

## Community Beautification through Nutrition Education and Gardening

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## Learning Objectives

- Describe how to use container gardening to increase access to fruits and vegetables.
- Leverage community partnerships for program success.
- Measure consumption of fruits and vegetables and food security.

## Project Summary: Situation

- Many Bismarck residents live in apartments, trailer parks and assisted living facilities or homes with small yards that provide little opportunity for gardening.
- Gardening not only provides for physical activity and family togetherness, but also improves nutrition while beautifying the community.
- The Hunger Free ND Garden program encourages North Dakota gardeners to donate excess produce to local food helper agencies such as community meal sites and food pantries.
- Community Development Block Grant provided by the City of Bismarck to departments for developing projects that "principally benefit low and moderate income persons, eliminate slum and blight, or address an urgent concern that threatens life or health."

## Project Summary: Response

- Awarded \$1,500 to be used for the 2015 growing season which provided nutrition education for low and moderate income persons in Bismarck.
  - Partnered with United Way Day of Caring to build 140 boxes in August 2014. Each box is approximately 18" x 24" and 8" deep.

## Project Summary: Response

- Each recipient signed a contract and received educational information to guide container gardening as well as a voucher to purchase soil, seeds and food-bearing plants.
- Throughout growing season, participants were provided ongoing support via email and phone contacts. Growing tips, donation related information and recipes for using and preserving garden produce were shared.

## Project Summary: Community Partners

- Missouri Slope Areawide United Way
- Hardware Stores: Menards, Runnings, Mac's
- Dan's Supermarket
- Burleigh County Housing
- Community Action
- Bismarck Senior Center
- House of Color, Inc.
- Master Gardener Volunteers
- Burleigh County 4-H Volunteers
- Burleigh County Juvenile Court Volunteers
- Dakota Garden Expo

### Project Summary: Impacts

- Distributed to 80 households in Spring 2015. Of the 50 who have completed harvest and reported via survey, we asked:
  - “What did you grow?”
    - 93% grew vegetables, 10% grew flowers, 13% grew fruit
    - 6 were unsuccessful due to plant disease or improper care
  - “How much money did you save by growing your own fruit and vegetables?”
    - 43% saved up to \$10, 47% saved \$10-\$50, 3% saved \$50-\$100 and 7% saved more than \$100

### Project Summary: Impacts

- 53% reported that they and their families have eaten more fruits and vegetables because of this project.
- 50% shared what they grew with friends or family outside their households and 20% donated to food pantries.
- 60% would not have been able to garden without this program.
- 77% plan to use the boxes in the future.
- 73% are interested in participating in a follow-up as part of the grant program in 2016.

### Project Summary: Feedback

- We didn't properly care for our plants so only a little survived :( LOVE this program, we had such a good time even though we weren't very successful. It was really cool to be able to do something like this with my kids and we are excited to try again next year!
- Everyone enjoyed watching it grow, watering and eating what they produced!
- We planted pumpkin in our boxes and some herbs. Next year we will try different vegetables and some fruit. Thank you for helping us to start this wonderful habit! I think it will work much better for us next year!
- Thank you so much! This encouraged me to garden with my son for the first time! It was great - Thank you!!!

### Lessons Learned

- Communication and Expectations
- Volunteer Management
- Supply Acquisition
- Streamlined Process
- Awareness of Need
- Eligibility Scope
- Troubleshooting Problems

### Project Summary: Year Two

- Awarded \$5,000 to expand the program in 2016.
- Built 90 boxes during Day of Caring 2015.
  - Project Coordinator was key!
- Distributed boxes to 30 households.

## Questions?