



INFORMATION REPORT

TO: Mayor and Members Board of Health	WARD(S) AFFECTED: CITY WIDE
COMMITTEE DATE: July 11, 2012	
SUBJECT/REPORT NO: Hamilton Community Garden Network Coordinator Position (BOH12021) (City Wide)	
SUBMITTED BY: Elizabeth Richardson, MD, MHSc, FRCPC Medical Officer of Health Public Health Services Department	PREPARED BY: Donna Weldon (905) 546-2424 Ext. 4892
SIGNATURE:	

Council Direction:

The General Issues Committee at its meeting on December 12, 2011, approved the following: "That staff report back to the Board of Health respecting the results of the funding proposal submission made to the Trillium foundation for the Community Garden coordinator position".

Information:

On December 12, 2011, Public Health Services submitted a report to the General Issues Committee (GIC) regarding the position of the Hamilton Community Garden Network (HCGN) Coordinator. An update was provided on the work that had been accomplished in the year since funding had been granted through the Ontario Trillium Foundation. It was noted that this funding would be exhausted on February 1, 2012. Council's directive was to provide \$15,000 in one - time bridge funding for the period of February 1 to July 31, 2012 so that the work could continue, and that the cost be shared between Public Health Services and Public Works (See BOH Report BOH11001(a)). Funding was provided with the understanding that alternative funding would be found and no additional resources would be requested.

The major accomplishments of the Community Garden Coordinator during the period of this bridge funding include:

- 1) Supporting development of at least 16,000 square feet of new garden at 15 new and 2 garden expansion sites for the 2012 season.
- 2) Securing and distributing over \$25,000 worth of in-kind contributions.
- 3) Securing, or supporting gardens in securing, at least \$50,000 worth of funding.
- 4) Networking, Outreach and Training.

The full report titled, "Hamilton Community Garden Network Update", is found in Appendix A.

1. New Garden Expansion

The Coordinator has been successful in rapidly expanding community gardens in the City of Hamilton as is evidenced in the following:

New Gardens in 2012:

- Dundas, St. Mark's (~1600 sq ft)
- Binbrook Light Points and Binbrook fair grounds (~1000 sq ft)
- Stoney Creek Kiwanis (~1000 sq ft)
- Powell Park Community Garden (~800 sq ft)
- Victory Gardens, **4 new sites** (~10,000 sq ft)
- Neighbour 2 Neighbour Supported Gardens, **6 new sites** (~1000 sq ft)

Garden Expansions 2012

- Gage Park Community Garden Expansion (~200 sq ft)
- Neighbour to Neighbour Centre garden expansion (~ 500 sq ft)

Planned for Late 2012 or 2013 Gardens

- Kirkendall/Strathcona planning team
- Crown Point planning team

This expansion of 16,100 square feet of new gardens represents 16,000 pounds of new food production. As well, two new gardens are expected to be up and running in the Kirkendall/Strathcona Neighbourhoods and Crown Point by late 2012 or 2013. Currently, there are 150 people on a waiting list who wish to acquire space in current community gardens with 20 - 40 more enquiries from sites that do not keep a list of potential new gardeners.

This growth of community gardens is in keeping with the mission of the HCGN to build and sustain garden projects that improve food security and increase community involvement.

2. In-kind Contributions

The HCGN Coordinator has maintained a steady flow of in-kind contributions to the Network totalling \$ 27,524.00. These funds have come in the form of unpaid volunteer hours, space rental, event supplies and products for gardens such as soil, mulch, compost and seedlings.

3. Securing Funding

HCGN has successfully secured funding of \$48,000 from a variety of sources. As a result, funding is in place until the end of 2012. The Coordinator secured \$22,000 in funding from: Depave Paradise (\$15,000); Small Space Gardening Project (\$5,000); Oliver's Garden (\$2,000). The remaining \$26,000 was secured independently by individual gardens within the Network for further development of their gardens. Another grant submission will be made to the Ontario Trillium Foundation which, if accepted, will come on stream once current funds are exhausted.

4. Networking, Outreach and Training

The Coordinator has maintained her usual tasks of networking, outreach, updating tools for the network and training. In March, she hosted Seedy Saturday with 350 people in attendance and delivered a workshop on social media and blogging for 6 gardeners. She has maintained social media sites, maintained a directory, established an email list so that garden coordinators could communicate with one another and sent out monthly newsletters. She has trained new garden coordinators, and has updated a community garden guide and a tool rental for the gardens.

The Coordinator has been able to secure funding for the HCGN and has met her goal of expanding it rapidly. It is hoped the Network will continue to grow to accommodate the ever increasing interest in community gardens that is developing in Hamilton.

Hamilton Community Garden Network Update

May 2012

Prepared by:
Clare Wagner
Program Coordinator
Green Venture
Clare.wagner@greenventure.ca
905.540.8787. ext 158



*Connecting ideas and people to facilitate
sustainable living and realize a cleaner,
healthier community*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an update of the Hamilton Community Garden Network (HCGN) including recent progress and plans for future development. The focus of the report is on progress made with \$15,000 bridge funding provided by the City of Hamilton Public Health and Public Works for February through July of 2012.

The HCGN, or similar groups, have been guiding community gardening projects in Hamilton for over a decade supported by dedicated volunteers. With the passing of the City of Hamilton Community Garden Policy in 2010, community groups and citizens obtained a grant to fund the Network, including a full-time coordinator, for 2011. When the grant came to an end, the City of Hamilton stepped forward to provide support for the Network coordinator from February to July 2012. This report contains a detailed overview of progress since the bridge funding was secured. Work during this period has focused on fundraising as well as continued services in outreach, networking, tools, and training.

The Network's successes during the six month period include:

- Securing and distributing over \$25,000 worth of in-kind contributions;
- Securing at least \$50,000 worth of funding;
- Supporting development of at least 16,000 square feet of new garden space at 15 different sites for the 2012 season. This represents at least 16,000 pounds of new food production.

The interest in community garden is clearly thriving given the continued growth in number of gardens each year as well as a growing waiting list. Currently there are at least 150 people wanting to have a garden plot in Hamilton. To continue supporting this growing movement, the Network is striving to follow a three-phased development plan with the goal of establishing the HCGN as both financially and organizationally sustainable after four years of support. With the funds secured to date, the Network can continue to operate through the winter of 2012 when information on longer term granting opportunities will be available.

Contact

Clare Wagner
Community Garden Program Coordinator
22 Veivers Drive, Hamilton, Ontario, L8K 5P5
Tel 905.540.8787 ext 158
Fax 905.540.8882
clare.wagner@greenventure.ca

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HAMILTON COMMUNITY GARDEN NETWORK PROFILE

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Hamilton Community Garden Network is a working group composed of community garden organizers, members, and supporters. The group collaboratively supports and promotes individuals and communities in developing and maintaining community gardens in Hamilton from the perspective of improving food security and increasing community involvement. Hamilton now has 58 community gardens along with many partners and supporters. An up-to-date directory of the gardens as well as information about the Network and its programming can be found at the website, www.hcgn.ca

MISSION

To support Hamiltonians in building and sustaining community gardening projects from the perspective of improving food security and increasing community involvement.

VISION

A community in which everyone has the opportunity to participate in and benefit from gardens grown to meet their needs.

VISION STATEMENT

Within the next four years, the Hamilton Community Garden Network will be able to provide consistent and comprehensive support to existing and emerging community gardens through outreach, networking, tools, and training. With this support, at least twenty new community garden projects will be established. The Network will be known as the resource for all community gardening needs in Hamilton and will be sustained by its members, partners, and supporters.

HCGN ACTIVITY AREAS

Fundraising: Exploring and implementing strategies for sustaining the HCGN in order to complete its mission.

Outreach: Bringing others into the Network through marketing and the development of new partnerships.

Tools and Training: Providing tools and training to current and prospective community garden coordinators.

Networking: Making connections between those engaged in the community garden movement to enable and enhance garden growth and sustainability.

OVERVIEW OF FUNDRAISING AND SUPPORT

From February through July 2012, the Network coordinator position has been supported part-time by the City of Hamilton Public Works and Public Health. The

focus during this time has been on gaining increased funding and support for ongoing development of the HCGN and its member gardens.

CASH SUPPORT

Summary

With the funded coordinator position, cash support has been maximized. Almost \$50,000 in cash support as been secured or distributed by the HCGN or gardens it works directly with. Highlights include:

- Distributing over \$3,000 in funds (from Ontario Trillium Foundation) for specific community garden projects which were all matched or exceeded by the gardens to a value of over \$20,000. The projects that were supported include:
 - Powell Park Garden Fence: \$500 from HCGN + \$1500 in outside funds
 - North Hamilton Community Health Centre rain barrels: \$85 from HCGN + \$85 in outside funds
 - Churchill Community Garden portable toilet: \$300 from HCGN + \$1040 in outside funds
 - Gage Park Garden expansion and shed: \$300 from HCGN + \$900 in outside funds
 - Binbrook Community Garden site establishment: \$500 from HCGN + \$7,500 in outside funds
 - Stuart Street containers and workshops: \$300 from HCGN + \$300 in outside funds
 - CityHousing garden support: \$1200 from HCGN + \$1200 from outside funds (CityHousing various support)
 - EcoHouse Community Garden accessibility renovations: \$10,000 in outside funds
- Securing over \$20,000 in project-specific funds to help support the HCGN through the fall and winter
- Applying to the Ontario Trillium Foundation for \$90,000 to support the final two phases of development of the HCGN (final decisions on this funding will be available in the fall of 2012)

TABLE 1: CASH SUPPORT SUMMARY, FEBRUARY THROUGH MAY 2012

Item	Comments/Rationale	Total
HCGN Garden Support Funds	funds distributed to gardens through HCGN (mainly from the Ontario Trillium Foundation)	3,185.00
Funds secured and used by gardens	additional funds secured and used by gardens working with the HCGN	22,525.75
Oliver's Garden Project	\$2000 going towards project and HCGN development	2,000.00

Small Space Gardening Project	\$5000 from Keep America Beautiful/UPS to host a small space gardening demonstration and workshop series with Volunteer Hamilton (set to be completed in Fall 2012)	5,000.00
Depave Paradise	\$15,000 in partnership with the Green Communities Canada RAIN program to start a new garden by depaving a site (set to be completed in Fall 2012)	15,000.00
Total Funding Secured		47,710.75

IN-KIND SUPPORT

The HCGN helped to secure and distribute over \$25,000 worth of in-kind contributions including volunteer time, garden supplies, and specialist support.

TABLE 2: IN-KIND DONATIONS SUMMARY, FEBRUARY THROUGH MAY 2012

Item	Comments/Rationale	Total
Volunteers/Coop students	200 hrs @ \$15/hr	3,000.00
Website and Design specialists	25hrs @ \$60/hr	1,500.00
Space rental	Meeting, event space	1,000.00
Compost	240 cubic yards compost + delivery (~\$45/yd) to 12 gardens from City of Hamilton contractor	10,800.00
Mulch	117 yards mulch + delivery (~\$51/yd) to 9 gardens from City of Hamilton	5,967.00
Soil	Soil and delivery to three gardens from Big Yellow Bag	4,000.00
Seedlings	300 seedlings (~\$1/seedling) from Oliver's Garden Project and Green Venture	300.00
Event supplies for Seedy Saturday	Refreshments, workshops, signage, door prizes, seeds	957.00
Total In-Kind		27,524.00

Donations

Partners, including the City of Hamilton and local businesses, such as Big Yellow Bag, have donated garden supplies to the Network including compost and soil. Design materials and website hosting have been provided on an ongoing basis by Josh Gordon Creative and Milk Crate Creative. The City of Hamilton, Green Venture, and HARRRP have provided free meeting space. Faith and the Common Good provided space and publicity for community outreach exhibits. Individual gardens have also

relied heavily on donations from a number of Hamilton businesses to support the building of new gardens or enhancement of established gardens.

Staff Time

The City of Hamilton has donated staff time from Public Works, Public Health, and CityHousing Hamilton to provide ongoing support to established and emerging gardens. Other partners who have donated in-kind staff support include the Neighbour to Neighbour Centre, Canadian Organic Growers (Hamilton Chapter), and the North Hamilton Community Health Centre. Sarah Wakefield, a professor in the Department of Geography at the University of Toronto, through her affiliation with the Community Food Security Stakeholder Committee, has provided consultation, facilitation and research skills.

Volunteers

The Network has always relied heavily on volunteer support. The majority of garden leaders that make up the Network are volunteer leaders who coordinate their own teams of volunteers to maintain garden sites. Through 2012, the Network has worked to engage volunteers in Network-wide projects such as Seedy Saturday, workshops, and special projects.

PARTNERS

The HCGN is composed of partner organizations and individuals. Many of the groups lead their own community garden initiatives for specific neighbourhoods or populations. New partnerships are always being forged. In addition to many independent citizens, the following are current partners of the HCGN:

- Backyard Harvest
- Canadian Organic Growers
- City of Hamilton, Public Health
- City of Hamilton, Public Works
- CityHousing Hamilton
- Crown Point Neighbourhood Planning Team
- Green Venture
- Environment Hamilton, Hamilton Eat Local
- Hamilton Community Food Security Stakeholder Committee
- Hamilton Victory Gardens
- Independent Community Gardens throughout Hamilton, including but not limited to:
 - Stuart Street, Today's Family, West Highland Baptist Church, McQuesten, Hill Street, Victoria Park, Churchill, Dundas, Gage Park, Bethel, Athens Street, Bartonville Neighbourhood
- Josh Gordon Creative
- North Hamilton Community Health Centre (NHCHC)
- Neighbour to Neighbour Centre
- Milk Crate Creative
- Ottawa Street Farmers Market

- Parkview Secondary School
- Volunteer Hamilton

HAMILTON COMMUNITY GARDENS, FEBRUARY TO MAY 2012

The Hamilton community garden movement continues to grow rapidly. The following sections highlight key 2012 garden statistics for Hamilton as of May 2012.

NEW GARDENS AND GARDEN EXPANSIONS

TABLE 3: NEW GARDEN STATISTICS FOR 2012

New or expanded gardens	New Space (square feet)	Estimated Yields (pounds of food)
Dundas, St. Marks	1600	1600
Binbrook Light Points (Binbrook fair grounds)	1000	1000
Stoney Creek Kiwanis	1000	1000
Powell Park Community Garden	800	800
Victory Gardens – 5 new sites	10,000	10,000
Neighbour to Neighbour Centre supported gardens – 6 new sites	1,000	1,000
Expansion: Gage Park Community Garden	200	200
Expansion: Neighbour to Neighbour Centre garden	500	500
15 new gardens + 2 garden expansions	16,100 new sq ft	16,100 pounds of food

Table Notes:

- Where exact numbers weren't available, sizes for gardens started this year are estimated based on average garden sizes in Hamilton.
- Estimated yields based on 1 lb/sq ft (based on Raised Bed Gardening factsheet by the Ohio State University- <http://ohioline.osu.edu/hyg-fact/1000/1641.html>)

GARDEN DEMAND: WAITING LISTS AND GARDEN PLANNING COMMITTEES

Demand for more gardens in Hamilton is very evident from the number of people on waiting lists. To meet this demand, some neighbourhoods are already planning for the addition of new gardens in late 2012 or early 2013.

Waiting Lists: Over 150 Hamiltonians

Most of the gardens in lower Hamilton and the Mountain have waiting lists. In total, over 150 documented names are on waiting lists; in addition, there are between 20 and 40 more inquires for space from sites that do not track a waiting list.

Garden Committees Established

Some neighbourhoods have come forward to express interest in starting new community gardens. With support from the HCGN, new planning teams have been developed in Kirkendall/Strathcona and Crown Point and gardens will likely be built in late 2012 or early 2013.

HCGN ACTIVITY, FEBRUARY TO MAY 2012

Having a part-time coordinator, along with the materials developed throughout 2011, has allowed the Network to grow mostly in the areas of networking and fundraising. The highlights include:

Outreach:

- maintained social media sites
- maintained up-to-date garden directory
- exhibited at local events
- fostered and established new partnerships

Networking

- established e-mail list for garden coordinators to communicate directly with each other
- sent out monthly e-newsletter
- responded to inquiries from both coordinators and gardeners

Tools

- maintained and updated tools developed in 2011 such as the Hamilton community garden guide and tool rental for community gardens

Training

- provided one-on-one consultations to new garden leaders
- provided presentations to prospective garden leaders
- developed and hosted a garden coordinator workshop on social media and blogging

Fundraising

- hosted Seedy Saturday fundraiser and outreach event
- secured extensive in-kind and cash funding (detailed in overview of fundraising and support)

All of this support has allowed for the development of 15 new community gardens and the expansion of two gardens in Hamilton in 2012. As well, two new leadership teams were developed.

Specifics of the progress in 2012 are highlighted in the following sections. While the progress has been extensive, it is clear that more time is needed to fully develop and sustain the network as is explained in the development plan.

PROGRESS STATISTICS

This chart highlights progress in the areas of outreach and education. Specific successes include:

- Over 300 attendees at Seedy Saturday with over \$1000 raised
- Coordinators from 11 different gardens either attended a networking meeting or a coordinator workshop (the topic was the workshop was social media and blogging)
- Over 900 people exposed to the HCGN at local events including over 40 directly engaged
- 55 public inquires for garden space answered
- 7 consultations with new or current garden leaders
- 27 volunteers providing 223 hours of work

TABLE 4: OUTREACH STATISTICS

Item	Number	Attendance	Volunteers Engaged	Volunteer Hours	Notes
Events attended	3	~ 900 - 40 directly engaged	-	-	Faith and the Common Good, Earth Day Tree Planting Festival, Queen Victoria EcoFair
Events hosted	1	340	22	163	Seedy Saturday
Network meetings	1	5	-	-	
Consultations with coordinators (phone or meeting)	7	-	-	-	Individual or small group meeting
Consultations with gardeners and community members	55	-	-	-	People looking for garden space
Other Inquires (research, other organizations)	5	-	-	-	Research inquiries about community gardening
Workshops	1	6	2	10	Blogging and Social Media Seminar
Other Outreach	-	-	3	~50	Oliver's Garden Project
Written Media Hits		-			

Video Media Hits	2	-	-	-	Cable 14
Face book Likes	51 new (237 total)	-	-	-	
Twitter Followers	147 new (247 total)	-	-	-	
Unique website hits	295	-	-	-	

QUOTES AND PHOTOGRAPHS



Photograph 1: Seedlings growing at Parkview Secondary Greenhouse



Photograph 2: Representatives from six community gardens learning about social media and blogging from two experts



Photograph 3: Two community garden participants showing off their plot after weeding and mulching.

Quotes from participants:

“Thanks again, for your help in setting this up! You've been fantastic!” – Ben, donor of soil working through HCGN to donate to three gardens

“I thought you would like to know that, with your vision, encouragement and resources we have built a new Community Garden” – Dave, community garden coordinator building in Dundas

“A huge thanks for the abundant information you've provided” – Michael, student working on new garden site

“You have honestly made this process not so daunting and we really appreciate everything you guys are doing. “ – Chad, community garden coordinator building site in downtown Hamilton.

HCGN DEVELOPMENT PLAN OVERVIEW

To grow the capacity of the HCGN to become a self-sustaining community garden network, a three phase plan has been developed. The phases represent growth of the HCGN core areas to provide ongoing networking, outreach, basic tools and training, and a sustainable funding source. Beyond the core objectives, it is recognized that in the area of community gardening there are constantly new opportunities and ideas. To promote new projects, the Network will look for project-based support as outlined in the ‘Additional Projects’ section.

Following is an overview of the development phases. We are currently wrapping up the first phase and continue fundraising to move through phase two to reach the final phase of self-sustainability.

HCGN CORE DEVELOPMENT PHASES

PHASE 1: DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT THE NETWORK

Time

Two years, January 2011 through December 2012

Progress

16 months completed to date. Most current progress (February through May 2012) is highlighted in the 'Progress to Date' section.

Summary

To create a self-sustaining network, a solid foundation needs to be established. This two-year phase involves development and implementation of basic tools and training as well as a strong push for outreach and networking components of the Network. While year one is focused on development of the Network's foundation, year two is a crucial time to implement and modify this foundation. There will be more emphasis on outreach to increase awareness of the Network and on networking to increase capacity of volunteers (specifically community garden coordinators) within the Network.

PHASE 2: ESTABLISH THE NETWORK AND BUILD CRITICAL MASS

Time

Two years, January 2013 through December 2014

Summary

Phase 2 will focus on getting the HCGN established in the community as the go-to group for community gardening needs in Hamilton with a critical mass of supporters. The emphasis will be on outreach through public relations and marketing. In year one, the fundraising, marketing and outreach plan from Phase 1 will be implemented and further developed. Year two will be spent continuing to implement and improve the development plan while establishing and fostering new partnerships. The goal will be to reach organizational and financial sustainability by the end of year two.

PHASE 3: BE SELF-SUSTAINING

Time

Ongoing, following completion of Phase 1 and Phase 2

Summary

By the end of this phase the HCGN will be achieving the vision of providing consistent and comprehensive support to community gardens through outreach, networking, tools, and training. The Network will be known as the resource for all community gardening needs in Hamilton and will be sustained by its membership and donations.

ADDITIONAL PROJECTS

While efforts to develop and sustain gardens will be constant, the field of community gardening and urban agriculture is ever changing. To meet the changing demands, the HCGN will pursue special project grants to provide specific tools and training opportunities as they arise.

Following are examples of special projects and where funding was secured:

OLIVER'S BACKYARD COMMUNITY GARDEN PROJECT

Overview

Oliver, a six-year-old resident of Hamilton, Ontario, saw a need in his community and found a way to fill it through organic, urban food gardening. Oliver saw two young kids rummaging in the garbage which led to a conversation with his mom about some people not having enough money for food. Within weeks, Oliver convinced his parents to transform their small, urban back yard into an organic veggie oasis to sell the vegetables from a table in his front yard and give 100% of the money to a youth shelter.

The HCGN has identified many high needs areas (over one in five people in Hamilton face low-income situations) with a lack of green spaces for central community gardens. At the same time, the Network has been approached by many citizens wanting to share their backyards to benefit their communities. These individuals need knowledge and resources to safely and successfully grow and share organic produce which is just what Oliver's Garden Project can provide.

With support, the project will:

- Help at least five families start organic gardens with support through soil testing, organic seeds and plants, soil, lumber, and volunteers
- Establish a tool share to support gardening families
- Provide education to at least 100 youth and adults through workshops, tours, and consultations
- Support children and families in selling their produce for donations that will benefit local charities by securing outlets and signage while ensuring all regulations are followed
- Introduce part-time neighbourhood-specific garden animators to cater, support and develop programs in specific, high-needs neighbourhoods

- Engage at-risk youth from local secondary schools and shelters to grow 200 organic vegetable seedlings in the Parkview Secondary's greenhouse for use in community gardens

This project turns backyard gardening into a community effort by promoting and sharing of knowledge, resources, and cultures to increase investment and bonds within these communities. The impact goes far beyond any one garden, farm or organization by putting tools in the hands of children, families, and neighbourhoods. This empowers them to take ownership over production of fresh, local, nutritious food with profits reaching youth in need.

Secured funding

Nature's Path Gardens for Good Grant

Proposed future funding

SpecKids Change Challenge Grant

SMALL SPACE GARDENING PROJECT

Overview

To support the use of rooftop and balcony spaces to produce food, the HCGN partnered with Volunteer Hamilton and the City of Hamilton Public Works to host a small space gardening projects. The project includes a demonstration of small space techniques on the Volunteer Hamilton rooftop garden as well as a workshop series through summer 2012.

Secured funding source

Keep America Beautiful/UPS Grant

DEPAVE PARADISE

Overview

Green Communities organizations throughout Canada will be working to depave areas and create new green spaces. The benefits include decreased storm water runoff, new gardening area, and community building through volunteer driven workdays.

Secured funding source

Green Communities Canada RAIN program

CONCLUSION

The Hamilton Community Garden Network is an asset to Hamilton that has continued to make progress in 2012, thanks to solid financial and in-kind support. Guided by the development plan, over the next three years, the goal is to develop

the Network into a sustainable program to provide ongoing support to community gardening projects in Hamilton from the perspective of improving food security and increasing community involvement. With funding already secured, the Network will continue through December 2012. With future funding secured, the second and third development phases can be reached.