



### **Community Garden Program**

Neighbour to Neighbour has had a successful and sustainable community garden since 1986. This project will expand our community gardens into different neighbourhoods in our service area. It will give our neighbours the opportunity to have a garden plot closer to their home as we service a large geographical area. It will provide community gardens into neighbourhoods on the Hamilton Mountain.

We have partnering churches, schools and community groups who are going to house the gardens at their site providing a sustainable base of volunteers, water and future fundraising. Neighbour to Neighbour will provide the start up tools, soil, plants, water tanks etc. We will also provide our expertise and community links. Neighbour to Neighbour will register our clients to utilize the new community garden plots that are created.

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Neighbour to Neighbour Community Garden Program- is important because it gives our clients, who are the under or unemployed families and individuals, better access to healthy living through plots of land to grow their own food with supports. Neighbour to Neighbour services 1250 families a month in our food access programs.

It addresses the need for those who are facing poverty to feed their families with healthy and fresh vegetables. This has been expressed over and over again as a concern for those living in poverty.

What makes this project unique is that we are developing these gardens in Neighbourhoods so that transportation is not longer a barrier for our clients and it will help them to build better community networks and support systems, as well as growing healthy food.

In 2013 Neighbour to Neighbour will have between 17 and 20 community gardens on the Hamilton Mountain. 10 of these gardens on school gardens.

It is our plan to help them with the start up costs and we will refer our clients to the new gardens in their own neighbourhoods. Total start up cost per location is \$5,000.00.

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## Benefits of Community Gardens

### **Health**

- “higher consumption of vegetables and fruits is known to promote health and prevent disease, but may be harder for people with limited incomes to attain” (Wakefield, Yeudall, Taron, Reynolds, & Skinner, 2007, p.97)
- interacting with nature is found to be relaxing and calming (Wakefield et al., 2007)
- gardening increases people’s control and decreases their stress (Wakefield et al., 2007)
- “better access to food (an issue of particular importance for gardeners with low incomes), improved nutrition, increased physical activity and improved mental health” (Wakefield et al., 2007, p.95)
- “contribution to healthy living in the form of better nutrition and increased exercise” (Wakefield et al., 2007, p.97)
- “gardeners said that their gardening helped keep them physically (and mentally) active” (Wakefield et al., 2007, p.97)
- “for some, especially the elderly, the exercise and activity – both physical and mental – the garden offered was essential” (Wakefield et al., 2007, p.97)
- Gardening may support cognitive vitality and healthy aging throughout the life cycle” (Okvat, & Zautra, 2011)
- “Youth living in impoverished neighborhood are more likely than their peers living in more affluent communities to experience physical and mental health problems, a poor-quality diet, an unhealthy body weight, academic difficulties, challenges obtaining gainful employment, delinquency, and criminal activity” (as cited in Allen, Alaimo, Elam & Perry, 2008)
- “Adolescence is a fundamental period of identity development when youth begin to explore their individuality, test out adult roles, consider future opportunities and selves, and make decisions accordingly” (Allen et al., 2008)
- “The gardens promoted responsibility, hard work, and delayed gratification” (Cognitive and Behavioural Competencies) (Allen et al., 2008)
- “These types of programs have been shown to reduce children’s involvement in alcohol, drug, and tobacco use and sexual activity (Allen et al., 2008)
- “gardens can be areas for recreation and exercise. According to the American Journal of Preventative Medicine, the “creation of or enhanced access to places for physical activity combined with informational outreach” produced a 48.4 percent increase in frequency of physical activity in addition to a 5.1 percent median increase in aerobic capacity, reduced body fat, weight loss, improved flexibility and an increase in perceived energy” (Green Institute, n.d.)
- “Eating locally produced food reduces asthma rates, because children are able to consume manageable amounts of local pollen and develop immunities” (Green Institute, n.d.)
- “increasing the consumption of fresh local produce is one of the best ways to address childhood lead poisoning as well as their exposure to chemical fertilizers and pesticides” (Green Institute, n.d.)

## Nutrition

- “better access to food (an issue of particular importance for gardeners with low incomes), improved nutrition, increased physical activity and improved mental health” (Wakefield et al., 2007, p.95)
- “access to food to promote food security” (Draper & Freedman, 2010, p.481)
- “fill gaps in diet” ex: ability to “grow and eat culturally appropriate foods” (Wakefield et al., 2007, p.97)
- “children were seen as particularly benefiting from access to fresh produce” (Wakefield et al., 2007, p.97)
- “contribution to healthy living in the form of better nutrition and increased exercise” (Wakefield et al., 2007, p.97)
- “participants spoke of eating more vegetables because of their community garden involvement” (Wakefield et al., 2007, p.97)
- “Similarly, Palmer and colleagues (2009) found that nutrition knowledge improvements were the same for control and experimental group youths, except that the nutrition-plus-gardening participants were additionally more likely to choose and consume vegetables in a lunchroom setting at posttest” (Draper & Freedman, 2010, p.487)
- “Youth gardening programs, not designated as a nutrition intervention, were found to promote youth development (e.g. social relationships, respect for other individuals and cultures), improve access and consumption of healthy foods, and increase science achievement and environmental attitudes” (Draper & Freedman, 2010, p.487)
- “The children and adolescents who worked in the community gardens improved their nutrition knowledge and skills and developed more varied palates” (As cited in Allen et al., 2008)
- “Food preferences and eating habits established during childhood are believed to predict lifetime dietary behaviour” (As cited in Allen et al., 2008)
- The most commonly expressed reasons for participating in gardens were access to fresh foods, to enjoy nature, and health benefits. (Armstrong, 2000)
- “Results suggest that the garden programs provided opportunities for constructive activities, contributions to the community, relationship and interpersonal skill development, informal social control, exploring cognitive and behavioral competence, and improved nutrition” (Allen et al., 2008)
- Nutrition knowledge scores for students in the nutrition education only (NL) and the nutrition education plus gardening (NG) were significantly greater than those in the control group (CO) and these differences were maintained at the six month follow-up. Post-test Vegetable Preference scores for the NL and the NG groups were each significantly greater than those of the CO group for broccoli and carrots. In addition the NG group was significantly greater than both the other groups on snow peas and zucchini. At the six-month follow up both the NL and NG groups remained significant for carrots and the NG was also still significant for broccoli, snow peas and zucchini. There was no significant difference among the 3 sites in relation to the student's willingness to taste the vegetables. (Morris, Briggs & Zidenberg-Cherr, 2002)

- “Commonly cited barriers to fruit and vegetable intake include cost, availability and acceptance. Community gardens have the potential to decrease these barriers by lowering the cost of produce, increasing access, and eventually increasing acceptance and improving taste perceptions of fruits and vegetables” (Dibsdall, Lambert, Bobbin & Frewer, 2002)
- “Community gardens could help people eat more nutritious food without hefty expense” (Okvat & Zautra, 2011)
- “A cross-sectional random phone survey of 766 urban adults found that those with a household member who participated in a community garden ate fruits and vegetables 1.4 more per day than those who did not participate, and they were 3.5 times more likely to eat fruits and vegetables at least 5 times daily” (Okvat & Zautra, 2011)

## **Stress**

- “Psychological stress... can dysregulate immune function with a potentially substantial impact on physical health” (Graham, Christian & Kiecolt-Glaser, 2006)
- “Stressful experiences very early in life can alter the responsiveness of the nervous system and immune system” (Graham et al., 2006)
- “opportunity to get out into nature” was found to be “relaxing and calming” (Wakefield et al., 2007, p.97)
- “community gardens were seen to offer spaces of retreat within densely populated neighbourhoods” (Wakefield et al., 2007, p.97)
- “Nature provides an important buffer of life stress and a potential mechanism of resilience” (Okvat & Zautra, 2011)
- “Qualitative research with ten urban community gardeners in Australia found that the garden was seen as a sanctuary where people could escape daily pressures, a place which gave them a sense of worth and involvement, and a source of social support” (Okvat & Zautra, 2011)
- “gardening can promote relief from acute stress.” (Van Den Berg & Custers, 2011)

## **Community**

- “community gardens are seen to benefit the community as a whole, by improving relationships among people, increasing community pride and in some cases by serving as an impetus for broader community improvement and mobilization” (Wakefield et al., 2007, p.97)
- “individual sense of pride emerging from the gardening and associated programmes was often extended to the wider community as well” (Wakefield et al., 2007, p.98)
- “not only enhance community connection, but also the physical features of the community to its broader benefit” (Wakefield et al., 2007, p.98)
- in the Latino community gardens in NYC, it was found that “community gardens were not only used for growing food, flowers and other vegetation, but served as cultural and social neighborhood centers, where residents celebrated special community events and socialized with their family members, neighbors, new residents, and even visitors. The gardens were also used to educate youth and other

- community members about the value of farming, food and the Latino culture” (Ohmer, Meadowcroft, Freed & Lewis, 2009, p.382)
- “community gardens located in low-income areas were four times more likely to lead to addressing other neighbourhood issues, including other beautification efforts, crime watch programs, and tree planting.” (Ohmer et al., 2009, p.383)
  - “Tieg and colleagues (2009) found that the multiple social processes (e.g., mutual trust, reciprocity) fostered during participation translated into situations outside of the community garden setting, and others found that the relationships formed led to a stronger overall sense of community” (Draper & Freedman, 2010, p.480)
  - “gardeners often chose to donate a portion of their produce, typically to senior citizens, homeless, or poor individuals and families, improving food access for those within the larger community” (Draper & Freedman, 2010, p.481)
  - “mechanism through which individuals and communities preserved, expressed, and affirmed their culture” (Draper & Freedman, 2010, p.484)
  - “Results suggest that the garden programs provided opportunities for constructive activities, contributions to the community, relationship and interpersonal skill development, informal social control, exploring cognitive and behavioral competence, and improved nutrition” (Allen et al., 2008)
  - “Engenders community pride” (Okvat & Zautra, 2011)
  - "We find that the opening of a community garden has a statistically significant positive impact on residential properties within 1000 feet of the garden, and that the impact increases over time. We find that gardens have the greatest impact in the most disadvantaged neighborhoods. Higher quality gardens have the greatest positive impact. Finally, we find that the opening of a garden is associated with other changes in the neighborhood, such as increasing rates of homeownership, and thus may be serving as catalysts for economic redevelopment of the community." (Voicu & Been, 2006).
  - “Community Gardens provide them with a sense of personal well-being through stress relief, education , and the creation of friendships.” (Voicu & Been, 2006).
  - ”The benefits of community gardens to the larger community include: beautifying the area, providing a sense of community, increasing feelings of safety and community pride, as well as providing a broader food security by becoming less reliant on global imports” (Voicu & Been, 2006).
  - “ Community gardens can also have a positive impact on surrounding property values.”
    - “ Voicu and Been (2006) determined that property values immediately within the vicinity of the gardens increased by 9.4% over a five year period.
  - “Not only did the immediate property values go up, the city also estimated they will receive a financial benefit of \$503 million from taxes over the next 20 years.” (Voicu & Been, 2006).
  - “community gardens add beauty to the community and heighten people’s awareness and appreciation for living things. In Chicago survey this was the #1 reason given for the importance of community gardens – mentioned by 14.3% of respondents) while 83% of respondents felt that the garden has enhanced the beauty of the community” (Green Institute, n.d.)

- “A 1995 Regional Pland Association poll of individuals nationwide found that the major components of a satisfactory quality of life are safe streets and access to greenery and open spaces. In another survey, owners of small companies ranked recreation, parks and open space as their highest priority in choosing a new location for a business” (Green Institute, n.d.)
- “urban green spaces are unevenly distributed and access is extremely limited near low-income neighbourhoods populated by minorities (including recent immigrants)” (Green Institute, n.d.)

## **Crime Reduction**

- community gardens can be developed in vacant lots to: “eliminate community hazards, such as trash, abandoned cars, and drug sales” (Ohmer et al., 2009, p.382)
- “community gardens located in low-income areas were four times more likely to lead to addressing other neighbourhood issues, including other beautification efforts, crime watch programs, and tree planting.” (Ohmer et al., 2009, p.383)
- “The ability to see or experience green space in an urban setting has been linked to fewer incidents of graffiti and other incivilities” (Okvat & Zautra, 2011)
- Gardens in low-income neighborhoods (46%) were four times as likely as non low-income gardens to lead to other issues in the neighborhood being addressed; reportedly due to organizing facilitated through the community gardens. (Armstrong, 2000)
- “Under-utilized and empty spaces are readily exploited by criminals (McKay, 1998)
- “The gardens were viewed as a means of keeping the local youth busy with a positive activity” - In impoverished area (Allen et al., 2008)
- “community gardens build block clubs and increase eyes on the street” (Green Institute, n.d.)
- “scientific studies show that crime decreases in neighbourhoods as the amount of green space increases and that vegetation has been seen to alleviate mental fatigue, one of the precursors to violent behavior” (Green Institute, n.d.)
- “community gardening is recognized by many police departments as an effective community crime prevention strategy.” -> “In Philadelphia, burglaries and thefts in one precinct dropped by 90 percent after police helped residents clean up vacant lots and plant gardens” (Green Institute, n.d.)

## **Individual/Personal**

- individuals gain “pride in their garden improvement”, as well as satisfaction from “sharing produce they had grown” (Wakefield et al., 2007, p.97)
- “gardening was an empowering experience to have something in life to ‘work-out’.” (Wakefield et al., 2007, p.97)
- Garden based programming can “help to build self-esteem through development of skills” (Wakefield et al., 2007, p.97)
- “fill gaps in diet” ex: ability to “grow and eat culturally appropriate foods” (Wakefield et al., 2007, p.97)

- “some individuals partake in community gardening activities purely because they view it as a leisure or recreational activity” (Draper & Freedman, 2010, p.483)
- “mechanism through which individuals and communities preserved, expressed, and affirmed their culture” (Draper & Freedman, 2010, p.484)

## **Economics**

- 10.8% of Canada qualifies as having a low-income (Government of Nova Scotia, 2008)
- “access to food to promote food security” (Draper & Freedman, 2010, p.481)
- “a small plot of land can yield large amounts of produce, equating to significant monetary value and savings” (Draper & Freedman, 2010, p.482)
- “Saldivar-Tanaka and Krasny (2004) estimated that in New York City, an investment of \$5 to \$10 in plants for a garden plot provides for a profit of \$500 to \$700 worth of fruits and vegetables” (Draper & Freedman, 2010, p.482)
- “Commonly cited barriers to fruit and vegetable intake include cost, availability and acceptance. Community gardens have the potential to decrease these barriers by lowering the cost of produce, increasing access, and eventually increasing acceptance and improving taste perceptions of fruits and vegetables” (Dibsdall et al., 2002)
- A study performed by Voicu and Been (2008) showed that community gardens opened within 1,000 feet of properties increased the properties values significantly over time. “These real estate price boost in turn yield increased tax revenue for local governments” (Okvat & Zautra, 2011)
- “local agriculture conserves resources by shortening the commodity chain, saving on fuel demanding transportation and packaging” (Green Institute, n.d.)
- “reducing the “heat island” effect, gardens lessen the need for air conditioning and lower electricity bills” (Green Institute, n.d.)

### **Municipal Costs**

- “Developing and maintaining garden space is less expensive than parkland area, in part because gardens require little land and 80% of their cost is in labor” (Green Institute, n.d.)
- “Composting saves on land fill space, which saves the city and tax payers money” (Green Institute, n.d.)
- “community gardens provide a place to retreat from the noise and commotion of urban environments, they attract people (including the ‘creative class’ of the new economy and small businesses) (Green Institute, n.d.)

## **Ecological**

- from the survey results of the Community Conservation Program Evaluation: “both volunteers and partners felt that program increased their knowledge and awareness of green space and other conservation issues, as well as their sense of connection to the outside world” (Ohmer et al., 2009, p.395)
- “Adults who had significant and positive exposure to nature as children were more likely to be environmentally sensitive, concerned, and active” (As cited in Blair

- article – Chawla) “Growing food locally decreases the energy demand and concomitant carbon emissions associated with transporting food from afar” (Okvat & Zautra, 2011)
- “Prepackaged food arrives at supermarkets from energy-intensive, polluting, and often obesity-promoting industrial food-manufacturing systems. Researchers have estimated that this system consumes 17-20% of American fossil fuel and that 29% of the food is wasted (Blair, 2009)
  - community gardens “reduce soil erosion and runoff, which lessens flooding and saves the city money” (Green Institute, n.d.)
  - “restore oxygen to the air and help reduce air pollution, through the gas exchange systems of leaves and soils” (Green Institute, n.d.)

## **Social**

- “gardens were also seen by the gardeners as a place for positive social interaction. [...] This is a particularly important benefit of community gardening in communities where social exclusion and marginalization are pervasive problems” (Wakefield et al., 2007, p.98)
- “Sharing not only vegetables and tools, but also ideas, across cultures and other social differences was seen as a particularly potent form of social engagement within the gardens.” (Wakefield et al., 2007, p.98)
- “facilitating social interactions among residents and overall community development” (Ohmer et al., 2009, p.380)
- “the mere presence of green space, including trees and grass, can facilitate social interaction and ties among neighbours” (Ohmer et al., 2009, p.380)
- quote from an article cited in this one: “compared to residents living adjacent to relatively barren spaces, individuals living adjacent to greener common spaces had more social activities and more visitors, knew more of their neighbours, reported their neighbours were more concerned with helping and supporting one another, and had stronger feelings of belonging” (Ohmer et al., 2009, p.381)
- “community gardening can facilitate social capital among residents, particularly those in decision-making roles, and improve the appearance of urban neighbourhoods” (Ohmer et al., 2009, p.381) social capital examples: reciprocity and trust
- Glover found that “participants viewed the community garden as a way to successfully bring together people of different races and other people who would not normally socialize” (Draper & Freedman, 2010, p.480)
- “Community gardens can provide a safe space for individuals and families to gather and relax, especially for those who would not otherwise have easy access to such areas. For example, Latino community gardens in New York City were identified as the only open spaces available within the neighborhood” (Draper & Freedman, 2010, p.483)
- “The garden yielded close relationships between youth and adult residents in the neighborhood, friendships among the youth and opportunities to develop interpersonal skills in negotiation, conflict resolution and communication”. (Allen et al., 2008)



## Youth

- “community gardens can provide a unique educational opportunity for youth and help them to acquire a sense of self, identity, and ownership for their neighbourhood.” (Ohmer et al., 2009, p.383)
- youth involved in a community garden in Brooklyn, NY that grew produce and sold it at the local farmers market, “developed a sense of self and identity that demonstrated their importance and value to the community, along with new gardening knowledge and interpersonal skills, such as how to nurture a garden, and how to work with a team to achieve goals” (Ohmer et al., 2009, p.383)
- “youth gardening programs and projects were found to produce positive dietary, academic, and developmental results. Gardening-enhanced nutrition programs increased participants’ nutrition knowledge; fruit and vegetable consumption, preference, and asking behaviours at home; physical activity; and gardening self-efficacy” (Draper & Freedman, 2010, p.478)
- “two studies showed no differences between students participating in a garden-enhanced nutrition program versus only the nutrition education component, except that youth in the garden-enhanced programs increased their preference for a greater number of types of vegetables” (Draper & Freedman, 2010, p.478) These articles were by Morris & Zidenberg-Cherr 2002; O’Brien & Shoemaker, 2006.
- “Similarly, Palmer and colleagues (2009) found that nutrition knowledge improvements were the same for control and experimental group youths, except that the nutrition-plus-gardening participants were additionally more likely to choose and consume vegetables in a lunchroom setting at posttest” (Draper & Freedman, 2010, p.487)
- “Youth gardening programs, not designated as a nutrition intervention, were found to promote youth development (e.g. social relationships, respect for other individuals and cultures), improve access and consumption of healthy foods, and increase science achievement and environmental attitudes” (Draper & Freedman, 2010, p.487)
- “participatory learning opportunity for youth, which led to improvements in academic performance and social skill development” (Draper & Freedman, 2010, p.487)
- “Youth living in impoverished neighborhood are more likely than their peers living in more affluent communities to experience physical and mental health problems, a poor-quality diet, an unhealthy body weight, academic difficulties, challenges obtaining gainful employment, delinquency, and criminal activity” (as cited in Allen et al., 2008)
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- “These types of programs have been shown to reduce children’s involvement in alcohol, drug, and tobacco use and sexual activity (Allen et al., 2008)
- “The children and adolescents who worked in the community gardens improved their nutrition knowledge and skills and developed more varied palates” (As cited in Allen et al., 2008)
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- “Classrooms that used the environment as an integrating context for learning with nonintegrating classrooms... Enthusiasm for learning, standardized test scores, and GPAs were higher in 92% of the comparisons... Enables learning that is problem-based and interdisciplinary, with a significant positive impact on achievement” (Blair, 2009)
- Nutrition knowledge scores for students in the nutrition education only (NL) and the nutrition education plus gardening(NG) were significantly greater than those in the control group (CO) and these differences were maintained at the six month follow-up. Posttest Vegetable Preference scores for the NL and the NG groups were each significantly greater than those of the CO group for broccoli and carrots. In addition the NG group was significantly greater than both the other groups on snow peas and zucchini. At the six month follow up both the NL and NG groups remained significant for carrots and the NG was also still significant for broccoli, snow peas and zucchini. There was no significant difference among the 3 sites in relation to the student's willingness to taste the vegetables. (Morris et al., 2002)

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