

Waukesha County Community Youth Garden

Project Partners

Waukesha County Juvenile Court, Waukesha County Health and Human Services Department, Waukesha County Corporation Counsel, Wisconsin State Public Defenders Office, Waukesha County Bar Association Juvenile Law Section, UW-Madison Extension Waukesha County, Extension Master Gardener Volunteers

Project Description

The purpose of the community garden project is to provide an alternative to sanctions for the youth that reside in Waukesha County while providing cost effective savings for Waukesha County residents. The community garden project will allow the youth to forego potential sanctions or placement in a juvenile facility in favor of participating in a community garden project for a period of eleven weeks. The community garden project will allow two groups of youth to participate in eleven, 90-minute sessions to develop and manage a garden that will provide food for the community food pantry at the end of the growing season. Youth will participate in this program through court orders made by the Waukesha County Juvenile Court System or through referrals prior to entering the court system.

Youth will:

- Gain work readiness skills
- Learn teamwork principals
- Enhance positive social skills
- Engage in restorative justice within the community
- Participate in a hands-on horticulture and nutrition education program
- Grow vegetables that will be donated to the Food Pantry of Waukesha County

Outcomes

Cognitive benefits include learning new skills and terminology. Youth increase their knowledge of gardening and related life skills through a hands-on gardening, and nutrition education experience.

Social benefits are gained from working within a group-learning setting to share, relate, compromise, and work towards a common goal. The social interactions help youth feel better about themselves and help them see the benefits of teamwork.

Psychological benefits include an improvement of self-esteem and self-confidence. Knowing that they must nourish and care for these living plants help youth feel more productive and motivated. Produce harvest is donated to a local food pantry, which gives youth a chance to give back to their community in a positive way.

Physical improvements result from youth working in the fresh air and getting exercise in a non-threatening environment.



Project Details:

2021 program runs
June 14th – August 25th

Held Monday and Wednesday
3:30- 5:00 PM at the Waukesha
County Community Gardens;
Rain location– HHS

Length of program 11
weeks(1 module) = 16.5
hours of community
service

Routes to garden program participation:

1. Referral to alternative sanctions instead of coming to court
2. Judge orders participation as an alternative to shelter care sanction
3. Referral with a new truancy

