

# Dallas Youth Garden 2015 Program Summary

## Program Summary

The Dallas Youth Garden is a non-traditional 4H program that provides summer internships to teens. Each intern in our program is responsible for developing a 25'x50' market garden using sustainable gardening principals. Interns gain job and leadership skills, learn agricultural practices, and become aware of the nutrition needs of our community. All produce from our garden is donated to local food programs for distribution to hungry families in our community.



## Community Need

1. Our youth need summer jobs and need to learn soft job skills to prepare them for the job market. The number one activity that youth in Polk County have identified as WANTING TO DO was "job opportunities" (47.2%) as taken from the 2011/12 Polk County/Extension Youth Needs Assessment. In the job market, managers have an overall negative view of young workers, and point to their lack of soft skills regarding communication and interpersonal interactions, time management abilities and willingness to work as a team. (2013 study by American Express (AXP) and Gen Y research firm Millennial Branding)
2. Our youth need to learn about agriculture and food production in Polk County. The general public often does not understand the importance of agriculture. " Nowhere is our disconnectedness more evident than in our systems of food and farming. Most consumers, particularly younger consumers, have no sense of where their food actually comes from. They may know that farmers grow crops and livestock, and that someone processes and packages these crops and delivers food to grocery stores and restaurants, but they have little sense of what's involved in this process." (From: Reconnecting Consumers and Farmers in the Food System, John Ikerd)
3. Many families in Polk County need food assistance and experience hunger. About 13.6% of households in Oregon – more than 491,000 Oregonians (the population of Polk/Marion Co) suffered "food insecurity" and 5.9% of households in Oregon – more than 213,000 individuals – (11 packed Rose Garden Arenas) suffered "very low food security" in 2009/2011 (According to the Household Food Security in the United States Report authored by USDA as reported by the Oregon Food Bank).

## Primary Accomplishments

1. Our youth need summer jobs and need to learn soft job skills: Our program provided job application and interview experience to 12 Dallas youth and provided job experience to nine Dallas youth. Interns learned about time management, managing job expectations, and team leadership. This year we kept the number of job opportunities at 8 interns and one alternate.
2. Our youth need to learn about agriculture and food production in Polk County: Our interns gained firsthand experience and knowledge about sustainable market gardening and food production in Polk County. Our interns raised awareness to 100+ members of our community through formal presentations, garden tours, and our booth at the Polk County Fair. Interns also involved family members in our garden by bringing home a limited amount of produce, finding recipes that use fresh produce and bringing their cooking results back to the garden to share. Recipes ranged from cake to salsa.
3. Many families in Polk County need food assistance and experience hunger: We delivered over 4700 pounds of produce to the Willamette Valley Food Assistance Program in weekly deliveries from July to October. Our fresh produce deliveries positively impacted the 300 families who are members of the Food Assistance Program.



One Week of Produce

## **Measures Of Success**

Our third garden season was very successful and we are quite happy with our progress. This season we continued to focus on job skills, leadership skills, and improve supervisor schedules. Job skill improvements included improved daily job records that allowed interns to better manage their daily time sheet, track sick and vacation time, track garden productivity, document garden tasks on a weekly blog, and record garden progress. Last year interns were evaluated weekly. This year we evaluated gardens less frequently but spent more time doing it. Leadership projects were better defined and completed in a more timely manner this season. We also expanded leadership opportunities. Interns had the opportunity to cook with garden produce and bring their results to share with other interns. Interns also learned about supervising as each intern supervised a work detail consisting of all interns for a short time period to address issues in their garden. We gained two additional supervisors and created a flexible schedule so that the impact on each supervisor was reduced.

Garden productivity was not as great as planned. While we harvested over 4700 pounds of produce, water rationing and extreme heat contributed to less productivity. We also focused on harvesting in a timely manner which meant our vegetables were smaller and of a more consistent size. (Seldom did we harvest zucchinis greater than 10 pounds.) Our companion flower planting was very successful and we donated a large quantity of flowers to the County Fair. We also provided the opportunity for interns to share some of their produce with their families. This expanded our impact on the community to include intern family members.

## **Advisors & Supervisors**

Mike Ainsworth, Dean Anderson, Brian Green, Susan Busler, Kathy Chiles, Nan Cordy, Linda Fox, Barbara Nichols, Karen Lippsmeyer, Dave Pederson, Craig Pope, Christine Chute, Eileen Shaffer, Linda Fox, Mark Fancey

## **Partners**

4H Youth Development Program, Dallas High School, Polk County Family and Community Outreach, City of Dallas, Polk County Master Gardeners, Willamette Valley Food Assistance Program, Trinity Lutheran Church

## **Specific Accomplishments**

1. We accepted job applications and interviewed 12 intern candidates in grades 9-11. We offered internships to 8 candidates and an alternative position to 1 candidate. Applicants received an application/internship evaluation summary to help with future applications.
2. Each intern designed and planted a 25'x50' market garden.
3. Each intern completed a leadership project in June, July, and August. Leadership projects focused on education, communication with the public, and garden improvement. Each leadership project contained a problem identification, solving, and communication component. Projects included public speaking, addressing garden pests, cooking produce, and fund raising.
4. Each intern maintained an on-line weekly blog that tracked garden progress and activities.
5. Interns were evaluated every two weeks. The evaluation included attentiveness to work, timeliness, work habits, problem solving, and garden knowledge. All evaluations were rated superior.
6. The program weekly provided fresh produce to the Willamette Valley Food Assistance Program from July through October totaling more than 4700 pounds for the season. The Food Assistance Program provided this produce to over 300 Polk County families.
7. Interns were responsible for supporting the garden through fund raising activities and collectively raised \$480 for program support.
8. Interns donated flowers for the Polk County flower arranging contest.
9. Interns made presentations to the Lion's Club, Rotary Club, gave garden tours, and manned a booth at the Polk County Fair.
10. During the season each intern supervised all interns for a work session in their garden.
11. Each intern had award winning participation at the Polk County Fair and the Oregon State Fair.
12. All interns successfully completed the program and each received a letter of recommendation and a final evaluation that provided feedback on the job performance during the summer.
13. We provided specific recommendations for past interns as they applied for jobs.
14. We became a recognized project for the Polk County Master Gardeners.
15. We improved our garden in the fall by spreading manure and placing black plastic down for weed control.



## Interns



Brianna planting broccoli



Logan weeding



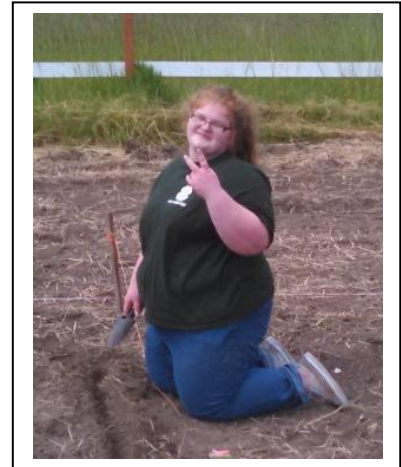
Alternate Ryan watering



Loish watering in the heat



Shyla ready to pick squash



Marypat planting



Steph watering onions



Robert spreading mulch



Myranda watering tomatoes

### ***I Learned...***

Brianna: How to work in a team and how to lead a team.

Logan: How to work hard and be on time for work.

Loish: How to work with people this summer.

Marypat: Teamwork is important!

Myranda: How to better communicate with my co-workers.

Robert: How to work in a group effectively.

Shyla: Teamwork is something that is important.

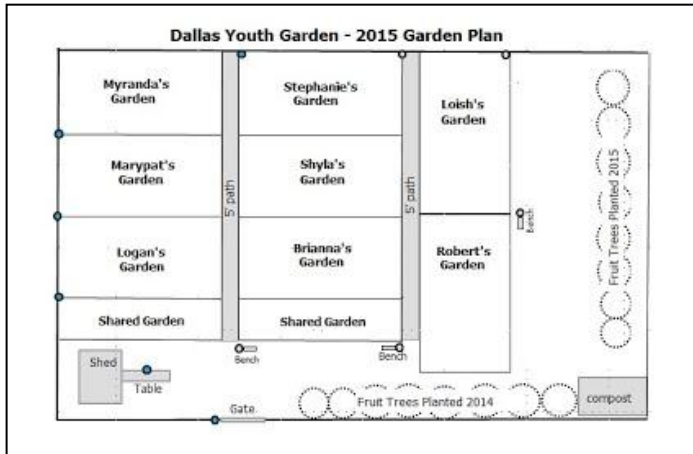
Steph: How to work as a group.



## Garden Plan & Activities



The Garden In Early July



Garden Plan



Garden Preparation



Fair Ribbons



Flower Donations For The County Fair



Making Salsa At The Garden



Open House

## Donations

We continue to expand our support base for the garden this past year. Below is list of intern sponsors and contributors.

### Intern Sponsors

Christine Chute  
Dallas Community Foundation  
Dallas Lions Club

Dallas Rotary Club  
Polk Co Family & Community Outreach

### Contributors

Agri-Plas Inc - Agriculture Tarps  
Anderson Mobile Service - Equipment  
Al's Nursery - Fruit Trees  
Anna Scharf - Tomato Cages  
City of Dallas - Water  
Clyde Freeborn - Plant Starts  
Coastal Farm Supply - Supplies  
Dallas Service Integration Team - Garden Tools  
Dean Anderson - Supplies  
Eileen Shaffer - Supplies  
Don Fleming - Tractor Work  
Graphic Latitude - T-Shirts  
Intern Donations 2015 - Cash

Linda Fox - Plant Starts  
Mark Fancey - Cash  
Nan and Gary Cordy - Supplies & Tractor Time  
Old Mill Feed Store - Supplies  
Perryhill Farms - Peaches  
Polk County Master Gardeners - Plant Starts  
Rickreall Dairy - Manure  
Susan Busler - Cash  
Teal Creek Farms - Plant Starts  
Trinity Lutheran Church - Land  
Territorial Seed Co - Seeds  
Wilco - Supplies  
Whites Hauling & Trucking - Equipment

## Expenses

<b>Expenses</b>	<b>Amount</b>
8 Intern Salaries (May-August)	4200
1 Alternate Salary (May-August)	100
Fruit Trees & Plant Starts	700
Garden Supplies	720
Equipment Donations	300
Water (estimated)	500
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$6520</b>

## **2016 Plans and Budget**

- Continue to offer our application and interview process to Dallas High School Students
- Hire 8-9 interns and no alternate
- Examine sustainable funding models for the garden.
- Continue with job training skills and update time sheet recording
- Continue to evolve the leadership aspects of the program and expand intern supervision roles
- Improve the garden by improving drainage
- Improve processing time by adding a produce table and purchasing 2 more scales
- Continue to expand vegetable varieties
- Deliver >5000lbs of produce to the Willamette Valley Food Assistance Program

<b>Expenses</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Garden Drainage System	700
Expand Produce Table	400
Seeds and Starts	700
9 Interns (\$500/each)	4500
Water	500
Garden Tools & Supplies	500
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$7300</b>