GARDEN

**Visit the Garden:**
Get ideas, be inspired, learn about community gardens. Stop by during one of our sessions or schedule a tour!

*The 2017 calendar of events will be published in the spring.*

**Become a Friend of the Garden:**
Don’t want to rent your own bed, but still want to participate in our workshops and events?
You can also volunteer to help take care of our shared spaces and take home fresh produce!

*Let us know, and we’ll include you on our weekly e-mail updates.*

**Rent a Garden Plot:**
Plots are raised wooden beds (4x8 feet). You choose what to grow there and maintain your plot all season.

If you’re new to gardening or want to keep learning, our gardening and cooking workshops help guide you through the season. Gardeners also learn from and teach each other. Not sure you’ll be able to make it to the garden every week? Some folks choose to share a plot with a friend.

*We’ll be accepting applications for the next season in early 2017. Call (814) 332-2787 or email marccommunitygarden@gmail.com for more information.*

**Join the Garden Committee:**
Help to organize volunteers, plan garden events, write our monthly newsletters, and take photos. Let us know if you have ideas for the garden!

**For Our Younger Gardeners:**
See the next few pages to learn more about gardening and cooking at Meadville Middle Area School and during our summer program, Grow Meadville.

*Contact us to learn about other food and gardening opportunities for youth in the Meadville area.*
In partnership with the Meadville Neighborhood Center, we launched a summer youth program this year called Grow Meadville. The goal of Grow Meadville is to engage youth in our local community and in learning how to grow and cook fresh foods.

This summer, students entering eighth, ninth, and tenth grade met during two three-week sessions. The day began with garden work: planting, watering, weeding, and otherwise maintaining garden beds in the hoop house and outside. The group then cooked lunch together, using produce harvested that morning. The students were responsible for following recipes and working collaboratively to make the meal. In between gardening and cooking, youth participated in lessons and activities on food systems, community development, youth leadership, and decision-making.

Our 15 participants gained valuable skills and developed friendships with community members and each other. Many of these connections were made during our “urban trek” field trip, when we visited local sites and businesses such as the Market House, Johnson-Shaw Stereoscopic Museum, and Diamond Park.

At our closing reception, students presented their ideas for community improvement projects and guests voted for one proposal to fund. The winning team proposed to organize events for teenagers in our community. They gave themselves the name Teens Around Town (TAT), hosted a teen dance held downtown, and have continued to meet regularly to plan future events. We are excited to see what’s next for this group!

Contact us to get involved in the 2017 program!
This year, most students at Meadville Area Middle School (MAMS) will have participated in garden-based activities at least a few times. School gardens allow students to connect classroom concepts to the real world and to have positive experiences with their local community and environment. Students also learn practical skills of gardening and cooking and often become more interested in eating fresh, local foods.

MAMS teachers bring students to the garden during class and harvest produce from the garden to take into their classrooms. This year, for example, Mr. Hyatt and Mr. Andre’s seventh grade Social Studies class learned about the Native Americans’ growing practice, “The Three Sisters,” during a visit to the garden. In Ms. Agnew’s seventh grade Science class, students learned about the scientific method by growing lettuce in three different soil mixtures to test which grew the best lettuce. Mrs. Gordon’s Math class and Ms. Nicolazzo’s Life Skills students also use the garden in their classes regularly.

A “Harvest of the Month” program is now held monthly in the school cafeteria to highlight foods that are in season in our region. Students in Ms. McKissick’s Family Consumer Science morning classes prepare samples that are then provided at lunch. This gives each student the opportunity to try a locally grown and in-season fruit or vegetable during their lunch period. In October, we made applesauce with apples grown just a few miles away. The students loved it!

This garden is currently funded by a private foundation and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and is part of a collaborative effort to provide more wellness resources in our community.

Institutional partners include: the MARC, Crawford County Career and Technical Center, Crawford Central School District, Meadville Medical Center, Allegheny College, City of Meadville, and the Crawford County Commissioners.

Contact us:
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