

Growing Together Nebraska 2019 Impact Report

Increasing access of fruits and vegetables



EXTENSION



GARDEN COLLECTION PROJECT

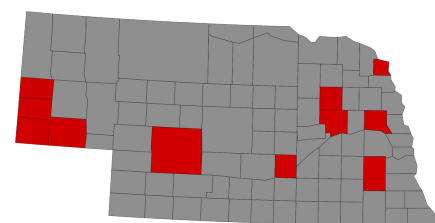
Growing Together Nebraska (GTN) is a donation garden project that increases food security and promotes healthy food access for families and individuals who are food insecure. This team engages active Extension Master Gardeners (EMG), local community organizations and volunteers to build and manage donation gardens to improve access to affordable, nutritious and safe foods. Nebraska's efforts feed into a Growing Together multi-state (Iowa, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan and Wisconsin) SNAP-Ed project.

FRESH PRODUCE

For the fourth consecutive year, Nebraska Extension's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Education (SNAP-Ed) awarded funding to communities across the state through its Growing Together Nebraska program. Over \$27,000 was designated to 10 county sites across the state to provide fresh, locally grown produce to those in need in Nebraska during the 2019 growing season. Across 10 county sites, including 13 gardens, a total of 35,408 pounds of produce was donated to local partners, with an estimated value of \$50,688.45.

Statewide Impact:

13 Gardens across 11 Counties



35,408 pounds = 106,225 servings of fruits & vegetables



35,408

pounds of fruits and vegetables supplied to food pantries and distribution sites

12,239

people with low income received fresh produce



241

volunteers, including 63 Extension Master Gardeners, contributed over 4,800 hours to the project, valued at \$116,000.

Meeting a Need in Local Communities

During the spring of 2019, Dodge County experienced record flooding that created a public health concern for the safety of home grown foods. Although research indicated that foods consumed 90 days post-flood recession is safe, food pantries were under direction to not accept these types of donations. Dodge County Extension established a donation garden in an effort to decrease food insecurity and increase access to fresh fruits and vegetables. As a donation garden site, they were equipped with the resources to get the food into the hands of those in need. They worked in partnership with the local food pantry to use a referral system to distribute produce. The pantry was able to refer clients to the Extension office to receive produce. This provided an opportunity to recruit limited-resource individuals into the lessons taught by SNAP-Ed at the Extension office. This partnership with the food pantry ensured that individuals in need had access to fresh produce.

**"This is wonderful. I love tomatoes but the pantry doesn't often have fresh vegetables."
-Dodge County Produce Recipient**



**"...I appreciate all the tips for good health by eating healthy greens and many other vegetables to give my body energy."
-Dakota County Produce Recipient**

Siouxland Community Health Center (SCHC) of Nebraska partnered with the Voices for Food (VFF) Project to establish a "hub" location for daily produce drop off to increase fresh produce access for low income medical clients. Since SCHC serves low income clients with medical needs and is open daily, this partnership was mutually beneficial. Ninety-eight percent of participants at SCHC are at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level guidelines. The project started with marketing the site as a hub, recruiting gardeners to drop off produce at the site and preparing the site to accept produce. Skilled gardeners at SCHC assisted with three raised beds to grow produce on site. The success of this partnership exceeded expectations, as 2,548 pounds of produce were made available (by community donations and grown on site) to over 600 low income medical clients at the health center. This collaborative effort by Nebraska Extension and SNAP-Ed's Growing Together Nebraska to engage partners in the community has strengthened the food system for families living in Dakota County.

**"We screen our patients annually for social determinants of health, which includes food insecurity and this partnership has been a great addition to our efforts to address social determinants of health."
-SCHC Medical Director, Dave Faldmo**



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