

# NCR-SARE Youth Educator Grant Project

## 2014 Final Report

### PROJECT IDENTIFICATION

- Name: April Hoy
- Address: 3083 Liberty Rd.  
City: Delaware State: Ohio Zip Code: 43015
- Phone: 740-363-2548
- E-mail: AprilHoy@stratfordecologicalcenter.org
- Website: www.stratfordecologicalcenter.org
- Project Title: Community Giving Garden
  
- Project Number: YENC14-072
- Project Duration: 03/2014 – 12/2014
- Date of Report: 12/10/14

### DESCRIPTION AND RESULTS

Our project was to educate youth about sustainable agriculture by engaging them in all aspects of a community service garden, while providing fresh organic produce to People In Need, our local food bank.

This project was accomplished in the following ways;

- 3,500 students planted, harvested and maintained the Giving Garden during Farm and Field Trips
- 350 Farm Campers ages 3 - 17, harvested food for the food bank, planted fall crops and maintained the Giving Garden by composting beds, watering, mulching and weeding
- 250 High School Students gained hands-on experience and instruction to take back to their school service garden, as well as, tomatoes and pepper plants planted by the students.
- Donated 1,498 pounds of fresh organic produce to People In Need.
- Stratford held Organic Gardening for Adults, Organic Gardening for Kids, Small Farmers, Native Plant Propagation and Cultivation classes for 115 participants from the general public.
- Partnered with 10 organizations in our community.

### BACKGROUND

I have been involved in teaching youth about sustainable agriculture for 10 years. My training has come through hands-on life experience. First, during my childhood growing up on a small family farm where we raised sheep, chickens, hogs and rabbits, as well as, ate from a large vegetable garden. Later as an adult I became a Volunteer, Farm and Nature Guide at Stratford Ecological Center, which then lead to a full-time paid position as Field Trip Coordinator and eventually Farm Camp Director/ Education Director. I have had the opportunity to work with students from pre-school age to college students. With a 236-acre farm and nature preserve serving as a living

classroom the lessons are diverse and adaptable to any age.

Stratford's mission statement;

*Stratford Ecological Center is dedicated to the education of children and adults in understanding the relationship between living things and their environment, thereby fostering an appreciation for the land and all life that depends on it.*

Being an ecological center the lessons we teach are primarily focused on the relationships between plants, animals, insects and other living things in our natural community. The Giving Garden project expanded these lessons to include our relationship with each other as **people, exploring the ideas around what kind of community we choose to create through our relationships with each other.**

## **GOALS**

The 2014 giving garden project goals are to educate thousands of people about sustainable gardening techniques and hunger related issues in our community. As well as, to support and act as a resource for local groups and organizations working to end hunger.

## **PROCESS**

Spring

### **February**

Seed flats; leek, onion, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, broccoli

Up-date/create Giving Garden promotional information on web-site

**Education** – Visited *Thomas Worthington High School*, Food and Fitness Class. Seed flats of lettuce, tomatoes and peppers (for school Giving Garden). SEC will grow the flats in greenhouse until the school giving garden is ready for planting.

SEC Education Coordinator gave a 45-minute presentation about the basics of Organic Gardening, the importance of Sustainable Agriculture and Community Service to 120 high school students.

**People In Need** – Continue to donate fresh greens from the greenhouse. Met with Kevin Crowley to discuss the produce needs of the food bank. Created recipe cards, added organic gardening in small spaces ideas and tip to the back of the cards for PIN clients.

### **March**

Seed flats; kale, cauliflower, celery, parsley, lettuce, eggplant, tomatoes, peppers.

Direct seed; peas, spinach

Depending on the weather pull back mulch to dry soil and turn in cover crop.

Set up Facebook access system for visiting groups.

**Education** – SEC began *Farm and Field Trips*. Over 2,000 students, teachers and parents visited Stratford during a spring Farm and Field Trip. Giving Garden activities were set up for the students to gain hands-on experience in the garden. Children harvested early spring crops, planted transplants, turned in cover crops, worked compost into the garden beds, watered,

weeded and planted seeds in the Giving Garden. Not only did the students gain an understanding of Organic Gardening but also the value of Community Service, and an appreciation of hunger in our local community.

**People In Need** – Donated early spring produce and greens from the greenhouse.

### April

Seed flats; basil, cucumbers, squash, marigolds, calendula

Direct seed; beets, carrots, potatoes

Form Adult Giving Garden volunteer crew.

**Education** - The *Thomas Worthington* Food and Fitness class visits SEC to volunteer in our Giving Garden (continuing their gardening experience and education) and transplant their lettuce, tomatoes and pepper plants.

SEC offered *Small Farmers, Organic Gardening for Adults, Organic Gardening for Kids, Vegetable Variety Seeding* and *Native Plant Propagation and Cultivation* Classes to the public.

**People In Need** – Donated early spring produce and greens from greenhouse. Trained volunteers about the donation process.

### May

Transplant; Tomatoes, Peppers, Cucumber, squash, basil and other warm season crops. Compost and mulch beds. Reestablish paths with newspaper and straw, make worm casting tea, water, weed, harvest and cultivate.

Plant beneficial companion plants.

**Education** – Continue Farm and Field Trips;

The Thomas Worthington Food and Fitness class visited SEC to volunteer in our Giving Garden (continuing their gardening experience and education) and pick up tomato and pepper plants to take back to school Giving Garden

**People In Need**- Donated produce, container tomato plants to hand out at the food bank with care instructions.

### June

Tended warm season crops, transition out Cole crops. Focus on session plantings of beet, carrot, bean, turn compost, water, weed and mulch.

**Education** – Small Farmers program worked in the Giving Garden to plant harvest and learn about our food bank program.

Farm Camp begins- for 8 weeks Monday – Friday children ages 3 – 16 will work in the Giving Garden. Over 320 campers will participate in the Giving Garden project

**People In Need** – Donated produce

### July

Tended crops, watered, weeded, mulched, side dressed, turned compost. Harvest garlic and potatoes. Seeded fall crops

**Education-** Farm Camp and Family Farm Chores continue.

**People In Need** – Donated fresh produce

### August

Harvest, watered, weeded, cultivated, transplanted fall crops, direct seeded (lettuce, spinach)

**Education** – Farm Camp Family and Family Farm Chores continue.

**People In Need** – Donated fresh produce

### September

Transition out warm season, tend fall crops, harvest, plant cover crop, mulch, and turn compost.

**Education** – *Fall Field trips* begin, SEC will host around 1,500 children during the fall Field Trip season. The students were involved with everything from harvesting to covering the beds to getting ready for winter

**People In Need** – Invited PIN to set up a booth at the harvest fair.  
Donated Produce

### October

Transition out warm season, tend fall crops, harvest, plant cover crop, mulch, and turn compost.

**Education** – *Small Farmers* harvested for the food bank, fall field trips continued. Thomas Worthington, Food and Fitness class returned to volunteer in the Giving Garden and learn about Sustainable Agriculture.

People In Need – Donated Produce, with a total of 1,498 pounds of fresh organic produce donated.

November – January, Plan for 2015 Garden and Educational Opportunities and continue to donate from SEC greenhouses.

## PEOPLE

- April Hoy, SARE Project Manager, Education Director, Stratford Ecological Center (SEC)
- Jeff Dickinson, Director /Farmer, SEC
- Kevin Crowley, Executive Director, People In Need, Inc
- Ray Domire, Deputy Director, People In Need, Inc
- Glen Snow, Videographer, Snow Peak Productions
- David Hoy, Development Director, SEC
- Bob Harter, Retired ODNR Division of Wildlife
- Emily Pidock, Administrative Assistant

- Nancy Shapiro, Delaware General Health District

## **RESULTS**

**Stratford Ecological Center** donated 1,498 pounds of produce to PIN.

**SEC** strengthened relationships and partnerships with PIN and its base, other volunteers in and around Delaware County, the families of these volunteers and visitors to serve a greater need in our own community.

**SEC** became a model for community involvement.

Created practical educational experiences for students and program participants. Such as, Practical knowledge of growing their own food. How to plan, design, build, plant, maintain and harvest a community service garden. Became more aware of the issues related to food security.

**SEC** Donated 50 Container Gardens to Area Community Service Groups and organizations.

## **DISCUSSION**

The biggest thing I gained in 2014 from being the Giving Garden Project Coordinator is a better appreciation and understanding of how many groups and organizations are working to fill the need for food in our community. With a project that addresses hunger relief through local-small scale-sustainable agriculture, the need for many partners is great! Stratford can't fill the need all on our own! But we can have a big impact by making the thousands of people who visit and participate in on-site programming aware about the need for hunger relief. As well as, by working together as a community using Organic Gardening practices and we can create real change.

In 2015 I plan to use reusable grocery bags for the container gardens instead of the buckets. The buckets required a lot of labor and extra expense. The reusable bags will accomplish the same goal with less labor and expense.

## **OUTREACH**

- Glen Snow of Snow Peak Production created a "Giving Garden" video that was shared with;
  - Friends of Stratford reception, community leaders and donors
  - SEC Board of Directors
  - SEC staff and volunteers
  - SEC Giving Garden presentation
- Delaware General Health District, Delaware County Hunger Alliance, United Way, Delaware Community Foundation helped SEC Donate 50 Container Gardens to Area community Service groups: Council for Older Adults, Feed program Vineyard Church, Woodward resource center, Andrews House, Mobile Feed Truck
- SEC highlighted the Giving Garden project in the Nov. 20 – E-News Blast sent to around 4,000 people.
- SEC highlighted the Giving Garden project on Social Media: Facebook and Twitter.



### Container Garden Care:

This container garden was provided by the Stratford Ecological Center's Giving Garden.  
May the fruits be plenty and continue to give!

#### How to best care for your tomato plant:

Check the **water** level of your plant. Is the base full? If not, fill it slowly through the pipe at the top. When watering your plant, **water at the base of the stem** – right where the plant meets the soil. Make sure your tomato plant gets **plenty of sunlight**. Put it on your porch or door step where the sunshine is bright.

With your thumb and pointer finger, **pick out any weeds** that don't look like a tomato plant. See the image to the left for an example of what your tomato plant looks like. Once the fruits arrive – and we hope that they do! – wait until the tomatoes full and dark in color and pluck them gently.



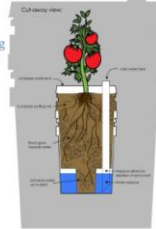
Tomatoes when plucked under ripe can ripen in a windowsill, but **it's best to have tomatoes ripen on the vine**. It should be easy to harvest your tomatoes. If you are having trouble picking them, it might be a bit too early! Wait a few days and try again!

#### Do not allow containers to dry completely or fine roots will die!

Apply some dark, moist compost to your container about once a month. But only a small amount! A little can be very helpful, but too much can damage your plant!



If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask us!  
Call us at (740) 363-2548 or email us at [info@stratfordsustainablecenter.org](mailto:info@stratfordsustainablecenter.org)



## PROGRAM EVALUATION

I truly appreciate the opportunity to work with the North Central Region SARE Program!  
Thank you for your support for our community