

Next Steps from a School Gardening Partnership Conference

(AGES: Academic Gardening to Enrich our Students)

Expanding the Impact of School Gardens Through Higher Education, K-12 School & Community Coalitions

Martha Assefa, Pat Barnosky, Michelle Beaulieu, Amy Borg, Casey Burns, Marguerite Cawley, Jennifer De Jordy, Daina Harvey, Kelsey Hopkins, Sue Hunt, Joanne Jaber Gauvin, Isabelle Jenkins, Eliza Lawrence, Anna Marinescu, Mackenzie May, Gina Plata-Nino, Grace Sliwoski, Adam Saltsman

Why a Conference?

- School gardens are valuable: ↑ veggie consumption, friendships, respect for other cultures, science achievement
- The local Regional Environmental Council (REC) supports gardens at 25 Worcester schools with construction, seeds, volunteers, in-classroom curricula and direct programming. REC identified summer maintenance as a big challenge.
- Worcester State University, Rep. Jim McGovern & Worcester Food Policy Council teamed up to promote partnerships to support gardens



26 people reported setting goals with new/strengthened partnerships!

Conference Interactions & Discussions

February 9, 2019



Building Community, Garden Planning and Support, Teaching Garden, Building School Gardens into Curriculum, Policy Initiatives, Collective Goal Setting

Participant Ideas for Next Steps for Worcester School Gardens

- 1. How can partnerships keep gardens going?**
 - Fund a Coordinator of Volunteers to connect assets, people and information
 - Share seeds, tools, knowledge, volunteers
 - Seek new funding together
- 2. How do we build school gardens into the fabric of our community?**
 - Reach out to places of worship, Senior Center, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, food pantries for volunteers
 - Join the local school garden networks with REC
 - Network/collaborate with potlucks, problem solving
- 3. How can greater collaboration address food security & food justice in our city?**
 - Grow food for diverse communities by students & families making planting decisions, new seeds, translating information, inviting local gardeners
 - Increase food security by suburban/urban partnership, corporate sponsorships, larger gardens, sharing produce with food bank
 - Urban Agriculture!
 - Edible landscaping with apple and other fruit trees
 - Teach about gardening, cooking, eating, nutrition
 - Create and Share – New garden plans?
 - Solve problems - New watering ideas?

Preparation Assessments

What do K-12 schools need? (REC Assessment)

Volunteers, knowledge, partnerships, summer watering, parent involvement, CORI checks

How can higher ed. benefit?

- Student projects (nutrition, Natural Sciences, Education, Urban Studies, Biology)
- Problem solving, interdisciplinary learning, applied learning
- Challenges: Other priorities, time, funding, knowledge



A Model Partnership Worcester State University Teaching Garden

- Management: The Urban Action Institute (Urban Studies)
- Mission: Inclusive learning, food & environment education, shared commitment to food justice
- Programming: 1-credit courses, community days, summer programs, class visits, "CSA"
- Partnerships: Chandler Magnet Elementary, Bet Shalom, Girls Inc., Community Connections, REC
- Funding: Stable year-long university funding



Join Us! Share your research ideas, action ideas, time! Contact Grace Sliwoski (REC): grace@recworchester.org