Growing Community Gardens through Education

Kaitlyn Becka
kmb191@zips.uakron.edu

Sydney Martis
sam184@zips.uakron.edu

Rich Mehok
rtm26@zips.uakron.edu

Please take a moment to share how this work helps you through this survey. Your feedback will be important as we plan further development of our repository.

Follow this and additional works at: http://ideaexchange.uakron.edu/honors_research_projects

Part of the Agricultural Education Commons

Recommended Citation
http://ideaexchange.uakron.edu/honors_research_projects/226

This Honors Research Project is brought to you for free and open access by The Dr. Gary B. and Pamela S. Williams Honors College at IdeaExchange@UAkron, the institutional repository of The University of Akron in Akron, Ohio, USA. It has been accepted for inclusion in Honors Research Projects by an authorized administrator of IdeaExchange@UAkron. For more information, please contact mjon@uakron.edu, uapress@uakron.edu.
Growing Community Gardens through Education

Kaitlyn Becka, Sydney Martis, Rich Mehok

The University of Akron

Abstract
This paper explores the process of our leadership experience project on the topic of community gardens. Initially, our proposed research question was where in Akron area is the best location to build a community garden? Based on the primary and secondary research conducted, building a community garden would not be feasible or needed. Our conclusion showed that the real need and importance within the community was an education program on the topic of community gardens rather than planting a real garden. Therefore, the research question was revised to develop an education program focusing on healthy eating, victory gardens, and pollination for students within the Akron Public School District. There were implications and leadership lessons learned throughout the course of this project. Our findings and education program will leave a lasting impact in the community, especially, for organizations such as Let’s Grow Akron and the Summit Food Policy Coalition who will continue to use our materials.

Introduction
In March 2014, Kaitlyn Becka, Sydney Martis, and Rich Mehok went on the Global Immersion Trip to Italy through the Institute for Leadership Advancement of the College of Business. During this trip, the three of us bonded and developed a friendship that lead to the forming of a group for a leadership experience project. Sydney and Rich talked extensively throughout the trip about topics such as food and nutrition. This conversation led to discussing the importance of community gardens especially food deserts. Following the trip, the two met with each other to further develop some ideas and spoke with Kevin Smith regarding their proposed idea for a leadership experience project. After solidifying their idea, Sydney and Rich spoke with Kaitlyn and asked her to join their LEP group. Soon after the group formed, Sydney, Kaitlyn and Rich began working on the project they became so passionate about.

The initial outcome that we wanted for our Leadership Experience Project was to create a set of complementary educational programs within a neighborhood in the City of Akron to promote healthy eating and lifestyles through a community garden initiative. We would do this in conjunction with a currently existing community-based organization to promote the sustainability of this initiative. This project would be very important to Akron and its success would provide numerous benefits to people residing in areas that lacked access to fresh foods. Our thought was that a wider distribution of easily accessible fresh food paired with an education program would provide a lifestyle change in the immediate community. These efforts would revitalize an organization with a crumbling community garden program or start a new garden.

**Research**

Throughout the summer we met as a group to conduct primary and secondary research on community gardens and food deserts. Our research consisted largely of primary research. However, secondary research was necessary to acquire knowledge about community gardens,
food deserts and educational programs. Secondary research was conducted at the beginning of the summer to collect data to strengthen our proposal. We used information found on the website of the USDA and Ohio Department of Health. It was vital to research other cities by reading online newsletters and reports about their community gardening initiatives such as Garden Dallas which is explained further below. Many clippings from The Plain Dealer about community gardening related activities in North Eastern Ohio added to our secondary research.

To begin our secondary research, we first had to define food desert in order to understand the problems associated with it. Food deserts are an increasingly important issue in public health. According to the United States Department of Agriculture a food desert is defined as an urban neighborhood or rural town without ready access to fresh, healthy and affordable food (USDA 2008). Specifically, they are identified as a region with both low income and low access to a source of fresh food. Food deserts are areas that are greater than 10 miles away from a fresh food store. The USDA states that 23.5 million people currently live in food deserts. Approximately half of these people, around 13.5 million, are classified as low-income individuals. This is an important issue in public health because lack of access to fresh foods contributes to a poor diet and can lead to higher levels of obesity and other diet related diseases, such as diabetes and heart disease (USDA). Most residents that live in a food desert do not have sufficient funds, time or desire to seek out a fresh alternative to the many cheap and easily accessible fast food options in the area.

Food deserts are prevalent in the City of Akron. The leading cause of death for residents in Summit County in 2004 was heart-related disease with an average of 1,342 deaths annually (Ohio Department of Health, 2008). When looking at the ‘Akron Neighborhood Profiles’ provided by the City of Akron webpage, some of the neighborhoods most in need of these
programs would include: Lane-Wooster, West Akron, Summit Lake, Downtown, and East Akron. This is so because all of these cities had some of the lowest average household incomes based on information collected from 2000 and none of these neighborhoods had an average household income over $30,000. According to Akron Children’s Hospital, about 54 percent of all 6 to 12-year olds are obese in Summit County (For kids, a fit future starts today). This figure is worse than the state average of 42 percent of 6 to 12-year olds being obese.

Diet and sedentary lifestyles are major components for heart-related diseases. We can fight against heart disease by promoting healthy eating to improve diets amongst the community. Akron’s neighborhoods have many fast food or corner store food options available but not many fresh food markets that are easily accessible. This wide distribution of fast food is negatively impacting the health of the residents of Akron. According to the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, following a healthy eating plan is a simple way to prevent overweight and obesity. One way to do this is by increasing fruit and vegetable consumption. The garden initiative will alleviate the causes of heart disease for Akron residents by help in providing easily accessible fresh foods.

Community Gardens are considered to be an effective solution for providing low cost and convenient access to fresh food in areas (food deserts) where fresh, healthy foods are not readily available or affordable. Community gardens also provide a community-led educational outlet for ending a social cycle of poor eating choices and their latent effects. According to Gardeners in Community Development, a community garden also provides many benefits to an urban neighborhood such as raising housing prices, building community amongst residents, reducing crime by creating a wholesome pastime for the residents and most importantly to our purpose, providing access to fresh food (Garden Dallas, 2015).
Community Garden History. How did Community Gardens originally come to be? Well, people have been systematically cultivating the land since the 1800s when vacant land was used to tide over unemployment (Lawson 2009). However, most of these programs ended as the economy improved. The Children’s School Garden Movement during 1890s and 1920s was a time when garden project started in collaboration with schools with the idea of including these gardens as part of the curricula (Lawson 2009). This movement continued into World War I when the effort was renamed the U.S. School Garden Army as an effort to combat the severe food crisis in Europe (Lawson 2009). This time period also saw the start of ‘Civic Gardening’ where citizen’s beautified vacant lots and backyards as part of a larger civic beautification campaign. Unfortunately, this movement mostly ended soon after the war was over. Yet, community gardens were once again turned to during the depression of the 1930s as a way to provide food and generate income (Lawson 2009). World War II Victory Gardens during 1941-1945 became part of a Food Fights for Freedom movement that helped citizens again combat food shortages domestically (Lawson 2009). After World War II, interests in gardening slowed down as citizens shifted their diet to processed foods found at supermarkets which have led to the present day obesity issues.

Community Garden Movement Today. Today’s community gardening movement began in the 1970s with distinguished citizens hoping to revitalize their urban neighborhood through the creation of gardens. The American Community Gardening Association, a nonprofit membership organization, was formed in 1978 by urban garden enthusiasts around the country. During economic downturns through the 1980s, community gardens continued to be a source of security and education. Today’s urban gardening movement encompasses all of the previous ideals of gardening: income generation, job creation, food security, education and community
building. The National Garden Association reports that 35% of all households in America, or 42 million households, are growing food at home or in a community garden which is up 17% in five years (National Garden Association, 2014). The fastest growing population of gardeners are millennials (18-34) as seen by the jump to 13 million in 2013 from 8 million in 2008 (National Garden Association, 2014). Collectively, the Association states that food gardening is the highest it has ever been in a decade.

National Community Gardening Conference. Our secondary research led us to a National Community Gardening Conference that was taking place in Chicago in August. After looking into details of the conference, we found it would be a useful source of information for our community garden initiative. As a group we decided that the American Community Gardening Association (ACGA) Conference would serve as a source of inspiration for an idea we could implement in the greater Akron area to meet our end goal of promoting healthy eating and lifestyles.

Unfortunately, Kaitlyn was in the middle of her internship so she was unable to attend. This left Sydney and Rich to attend the conference, gain new knowledge, network and bring this back to Akron. At this time we established Kevin as our mentor for our project so he chose to accompany us to the conference. The conference was a three day event featuring a mix of keynote speakers, individual workshop tracks, tours of featured Chicago gardening initiatives, and regional networking sessions. Before the conference began, it was essential to set goals for ourselves in order to make the most of the event. Kevin stressed the importance of networking with anyone in our region with a heavy emphasis on Ohio. Sydney added the idea of splitting up during the individual workshop tracks in order to gain a broad and expansive learning experience.
The conference lived up to all of our wildest expectations. The event started off strong with the keynote speaker Dr. Marianne Krasny, a civic ecology professor at Cornell University. She challenged everyone in the audience to figure out what we are a part of because we are part of something larger. She defined civic ecology as small acts of defiance and resilience to positively contribute to the environmental movement. We have adopted this civic ecology mission while moving through our project and finding where our efforts are best suited in the movement. The keynote speaker on day two Roger Hart, professor at the City University of New York and Director of the Children’s Environments Research Group, spoke passionately about how children’s lives today are so programmed. However, gardens are spaces for children to discover and learn by asking questions. He placed children at the root of the civic ecology movement which inspired us to explore educational programs in Akron.

Rich and Kevin attended a presentation called “Sustaining a Community Garden - Developing Effective Guidelines” which was a roundtable discussion with garden program leaders from Seattle, Philadelphia, and Boston about garden development and management tools. The presenters of this session handed out a “Community Garden Guidelines Exercise” and a “Plan of Management for (insert your name) Community Garden” which serves as an excellent resource in the initial steps of creating a community garden. (See Community Garden Guidelines Exercise” and “Developing a Vision for Your Garden Exercise” in Appendix B) The main takeaway Rich got from the Program Managers Roundtable was the importance of finding both a leader who may foster a community garden project and a fiscal agent (a 501c3 non-profit). The fiscal agent serves as the fiduciary when the project leader looks to receive grant money. A couple examples of fiscal agents they mentioned at the roundtable were churches, rotary clubs, housing corporations, local health departments, and schools. Some of the other participants in
this roundtable posed the question, “is it possible to be paid for our services as a community garden leader with all the time we dedicate to such a large project?” The roundtable garden program leaders informed us that one of greatest benefits of having the fiscal agent. When writing grants for community garden projects it is possible to request funding for salaries that are ran through fiscal agents. The last point they made was the importance of holding collaborative talks with fiscal agents early on in the process to avoid growing pains when launching your community garden initiative.

Sydney chose to attend a breakout session called “Junior Master Gardening in a Nut Shell” while Rich and Kevin were at the above session. This presentation was led by a Master Gardener (certified educator of the many phases of gardening) who spoke about the Junior Masters Gardening program and how to implement ideas into the attendees’ educational programs. She provided us with multiple handouts of a sample Junior Master Gardening curriculum. To conclude the session, the Master Gardener led the participants through a pollinator group activity which is used in the curriculum. This activity will be further explained below as we implemented it in our final educational project.

Rich and Sydney attended “The Other Side of the Community Garden Grant” which was led by Bill Dawson and Fiona Doherty from the Franklin Park Conservatory in Columbus, Ohio. The session started out with a comparing grants exercise where we were given two sample grant proposals. As a group we discussed which of the two proposals was the best and why. After establishing the basics structure of grant proposals we went in depth into each section. The parts of a grant proposal are:

1. Need/ Problem Statement
2. Goal/ Objectives
3. Activities
4. Time Table
5. Personnel or Organization Qualifications
6. Outcome Measurements
7. Continuation Plan/Sustainability
8. Budget Spreadsheet and Narrative
9. Executive Summary

The need/problem statement section should be the problem that is trying to be addressed and is supported with facts. For the purpose of grant writing, using local data is better than generalized data. The goal/objectives that are developed should be S.M.A.R.T goals (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound). The activities section suggested that the activities performed and goals are listed in a sequence of time. Also it is key to relate each of the activities back to an objective to prove the worthiness and to the overall goal of the project. As for the timetable section a couple of key factors that need to be included are time for preparation, having participant input, scheduling a mid-point evaluation, time for corrections and lastly scheduling a final evaluation. It is imperative to use both quantitative and qualitative measures in the Outcome Measurements section. It’s also important to assess the progress of the program at several different stages and wrap it all up with an evaluation. When drafting the continuous plan it’s important to identify the mistakes that can be avoided and what successes you expect from avoiding those mistakes. The executive summary section was stressed as the most important part of the grant proposal. This is what they called the “Big Pitch” similar to what the College of Business would call the “Elevator Pitch”. When grantees are sorting through initial proposals they often only look at the executive summary to narrow down the applicants. It is very important to be precise and concise when writing the executive summary in order the point across in the most efficient and attention grabbing manner.

Community Garden Sustainability was the next education session Rich and Sydney attended at the conference. The lecturers were from the New York City Parks GreenThumb Organization, which assists over 600 community gardens. This organization provides both
educational and physical materials for the gardens (rakes, shovels, etc.) along with technical assistance. One of the programs the New York City Parks GreenThumb Organization created is a City Match program for community gardens and soup kitchens. Community gardens not only donate food to various soup kitchens but the plow owners of the garden commit to volunteering a minimum number of hours at the soup kitchens. Other projects organized by the New York City Parks GreenThumb include farmers markets, school projects, and a tree care program. Since The New York City Parks GreenThumb organization plans these projects annually, it has helped the concept of community gardens to be viewed as a public amenity.

The last educational session Rich attended was “Defining Community Empowerment”. This was a very unique educational session because it validated the reason we were even pursuing a project focused on community gardens in the first place. The first exercise we were tasked with was to brainstorm definitions for Community Empowerment as a group. After the smaller groups brainstormed ideas, they were shared aloud as one large group. One of the more popular definitions that resonated with me was, “Community Empowerment- a psychological shift from powerlessness to a form of power”. This definition seemed very pertinent to our project considering our goal is to help fight obesity which requires people to feel empowered to make healthier lifestyle choices.

The second exercise of the “Defining Community Empowerment” educational session was to brainstorm questions to ask community garden leaders in order to successfully measure Community Empowerment through community gardens. (See Appendix B for the list of questions generated) We discussed these various questions and the degree of difficulty in measuring empowerment from them. Another topic of discussion was whether or not you can recognize when people have built transferable skills that people can take to other organizations.
This is especially important for grant writing in order to make sure that the benefits of your community garden initiatives are explained. The last thing that resonated with Rich from this session was the idea of collaboration when growing and sustaining community garden initiatives. Collaboration is key when running programs such as school projects or food stands to get the name of the garden out in the community. It not only helps recruit more plot owners but encourages the idea of leadership and service to people looking to get involved.

This conference concluded our secondary research by leaving us with ideas on how to conduct our primary research back in Akron. These primary research methodologies are discussed in the Project Report section below.

**Project Report**

In order to learn more about community gardens and their outreach programs, our goal was to complete community garden site visits in Cleveland, Medina, and Akron in the summer. We visited the Kentucky Garden in Ohio City Cleveland and Medina Community Garden located next to the Feeding Medina County Building. The food grown in the Medina garden goes right to the Feeding Medina County food bank for individuals less fortunate. Sydney visited the Hattie Larlham Garden next to the Akron Zoo. We composed a detailed report of the community gardens visited. The reports included all of the information gathered from the visit and pictures of the community gardens. (See Appendix C for notes and pictures from Medina/Kentucky Garden visit) From our site visits around Akron, along with conversations with influential individuals in the community garden scene in Akron, we were able to compile a list of potential garden locations and organizations with which to collaborate. This research led us to begin organizing interviews all sorts of people around Akron that somehow were involved in the Akron community gardening scene.
Before conducting our interviews, we compiled a list of standard questions that we would ask each individual (See Appendix A-Standard Interview Questions). One of our first interviews was with Roger Read, a highly regarded philanthropist in the Akron community who gave us a number of contacts to reach out to including Theresa Beyerle. Theresa is a volunteer at Crown Point, an organic garden that produces farm shares and a coordinator of service learning and undergraduate research at The University of Akron. She led us to speak with Miss Julie of Miss Julie’s Kitchen, a vegan restaurant in Akron, and Lisa Nunn, a leader of Let’s Grow Akron. Both Miss Julie and Lisa Nunn invited the team to a Summit Food Policy Coalition meeting where we discussed some upcoming local food programs including an educational series led by Miss Julie. She had expressed how she may need some help expanding the program. Attending this meeting and coming into contact with Lisa Nunn really helped us formulate where our efforts would best fit the needs of the community. (See Appendix C for notes from each interview)

We did interview other important individuals within the community regarding the topic of community gardens even though the ones listed above were the most beneficial. Emily Bean is the Community Investment Officer for the Akron Community Foundation. Her primary responsibility is providing funding for various community and rain gardens. Chris Norman is the Director of Urban Planning for East Akron Neighborhood Development Committee. Chris is also an active participant with the Summit Food Policy Coalition. Chriss talked with us about good locations for community gardens and where they plan to build a community garden. Beth Knorr is the Farmers Market Manager for Countryside Conservancy. Sydney and Kaitlyn attended a Farmer’s Market that Beth organizes in order see what she does in action, to talk to vendors, and get other thoughts on community gardens. Beth also is a member of the Summit Food Policy
Coalition who runs the Food Access Committee. Lynn Gregor is the educational programmer for Crown Point Ecology Center which is the same place Theresa Beyerle volunteers. The provided us with education information since she is an educational planner, strengths and weaknesses regarding Akron and Cleveland community gardens. (See Appendix C for notes from each interview)

Our original idea when first approaching the Leadership Institute was to build a community garden in one of Akron’s poor neighborhoods. We learned that this idea is not highly feasible after initially speaking with Shannon Donnelly, an Akron community garden activist and Geoscience professor at The University of Akron. (See Appendix C for Shannon Donnelly meeting notes) He told us during our interview, which is explained further below, that he has found that community gardens have proven to have a low participation rate in neighborhoods where outside groups spontaneously build gardens without the support of residents.

Remembering this advice and after a semester of extensive research on community gardening and sustainable food initiatives around the U.S., Northeastern Ohio, and our local neighborhoods in Akron, we determined that our new project idea was to develop and implement an educational program at an Akron Public School’s After School Program. The education program explains the importance of community gardening along with healthy eating to the students. According to a ‘Benefits of Gardening for Children’ fact sheet, community gardens have had lifelong benefits including positive social and interpersonal skill development, an increased understanding of healthy eating and nutrition, greater science achievement and attitudes towards learning, better design skills and environmental stewardship, and an increased awareness of diversity (Children, Youth and Environment Center for Community Engagement
One example of a successful community gardening education program is the free Discovery Field Trips at Birmingham Botanical Gardens. These field trips are free and available to students in the Birmingham, Alabama area. Their education programs run year round and more than 11,000 students enjoy their free science-curriculum based field trips annually (AL.com 2015). Thus, the development of an education programs would have much success in creating similar values for Let’s Grow Akron and Summit Food Policy Coalition by targeting children early on in their school career and empower them to eat healthier, live healthier, and ultimately live longer. Both Let’s Grow Akron and Summit Food Policy Coalition asked us to create this educational program so they could continue to use the education resources that we provide following the completion of our project.

**Program Development.** Julia Spangler is a third grade teacher at Crouse Community Learning Center. Rich became connected to Mrs. Spangler through Dr. Owens of the Taylor Institute for Direct Marketing. Julia has in the past worked with students to incorporate University level projects into her 3rd grade classroom so this connection was mutually beneficial for both our project and Julia’s classroom. The 75 3rd grade students that we taught were between the ages of 8-9. There are several students in each class that required additional attention due to disabilities. The students come from low income families of primarily African American race. Crouse provides the students with breakfast upon their arrival in the morning because of the low income students that attend the school. Julia is an advocate for community gardens and healthy eating within her school community. Crouse Community Learning Center has a community garden on the school premise. There is a garden bed for each one of the classes at Crouse. The students learn about healthy foods, community gardens, maintenance for the garden and fruits/veggies planted in their classes. The students maintain their own garden
throughout the school year and are encouraged to continue to take care of it throughout the summer. Community members near the Crouse will walk to the garden to help pull weeds, pick fresh fruit and veggies, or sit on the benches and observe the garden. In addition to working in the community gardens, the students participate in a program called Veggie U. Veggie U is a workbook full of different gardening information from soil, plants, flowers, and gardens.

We met with Julia to explain to her our education program initiative and learn about the programs she is implementing in her classroom. Julia was thrilled we contacted since we all share the same passion on education and community gardening that she does. We immediately started planning our education programs. Now that we established that an education program was important and that was what we were going to do, we didn’t exactly know where to start. Julia told us the reading and math level that we would expect her students to have knowledge of in order to get a feel for how to best teach. We found a Victory Garden lesson plan developed by The National WWII Museum in New Orleans which served as the basis for the Victory Garden Lesson Plan (See Appendix D for educational lesson plans). We then began to formulate a structure for our education sessions. We found flyers that depicted victory gardens that were used for the war, hangouts on victory garden information, pollination diagrams, and handouts on pollination. These all became resources that we used during our education sessions. Information gathered from the National Community Garden Conference educational session that Sydney attended helped assist in the development of our pollinator education session.

As a group we determined three important education areas of focus: victory gardens, pollination, and healthy eating styles. We taught three classrooms of about 25 third grade students for ninety minutes at a time. Each class was divided into three twenty minute sessions each focusing on a different educational component with a thirty minute follow up session to
conclude the program. During the follow up session, we provided the students with celery, peanut butter, and raisins as a healthy snack. However, we used those ingredients to make the snack called Ants on a Log. Sydney instructed the students on how to properly make this snack and it was up to the students to listen and follow instructions. Peanut Butter was placed on top of the celery with the raisins placed on top of the peanut butter resulting in the snack called Ants on a Log. (See Appendix E for pictures of the students making Ants on a Log)

**Education Sessions.** The pollinator education session provided the basic information on pollination, different types of pollinators, and the parts of a flower. There were two different flyers that were presented to the students to further educate them on the topic of pollination. The first flyer explained the process of pollination through the eyes of a bee, provided a list of different pollinators, and the definition of pollination. (See Appendix D for Pollination Flyer 2) The second flyer displayed the process of pollination through a series of pictures on specific parts of the flower with their appropriate definitions. (See Appendix D for Pollination Flyer and Flower Diagram) The students completed a handout where they labeled a diagram with parts of the flower and completed six matching definitions to words they just learned. (See appendix D for Pollination Handout)

Then, the students were instructed to complete a pollinator activity that we found as a resource from the National Community Gardening Conference. (See Appendix D for Cloverbud Activity Sheet Learning Activity: Pollinator Games worksheet) Each student was provided a half of a note card, popsicle stick, two erasers, a rubber band, and a piece of string. First, the students put one eraser on each end of the popsicle stick. The half of a note card was then stapled to the popsicle stick horizontally. The students would then take one end of the string and tie it to the end of the popsicle stick. Finally, the rubber band was stretched to be placed around each eraser
(which was at each end of the popsicle stick). Once the device was constructed, the students would swing the string around and a buzzing bee sound was made. A bee is a specific type of a pollinator which the students learned about in the beginning of the session. The purpose of the session was to educate students on the importance of pollination. The topic of pollination is not covered in the Veggie U material or covered in Julia’s curriculum which is the reason we thought there would be benefits to educating the students. (See Appendix E for pictures from the Pollination session)

The idea behind the Meal Math Challenge education session was to focus on healthy eating choices. Originally we planned to split the students into 3 groups each representing a meal of the day. The groups would then sort through the cut out items of foods with statistics on the back such as serving sizes and calories. The main idea of this education session is to assemble the healthiest meal with the least amount of calories. Also, to introduce the students to a wide variety of healthy food options to which they are not exposed to.

Similar to most of this project’s process, the meal math challenge exercise was adjusted in real time to accommodate the education level of the students. Instead of strictly sticking to the hands-off approach where the students would collaborate and figure out the solution on their own, Rich guided them as a group. First the students separated all of the cards into two categories: healthy and unhealthy. (See Appendix D for examples of the food activity cards used in this activity) Then, the students completed various tasks such as taking a group of the cards and adding the weight together that was listed under the nutrition statistics. All in all, despite the fact the exercise didn’t go exactly as planned we feel the same goal was addressed. The kids were asking questions such as, “are peanut butter and jellies healthy?” or, “if pizza has vegetables on it is it healthy?”. Questions like these indicated the children were critically
GROWING COMMUNITY GARDENS THROUGH EDUCATION

thinking about various foods and whether or not they are healthy. At the end of the day the end goal of this exercise was to get children to think more in depth to what they were putting into their body and other alternatives to what is currently in their diet. (See Appendix E for pictures of Meal Math Challenge session)

The Victory Garden education session informed students about the history of victory gardens that occurred during the World War and the importance of community gardens. A list of vocabulary words were presented to the students to aid in the discussion. (See Appendix D for Victory Garden Vocabulary) We presented several different flyers that were used during the war on victory gardens that would make it easier to illustrate the history of victory gardens to the students. (See Appendix D for Flyers 1-7) A handout with fun activities was distributed to the students in order to reinforce the topic of victory gardens. (See Appendix D for Victory Garden Student Handout) The students wrote a few sentences on a postcard to their families describing the victory garden information they previously learned. (See Appendix E for Postcard 1-4 and Appendix D for pictures of Victory Garden session)

Program Evaluation. Our contribution to Crouse Community Learning Center will leave a lasting impact. We did not have the students complete any type of assessment or evaluation following the program however; Julia Spangler provided us with written feedback on our education sessions. (See Feedback from Julia Spangler in Appendix D) One of the comments Julia Spangler provided in her feedback was that “Kaitlyn, Rich, and Sydney were able to adapt their lessons immediately to meet the needs of the students in each group and class that they worked with.” This was definitely a challenge for us at times but a great learning outcome. Also, the students were highly engaged in the lessons and were willing to challenge themselves to accomplish tasks that were hard. The students in each class asked if Sydney, Rich, and Kaitlyn
would be returning to work with them again. Not only did our education sessions inform the students but the community garden itself was improved with our contribution. Following our education presentation, we realized a large portion of our funds was still available. Therefore, we quickly contacted Julia Spangler and inquired on items needed for their community garden. Julia provided us with several options. As a group, we decided to use our funds to donate ten berry bushes to the school’s community garden. We purchased five blackberry bushes and five raspberry bushes (See Appendix F for pictures from the donation/planting of berry bushes) We spent a Monday morning with the student garden ambassadors from the 3rd grade classes to plan the berry bushes. Depending on the amount of funds left over, we are thinking about contributing a bench or two for the garden as well. Many community members and students sit on the benches when they need a break from maintaining it or just to observe it. We were happy to contribute to the Crouse Community Learning Center Community Garden since the concept of community gardens is a passion of the group.

Discussion

Going into this project, every group member had their own idea of an outcome that they would like to see. Rich had always desired to build a community educational center and was thrilled with the idea of creating a community garden with the hope of a center adjacent to the garden. Sydney’s main priority was to find a way to contribute positively to the community gardening scene of Akron/ her previous work experience with an Akron Public School gave her the idea of creating a community garden for a local school. Meanwhile, Kaitlyn was a supporter of the most feasible idea at the time which in the beginning was simply to start a new community garden.
One of the first meetings conducted was with Shanon Donnelly, a geoscience professor at The University of Akron. He warned us that we cannot go into a community and tell them what we think they need to make their neighborhood better. Specifically, community gardens get started but neglect turns the once beautiful garden to its original state as a vacant lot. His wisdom really stuck with us and opened up our minds to listening to the community members to find our niche in Akron’s food movement. (See Appendix C for Shanon Donnelly meeting notes)

Our original idea of making a garden turned into designing and implementing an educational program after several long months of research, interviews and meetings. We had expected to find a local school or church that wanted a community garden and give them the financial and planning support they needed in order to push their project along. The thought was that this is the greatest way we can contribute. However, we found that what Akron really needed was an education program kept by Let’s Grow Akron that could be passed around and used continuously. In both scenarios we thought we were doing the greatest good, however, the educational program proved to be the best outcome of our project. Our curriculum for the education programs will be used to educate other students on pollination, victory gardens, and healthy eating. The content of these education sessions will not change therefore can be used for years to come. Even though we used this material to education 3rd grade students, the information can be used for students in other grade levels as well. Let’s Grow Akron and the Summit Food Policy Coalition host several education programs throughout the year. Therefore, they can use some of our material in their education programs as well.

Despite our outcome not aligning with our original intentions, Shanon Donnelly recently praised our contributed to Akron’s community gardening network. He has found multiple instances of inefficiency when multiple groups of people were trying to do the same thing. One
example was two different efforts competing for Knight Foundation grant money when they could have combined forces to create a single strong proposed project. In the same way, Theresa Beyerle requested to sit on our initial meeting with Lisa Nun as she had been trying to get a hold of Lisa for a while. Our research allowed other people involved in Akron community gardens to understand what other individuals are doing. Through the course of our interviewing, we would spread knowledge of what we had learned while gaining new knowledge to pass on in the future. Essentially, we were acting like bees during pollinations, gathering new ideas during an interview and sharing those ideas in the future while repeating the cycle. This networking greatly helped many of the leaders of community gardening in Akron and reinforced the importance of teamwork to reach a common goal.

**Limitations**

Collectively as a team, we learned many different lessons throughout the process of our leadership experience project. Throughout our research process, we learned the importance of community gardens, organizations participating in the community garden initiative within the Akron area, and education programs and the lack there of. There were enough groups already involved in the community garden movement therefore there wasn’t anything for us to contribute. As a group, we learned the importance of networking with individuals within the community garden community around Northeast Ohio. Interacting with other people, developing contacts, and exchanging information allowed us to get our names and project initiative out for people to start talking about. During the process of networking, we were able to see the importance of building these contacts really impacted our project output. If it wasn’t for the networking we did during the research phase of our project, determining the education focus for our project and school location would have been rather difficult. Developing professional skills
as a team was another lesson learned throughout the course of this project that directly ties itself together with networking. We organized numerous breakfasts, lunches, and coffee meetings with high profile individuals within the community garden movement. (See Appendix C for a table detailing the meetings and specific individuals) Professionalism during these meetings was important to our success. During our meetings, we needed to demonstrate polite behavior especially since each individual took time out of their busy schedules to meet with us. Taking notes, greeting the individual with a firm handshake, and listening to the conversation are all professional actions that we demonstrated as a group.

Staying on task and narrowing in on ideas is definitely a lesson we learned collectively as a group. It was important for each member of the group to stay on task with their assigned jobs in order to complete this project effectively. By starting this project a year ago, it was important to stay on task making sure everyone in the group kept their notes up to date, were aware of due dates, and regularly communicated with one another. At the beginning of our project, we presented new ideas weekly based on our findings. Since we were still in the research phase, many ideas helped formulate a direction for our project. However, once we identified that our project would focus on education within the school environment; it was challenging to narrow in on the specific idea.

We learned through the research process of this project the importance of carrying out primary research. Primary research is information gathered first hand rather than from published sources. Our project consisted primarily of primary research such as our meetings interviewing people involved in community gardening. Being able to properly set up meetings, generate a standard list of questions that we would ask during the meetings, and observations at site visits.
If we were given the opportunity to perform the education sessions again, there would definitely be some changes made based on the lessons we learned from doing it the first time around. Adapting to the current situation is a huge lesson that we learned throughout the execution of our education sessions at Crouse Community Learning Center. We expected the students to come right into the classroom, be seated and quiet, and be ready for us to start teaching. However, that wasn’t the case for third grade students. Therefore, we adapted to the situation on hand and rearranged our agenda to best fit the time allotted. Based on the time constraints, if we had to plan this event again we could consider making two education sessions instead of three allowing us more time to focus on the topic. Trying to cram all the material we had prepared was difficult during the twenty minute time slots.

Not only did we adapt to the time constraints, the students ability to complete specific parts of the education sessions differed from what was expected. For example, Rich’s Math Meal Challenge education session originally required the students to compute basic fractions however; the students were not at the appropriate level to do that. Therefore, Rich noticed this and rearranged this education session so the students didn’t compute fractions but were still learning about healthy food. Sydney’s Victory Garden education session called for additional explanation before proceeding with the lesson. Many students were unaware of World War information therefore; Sydney briefly provided a summary of the war for the students to be able to further understand the concept of victory gardens. Quickly adapting to the situation within the classroom with very few minutes to discuss as a group, we learned over to overcome this obstacle and still successfully complete our education sessions.

One of the challenges and lessons we learned as a group was how to present the material we are now experts on to third grade students. We could not just go into the classroom and
explain the concept of victory gardens, community gardens, pollination, and healthy eating the same way we have been discussing it with professionals. The students wouldn’t be able to learn or understand anything if we didn’t translate the information. Based on the research we found, we were able to understand the proper language level that should be presented to the students.

Implications

There can be several conclusions drawn from our educational session projects held at Crouse Community Learning Center. Our project has a lasting impact because the materials are being handed down to Let’s Grow Akron and the Summit Food Policy Coalition. We do not have documentation that our material will be handed down to those organizations. However, we communicated with Lisa Nunn from Let’s Grow Akron over the phone about providing her with our materials. Also, we spoke with Miss Julie from Miss Julie’s Kitchen in person, who spearheads the education committee for the Summit Food Policy Coalition. We let both individuals know that we would be in contact with them after our project was completed. Both of those organizations will be able to use our materials and educate other students on pollination, victory gardens, and healthy eating. The Summit Food Policy Coalition is composed of an education committee which will be able to benefit from our material. The good thing about the topics we chose to teach, the information will not change and can always be reused. Our education sessions provided an opportunity for the 3rd grade students to make a change and help increase the importance of healthy eating and community gardens. The 3rd grade students were able to see how passionate the three of us were on the topic, therefore encouraging them to pursue anything they are passionate about.

Julia Spangler, the 3rd grade teacher at Crouse Community Learning Center that we worked with, wants to propose our project to higher school board members within the Akron
Public School District. She wants to implement this project or a variation of our project with different material into the school curriculum since the students thoroughly enjoyed it. Julia felt the students really learned something throughout our time teaching. Not only did they pay attention to the visitors in the classroom but effectively engaged themselves in the activities.

**Leadership Lessons**

In addition to our group learning outcomes, individually each member of the group learned lessons throughout the process of this leadership experience project.

**Kaitlyn’s Reflection.** Over a year ago during this time, Sydney and Rich approached me to join their Leadership Experience Project focused on community gardening. I did not have a strong passion for community gardens and urban civic ecology. I was somewhat aware of the impact of community gardens in society and several locations of community gardens within the Cleveland area but, that was all I knew. After researching the topic of community gardens in depth and speaking with friends and family on the idea, I felt this would be a good project to pursue. The amount of knowledge and large impression that I could leave on the community really grasped my interest. Now looking back at everything I learned and the impact we made on the community, I am so glad I pursued this Leadership Experience Project.

Throughout the process of the project, I learned many things about myself and working with others. Being an accounting major, I have a very black and white perspective. When I look at a task, I see only two ways to do things, the process needed to get to the end goal and then will execute. However, that was not the case with this project. We started out with a goal to build a community garden in Akron which we found would not be the best idea, after completing our research. Therefore, we were back to square one determining another goal for our project. I remember Kevin explaining to us a year ago that the project we determine now will not be the
actual project we completed. It was very difficult for me to work on this project at times knowing that our end result was going to change several times throughout the process. I had to understand how the changing of our end goal several times would be okay. I further developed my networking and professional skills during the Leadership Experience Project.

The different skills Sydney, Rich and I brought to the team allowed us to be very successful in the completion of this project. However, both of their personalities differ from my own which challenged me throughout this process. I learned to be open to listening to the many ideas that were proposed by my group members for project based on the research we found. I expanded my ability to effectively work with a team throughout this year long project as well. I feel this Leadership Experience Project prepared me to tackle future projects when I enter into the work world. I am able to effectively perform primary research which is an important lifelong skill. I found it extremely rewarding to teach other students and educate them on the material I previously learned myself. I feel it is important to learn something new every day and I was honored to be able to teach those students new information that they can carry forward forever. I hope the 3rd grade students were inspired by me to continue learning and maybe one day educate others on a topic they are passionate about. The topic of community gardens is so influential to the community, the knowledge the students learned can be carried forward to their lives outside of school and for the rest of time. I am excited to see the lasting impact our education program will have on students, the community, and the community gardening programs within the Akron area.

Sydney’s Reflection. I first became aware of community gardens in the summer of 2013 while working as an intern for Ohio City Incorporated, a community development corporation on the near west side of Cleveland. I was inspired by the sense of community that Kentucky Garden
brought to the neighborhood. It serves as a meeting point for residents, outdoor classroom for elementary school students and food source for low-income neighbors. These are the positive benefits that I want to bring to my own community. This same summer, I became very conscientious of my own health, nutrition and fitness which further fueled my curiosity in how my interests aligned with benefits from community gardening.

I made an instant connection with Rich while in Italy when we both expressed a mutual interest in healthy eating. This coincided with talking about healthy eating options in Akron and how we were both unaware of community gardens in the area. We both mutually decided to take on a leadership experience project with the intent of learning more information about Akron community gardens and eventually creating a garden in a neighborhood that needs it most. With Kaitlyn on board, the team had formed and it was time to begin.

Despite our outcome not aligning with our original intentions, I believe we have contributed greatly to Akron’s community gardening network. The most important outcome of our project is that our research allowed other people involved in Akron community gardens to understand what other individuals are doing. Through the course of our interviewing, we would spread knowledge of what we had learned. Essentially, we were acting like bees during pollinations, gathering new ideas and sharing ideas from people we had already interviewed. This networking greatly helped many of the leaders of community gardening in Akron.

I thought this project was going to be very easy. Thus, I was very comfortable with taking on a Leadership Experience Project while completing my senior economics honors project. However, easy was not the word to describe this project. I had to put aside my economist methodology for accomplishing research and develop business skills such as interviewing, budgeting, setting up meetings and problem solving by placing ideas into buckets. I was lucky to
have been able to work with both Rich and Kaitlyn who brought their own strengths to the table and allowed me to balance them both out. I was able to use my feasibility analysis skills while keeping an open mind with every new piece of information. Most importantly, I learned how to be a team player rather than an independent leader. I feel as though this project has well set me up with the necessary skills and knowledge to tackle important tasks in the future. This Leadership Experience Project has allowed us to provide a tangible and sustainable benefit to the community of Akron. I am looking forward to seeing our Victory Garden Trunk Show at many future Summit Policy Food Coalition and Akron Public School events.

Rich’s Reflection. Throughout this process I learned several practical intangible skill sets such as teamwork, leadership, and persistence. More importantly I learned a lot about myself, because there were times throughout this project where we were stuck in a rut and had no clue or direction. These are the times that taught me a lot about the type of person I am and also showed me the potential I have after graduation. Despite our completely different work styles Sydney, Kaitlyn, and I worked really well together. One thing I learned in this project is I can sometimes be over-dominating in discussion and debate. I remember specifically one of the first weeks of the semester I had the “perfect” idea. Kevin persistently told us to be cautious of falling in love with any one idea however, I did it anyway. During this discussion, Sydney kept making a point of saying that we are far away from our final idea considering we had many more people in the community to interview. Now that our project has been carried out I look back at how silly and naive I was early on to think I figured it out.

Our persistence as a team really helped up complete and succeed in this project. There were periods throughout the semester where I can remember each team member individually stepping up and taking lead to get us past a road-block in our project. Specifically, at times in our
project there were certain strengths each of us had that were very useful in getting us through the project. Sydney had excellent research skills early on in the project that helped us identify the initial problem we were trying to solve. Kaitlyn provided structure and follow-up with our various side projects such as setting up meetings and site visits to various community gardens. Personally, I combined both networking and creative skills that helped us move forward through many rejected ideas. By contributing those skills, they ultimately helped narrow us down to our final project.

As I mentioned before persistence was key in finishing this project. That is without a doubt the skill I improved on the most throughout this project. I’ve learned that some may classify me as an “idea guy”, someone who thinks of many quality ideas but immediately thinks of another before he finishes the original idea. That may be a harsh definition but managing my many commitments I feel like more follow through could have produced better results. Sydney and Kaitlyn were great influences on me throughout this project. I remember at times in the semester I became stagnant and uninspired to continue. Their persistence inspired me to work harder redefining my focus. Overall, this project showed me what can result from hard work, persistence, and collaboration.
GROWING COMMUNITY GARDENS THROUGH EDUCATION

Works Cited

Akron Childrens. (n.d.). *For kids, a fit future starts today.* Retrieved April 20, 2015, from
https://www.akronchildrens.org/cms/child_obesity_programs/


Ohio Department of Health. (December, 2008). *Healthy Ohio Community Profiles.* Office of Healthy Ohio, Columbus, Ohio.


Appendix A
Standard Interview Questions

Interview Questions:

1. What is the status of community gardens in Akron?

2. What resources are needed in order to improve and expand the community garden initiative in Akron?

3. Is there anyone else we should talk to?

4. Anything that you believe would be beneficial for us to see?

5. Is there something else we should focus on?

6. If you had a magic wand, what would you change right now?
Appendix B
National Community Garden Conference Material/Pictures

Questions Brainstormed from the Defining Community Empowerment Education Session
1. What is your role in community gardens?
2. Are there leadership development opportunities in your community garden?
3. How do you measure whether or not people are contributing?
4. Is there a spokesperson or an official?
5. If you have an idea who do approach for implementation of said idea?
6. Who do you approach with a problem or issue?
7. How or who recruits new members then develops them into leaders?

Research Documents Used from Conference:

Community Garden Guidelines Exercise.pdf
Developing a Vision for Your Garden Exercise.pdf
Appendix C
Reports/Notes from Garden Visits and Interviews

Notes from Meeting with Shannon Donnelly
Contacts to explore:
- Glendale – Karen Edwards
- Let’s Grow Akron
  - Lisa Nun
- Julie’s Kitchen
  - Julie E Stow
- Lynn Greggers (book on community gardens in Cleveland)
- Wil Hemker
- Summit County Food Coalition (rich white people)
- Jeremy Spencer
- Kurt Mulhouse (City of Akron planning)
- Akron Grows
- Francisca Richter- 5/2 Federal Reserve Bank
- Contact: Terry Schwarz

Some things to investigate:
- South East Asian Akron
- SVSM
- Refugee Migrant Population
  - Market farm (however, supposedly we cannot sell things from a garden)
- Neighborhood Foods- grant program
- Hydroponic garden (lettuce/tomatoes)

Notes from Kentucky Garden, Ohio City Cleveland Site Visit
Contact Person:
Michael Mishaga
1828 W 45th St
Cleveland, OH 44102-3406
e-mail: michaelmishaga@yahoo.com
cell: 216 798-3426

- This garden has year round access for the gardeners.
- It is a gated garden topped with barbed wire to keep out homeless, vandals and deer.
- Garden brings in people and the homeless to teach them about the garden and gardening.
- This garden promotes a stress-free environment and safe area. It is an engaging place to spend time. Families and Children of all ages have plots and work in the Kentucky Garden.
- The garden has a brick building that holds all the garden equipment for gardeners.
- Greenhouse that holds freshly harvested garlic and the windows are coated to diffuse the sunlight
- It is an organic garden created in 1977 in conjunction with the school across the street.
- Origin:
  - Dr. Erickson has a plot in this garden
- Intergenerational school has 2 plots in the garden and Dr. Erickson works to get people and students involved.
- Established from residents and council people interested in starting a garden. Word of mouth started this garden because they needed to get people involved and wanting to purchase plots.
- They divide up work by allocating volunteer hours. People are placed into work groups. For example, the garlic pickers of the market garden plots were one specific work group.
- People with full plots need to volunteer 10 hours a year.

Structure of the Garden:
- rain barrels, a greenhouse, a brick storage building, hoses, market garden, 133 plots 20x20, compost area, barrel grill and park benches, barbed wire fence
- around 25 plots get filled every year when opened until around July 1st then the plots get covered up to prevent weeds from growing.
- One plot which is 20x20 is $16.
- The Kentucky Garden is city owned and representatives meet with the community development department and water department.
- Parks and Recreation pays for the water but the gardeners pay for the irrigation system and upgrades.
- They are going to redo their greenhouse and focus on rainwater collection by redoing their greenhouse and distributing the rainwater.
- This garden was outreach programs for at risk students.
- They get their money through fundraising and grant writing
- The people of this garden got to smaller community gardens to help and provide assistance and their tools..
- They receive woodchips for paths in the garden by trading things to other organizations like churches and schools.
- Once people start planting their garden, they need to spend about 2-4 hours each week maintaining the crops.
- Word of mouth created small community ties.

Program we could assist with:
- Fundraiser for new irrigation
  Who? Natasha
  Where? HOB
  When? Last Saturday in August
  What? Yoga

Another location to consider:
- St. Paul’s Patch
Notes from Meeting at Community Garden at Medina Food Bank

- Medina Community Garden is located right next to the Feeding Medina County Building (which is a food bank).
- All of the food being grown in the garden goes right to the food bank.
- The garden is 1 acre and this it’s second year open
- There were many donations that helped this garden succeed. Donations of money and seeds that could be planted.
- Certain companies can sponsor a plot of land for a certain amount of money
- Smith Brothers Company donated the compost
- 1 in 4 children in Medina don’t have any food
- The Medina Schools provide students with no money or food, with food bags on Friday for the weekend. If they weren’t given these bags the students would go hungry all weekend.

Just in 1 elementary school in Medina 60% of students were given a food bag to take home for the weekend.

Contacts:
- I spoke with Emily Seminik who volunteers at the garden and plants everything. She provided me with her contact information.
- Sandy Calvert: executive director of the garden. She can provide me with detailed data and research on the garden. I will make outreach to her.
  330-241-2128 office number
- Ron Maitland (family friend) is in charge of the garden and has done a large amount of work with it over the past two years. I am going to contact him to receive information as well.
  rmaitland@zoominternet.net
  330-241-9135 Cell
- John Plank: may still work in the garden department at the Medina Home Depot which would be a great resource

Information about the garden itself:
- Need an area that gets good sun, like all day sun
- Make sure the garden is completely fenced in and every whole is covered because animals will find a way in
- Put compost in the garden along with the dirt and it will make it soft and easier to plan seeds
- Need to rototill the plot area really well before planting anything
- If you don’t want to rototill the ground, you can by wood/boards from Home Depot or Lowes and build a frame which can be filled with soil, dirt and plant seeds
- Need to find large cheap land!! Chick Master loaned Feeding Medina County a large space of land for a $1 a month
- 10 by 10 plots might be a good starting point for the garden
- Make sure to put stakes around the plot in line with each other so that you know where to drop the seeds. If you have people helping you plant the seeds, you might want to put a string down from one stake to another so that the volunteers know where to plant the seeds.
- Need to plant wildflowers to attract the bees
- If you plant berries, need to cover the bushes so that the birds stay away
- Perennials: plants that come back every year on their own: roses, hastas, snapdragons, lavender,
- Annuals: plants that need replanted every year
- When planting the garden, if possible leave enough space between the rows to go through the garden with the push mower to get all the weeds instead of hand picking them all.

- Watering is extremely important. Depending on how dry it is and how much rain we get will determine how often to water. Right now they water about every two days.
Notes from Meeting with Emily Bean-Community Investment Officer for Akron Community Foundation

Information Emily Provided:
- Emily’s primary job is funding the various community and rain gardens
- Summit County Food Policy Coalition: provides grants for people starting gardens and the Akron Community Foundation Funds them
- Akron Community Foundation: funds Neighborhood Partnership Program which has organization various gardens
- Glendale Community Garden Project: was the most recent project that received funding from the Akron Community Foundation
- there are certain organizations that want to start a garden such as homeless shelters
- we could possibly reach out to those places for a garden location

People to Contact:
- Let’s Grow Akron
  Contact Lisa Nunn: 330-745-9700, letsgrowakron@gmail.com
  - she will provide us with a lot of information at this point
  - she works with various different types of gardens including rain gardens
  - some of the gardens she works with are intergenerational and with immigrants
  - she knows how many gardens are around Akron, the best locations, worst locations, and all other possible information that we might want to know
- Sarah Vradenburg comes to the gardens and provides expert advice on how to sustain the garden and positive feedback. She used to work at Ohio State. She would be a good contact person.
  Sv0614@gmail.com

Notes from Meeting with Theresa Beyerle and Rodger Reed

Crown Point:
- Nonprofit organization
- produces organic veg. and plants and sells the plants at a plant sale
- works with other gardens to bring other crops together
- it does receive some grants
- people can purchase shares and that determines how many volunteer hours are required
  - $500 shares-10 volunteer hours
  - $400 shares-20 volunteer hours

People/Locations to Contact:
1. Lisa Nunn
2. Elena Goodrich: Trustee in Bath Township
   - Community garden start up
   - there was an article in the Akron Beacon Journal about her and the startup garden
3. Paula Davis: Keep Akron Beautiful
4. Akron Food Bank
5. Sheryl Smith: Neohouse
6. Shannon Donnelly: Teacher at the University of Akron
7. University Park Neighborhood (Located by Summa)
   - the soil was very back so they couldn’t plant anything this year
8. Howe Meadow National Park: Farmers Market
   -Saturday’s 9-12pm (Down on Riverview Rd.)
9. Dan Flowers: could provide us with other values of food that Smuckers might want to invest in and help with our project
10. Denay Akert
11. Ted Curtis
12. Hattie Garden
   -Community Garden by Edgewater Homes that is working with the Akron Zoo
13. Old Trail School Community Garden Project
14. Chris Uhas-AMHA
15. Mike Carter
16. John Valley: works for the City of Akron that would be a good person to talk to
17. Russ Pry: County Executive who talked to us while we were at Breakfast
   (330) 643-2624
18. Miss Julie’s Kitchen would be a great person and location to visit

Notes from Meeting with Lisa Nunn
Let’s Grow Akron:
   -Nonprofit community garden organization that creates and supports community gardens and beautification sites as well as backyard gardens in neighborhoods with limited access to fresh food and green space. Our Mission is to overcome urban blight and alleviate hunger in the community by teaching people to grow, prepare, and preserve their own food and working alongside them to beautify neighborhoods.
   Email: letsgrowakron@gmail.com
   Phone: (330)745-9700

Gardens to look at/People to Contact:
1. Sesame Street Garden
   -service learning garden that was done in 2010
   -down the street from Lets Grow Akron Office
2. Might want to look into the Summer Spouts Program though the Cleveland Public Schools
3. Neighborhood Network of University Park
   -meets the first Tuesday of every month on East Arlington Street
   -their main focus is Urban Agriculture
4. Sarah Vradenburg-Master Gardener

Issues with Starting a Gardens:
- Some gardens are successful and others are not
- it’s hard to follow through with the garden, the maintenance that is involved
- people from Fairlawn don’t come to Summit Lake to see or help with those gardens since it is not close to them.

Lisa’s Advice:
- Lisa is pushing for Stronger Community Garden leaders
she highly recommends maybe starting a annual fundraiser to bring awareness of everything that is going on in the community regarding community garden programs, food deserts, food awareness...etc.

- she wants to bring more awareness on cooking and canning
  (there are cooking and canning classes every Saturday)
- take a look at food desert areas that can be identified through maps made by the City of Akron and other organizations

**Notes from Two Follow Up Meetings with Theresa:**

**People to Contact:**
1. Lisa Nunn
2. Nancy: executive from Crown Point
3. Chris Norman: Director of East Akron Neighborhood Development Committee
   Email: cnorman@eande.org
4. Veronica Sims: Akron Summit Community Action (can provide some Summit Food Policy information)
5. Todd Shaver: Assistant Director of Akron off Campus Services who runs the Adolph Street Garden and does a lot of work with the Neighborhood Network University Park
   Email: tshaver@uakron.edu
   Office: Student Union 152
6. Beth Knorr: Market Manager with Countryside Conservancy; Member of Summit Food Policy Coalition and heads up their Food Access subcommittee.
   - heavily engaged in those locally and brings a broad background plus serves on a few state-level policy groups looking at urban/community gardening and food access.
   Email: farmersmarket@cvcountryside.org
7. Sarah Vradenburg: Summit Food Policy Coalition
   Email: sv0614@gmail.com
8. Lynn Gregor: Education Coordinator at Crown Point
   - used to work at the Cleveland Botanical Gardens and helped teach intercity kids on urban gardening in Cleveland

**Upcoming Events:**
- GAINS Network Meeting @ Musica in Akron on October 8th. Networking begins at 5:30, program starts at 6:15
- Summit Lake Mini Markets hosted by the Summit Food Policy Coalition Food Access Committee
- Countryside Farmers’ Market at Howe Meadow @ 4040 Riverview Rd. Peninsula, OH 44264 Saturdays 9am to Noon May 10th through October 25th

**Summit Food Policy Coalition Meeting Notes**

**Policy Committee Report: Parcel Assessment**

Chris Norman

- he provided a handout with parcels of land throughout the city of Akron that were surveyed.
Food Access Committee Report: Summit Lake Mini Markets and Local Food System Assessment

-Beth Knorr (See handout provided)
-Goal for next year is to have mini markets in other areas of Akron and not just in summit lake if they receive enough funding
-Currently submitted proposal to the United Way for more funding in order to make more programs

Educational Series Committee Report: It’s never too late to plant

Ms. Julie from Ms. Julie’s Kitchen-
November 3rd at 6pm at the Akron Food Bank there is a meeting discussing next year’s educational food program.
The program that was just held recently had 15 people enter and they all made a variety of salsa that was judged and there were winners presented.
-Students from the school that the event was located come and participated as well

NeighborFood Committee Report: Sarah Vradenburg and Lisa Nunn

-When the program first started the Akron Community Foundation provided 5000 grants to 10 gardens in the Akron area. The people who wanted the money submitted a proposal. This past year 12 gardens were provided with money from the grant.
-Ellet community garden
-One thing these people mentioned was that life gets in the way of gardening which is what we have heard from a lot of people
-Problem with Ellet Garden: (plant a row for the hungry program)
-people would just show up and take the food and not work for the food.
-not many people volunteering or wanting to take care of the garden
-however there are a lot of people who live in the neighborhood that are into drugs and crime. Some of those people helped in the gardens and they could see a transformation with those people
-island community garden on kling street
-a few gardens in the firestone park area

“To plant a garden is to believe in tomorrow”-Audrey Hepburn

Orientahouse-Place where gardeners can get help because the people there need to do community service hours so if the garden has someone to supervise these people, they would be a great help in assisting with the garden needs

Urban Vision Garden-Hydroponics

Notes from Meeting with Lynn Gregor

What Lynn Does:
-Educational Programmer for Crown Point Ecology Center
-also program coordinator for Cleveland through the OSU extension
-Managed Summer Sprout Program in Cleveland
-gardened with Kids through some of the Cleveland schools and summer educational projects
-helped start Market Gardens in Cleveland by identifying food deserts

Cleveland Community Gardens:
-the City is very supportive of the gardens
-were recognized as for a world renown school gardening project
-she has seen that a lot of gardens started in Cleveland that start and are stuck with until the end
-community gardens have been in the program for a long time in Cleveland
-about 20 new gardens would start a year when she worked there but about 15-20 would not return for the next year either
-there are about 175 actual gardens in Cleveland
-gardens in Cleveland are managed by the city and the city help provide education and funding

Weakness of Gardens in Akron:
-there isn’t enough leadership in Akron to bring all the gardens together and organize what garden is doing what and when they are doing it.
(In Cleveland, she was the program coordinator so she was that person who talked with all the gardens and figured out what everyone was doing)

NeighborFood Initiative:
-talk to Sarah Vradenburg about it
-sometimes have educational programs and training for students

Dig In! Book on how to garden found on the cuyohoga.osu.edu and search under urban agriculture

Veronica Sims: Akron Summit Community Akron

Crown Point:
-Nancy Wolff-Director at Crown Point Ecology Center; Lynn is going to get me in contact with Nancy so she can provide us with a tour or Crown Point
-115 acres of land and 10 acres certified organic farm land
-funded by the Dominican sisters and the land used to be a family farm when they bought it
-CSA:
-160 shares of produce and people will pay for the shares up front so the farmers get the money when they need it most
-if you purchase shares then once the crops are ready in the fall you will go pick up your basket of food at Crown Point
-if you buy shares you also need to volunteer at Crown Point for a certain amount of time depending on the amount of shares that you buy
-winter shares are available because they have heated high tunnels
-there are 4 farmer apprentices, 1 farmer manager, and another farmer
-Educational Programs-there is a children’s garden at Crown Point so the students can actually have hands on practice in the garden...they bring in students who can’t always afford it through grants they receive and people also sign up for the programs who can afford it
- Sweat Lodge and Medicine Wheel are Native American traditions that Crown Point is trying to implement.
- Donations from the farm are always given to the Food Bank... not based on if we have some left we will take it to the food bank. It’s always and a certain amount of food.
- Huge plant sale in May.
- Everything grown at Crown Point is organic.

*If she had a magic wand this is what she would do:*
  - Put money into the schools for educational programs.
  - The schools pay for librarians but why not gardeners?
  - Having educational programs about gardening would be so beneficial and transform so many things having a trickle effect. There would be hands on activities and working in the garden, learn more about food and healthiness, and then they would continue to garden in the future and teach other people.
  - Support current community garden projects.
  - Streamline and bring everything through a website or resource. Maybe a paper copy and how to get everything together like where to get land, donate food, how people can get food.

"Don’t Build a Garden and Hope they will come”

**Meeting Notes with Chris Norman**

Chris Norman is the Director of Urban Planning for the East Akron Neighborhood Development Committee.

*Information Provided By Chris Regarding Community Gardens:*
- Tuesday, October 21st 6-8pm Summit Food Policy Coalition Public Meeting at Akron Public Library.
- Neighborhood Foods: program of the Summit Food Policy Coalition that is put on by Lisa Nunn.
  - Provides grants and people apply for money to for new start-up gardens.
- Struggling with gardens in Summit County because of not enough funding and staffing. There needs to be a group of people that can take care of the gardens on a regular basis. Right now volunteers and volunteer time is how things get started here.
- Summit Food Policy Coalition: is a network of people from all organizations. They have a steering committee now that we can also meet with if we wanted to. They are not a 501C3 corporation. They work with the United Way because they are a funded non-profit agency. Chris has to submit his proposals to the United Way in order to get projects approved.
- CrownPoint: started a food farm with the Akron Food Bank.
- Wonder Farm/City Garden is a garden that was formed on a vacant parking lot. Called a lasagna garden because they just stick layers of mulch and soil on top of it. So when they water it or it rains the water doesn’t run off the concrete it stays in the garden.
- Food Assessment will come out by October 31st which was funded by the Akron Committee Foundation. It would be a great resource to look at. (Can contact Chris to receive that information)

**People to Contact:**
2. Lisa Nunn
3. Sarah Vradenburg
4. Ms. Julie’s Kitchen
5. Beth Knorr: started up Pop Smith which are gourmet popsicles; her husband worked for Crown Point. She started these Mini Markets located within Summit Lake that would benefit those in the surrounding communities and allow people with not much money to purchase food. They could use food stamps. If they spent 15 dollars they would receive 15 dollars free.

**Positives of Community Gardens:**
- Community gardens add value to the surrounding areas and beautify the land. Beautification is a large pro to the community garden initiative.
- People start the gardens and are all gung ho about starting gardens and by September they don’t want to do it or have the ambition anymore.

*If he had a magic wand this is what he would do:*
- He would want more support of market gardens and training programs that would educate people on gardening just like Cleveland has because it is really successful there.
- Economic development
- Local food incubator where people can share things

**Meeting with Beth Knorr**
- Beth Knorr is from Countryside Conservancy (Sydney and I attended the Farmers Market in Bath that she puts on every Saturday throughout certain day and then they move in to the Old Trail School.)
- She explained to us the farmers market and the vendors that were there.
- Countryside Conservancy has been around for a decade
- Talked about the Summit Lake Mini Markets that was discussed in the Summit Food Policy Coalition meeting as well
- She is really big on to providing food to those who really need it therefore she uses this food program called carrot cash
- Carrot Cash—match food stamps with money so that people can buy food up to 15 dollars (EBT Electronic Benefit Transfer which is an option for people with not much money)

**People to contact/places to check out:**
- Jill Oldhum from Summit Food Policy Coalition would be a good person to speak with
- (She provided us with the same names or people that we have already talked to..Lisa Nunn, Sarah Vradenburg etc.)
- Website to check out: localharvest.org or local harvest.org
- Beth suggested that it might be harder to find someone who is just as passionate about the project we start so maybe think about making it into a career

*If she had a magic wand and would change or implement a project this is what she would do:*
- Permanent locations for farmers market where they could sell food all night

**Meeting with Ms. Julie from Ms. Julie’s Kitchen**
- Growing Hope Educational Series starting in Jan.
  Educational Series monthly meetings November 3rd at 6pm at the Food Bank
- Food Access Committee Meeting
  - 3 mini markets in Summit Lake which is where she lives
  - helping with these upcoming programs might be a good program for us
- Taste and Make it: she goes in corner stores and helps people make food and explain to them about fresh produce. Through ASCA

If she had magic wand this is what she would do:
- Educating people on community gardens and healthy food is important!!! She would love to see more educational programs and sessions for people

### Meetings with High Profile Individuals within the Community Garden Movement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When?</th>
<th>Where?</th>
<th>Who?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April, 2014</td>
<td>Shannon Donnelly’s Office</td>
<td>Sydney, Rich, Kaitlyn, Shannon Donnelly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 10th, 2014</td>
<td>Akron Family Restaurant</td>
<td>Sydney, Rich, Kevin Smith, Kaitlyn, Rodger Reed, Theresa Beyerle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 16th, 2014</td>
<td>The Game Grill and Bar</td>
<td>Sydney, Rich, Kevin Smith, Lisa Nunn, Theresa Beyerle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 1st, 2014</td>
<td>Theresa Beyerle’s Office</td>
<td>Kaitlyn, Theresa Beyerle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 16th, 2014</td>
<td>East Akron Neighborhood Development Corporation</td>
<td>Kaitlyn, Rich, Chris Norman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 18th, 2014</td>
<td>Countryside Farmer’s Market at Howe Meadow</td>
<td>Sydney, Kaitlyn, Beth Knorr, Miss Julie from Miss Julies Kitchen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 21st, 2014</td>
<td>Starbucks in Polsky</td>
<td>Lynn Gregor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 21st, 2014</td>
<td>Akron Public Library</td>
<td>Summit Food Policy Coalition Meeting: Sydney, Kaitlyn, Sarah Vradenburg, Chris Norman, Beth Knorr, Miss Julie, Lisa Nunn, Lynn Gregor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 7th, 2014</td>
<td>Cilantro Thai and Sushi Restaurant</td>
<td>Sydney, Kevin Smith, Sarah Vradenburg</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D
Documents for Education Sessions

Pollinator Activity Documents:

- Pollination Flyer.pdf
- Pollination Flyer 2.pdf
- Pollination Handout.pdf
- Flower Diagram.pdf
- Cloverbud Activity Sheet Learning Activity Pollinator Games.pdf
- Pollination Lesson Plan.pdf

Math Meal Challenge Documents:

- Math Meal Challenge Lesson Plan.pdf

Examples of Food Choices used in Activity:

- Slice of Pizza.pdf
- Celery and Peanut Butter.pdf
- Fruit Salad.pdf
- veggie soup.pdf
- Salad.pdf
- Bagel with Peanut Butter.pdf
- Pasta with Veggies.pdf
- Fruit Smoothie.pdf
- Burrito.pdf

Other food items used for this activity were: Peanut Butter and Jelly Sandwich, Lettuce Wraps, Kale Chips, Chips and Hummus, Chips and Guacamole, Grilled Cheese, Chocolate Cake, Chips and Dip, Chili, Chicken Parmesan, Cheeseburger, and Cereal and Fruit

Victory Garden Documents:

- Flyer 1.pdf
- Flyer 2.pdf
- Flyer 3.pdf
- Flyer 4.pdf
- Flyer 5.pdf
- Flyer 6.pdf
- Flyer 7.pdf
- Postcard 1.pdf
- Postcard 2.pdf
- Postcard 3.pdf
- Postcard 4.pdf
- Victory Garden Student Handout.pdf
- Victory Garden Vocabulary.pdf

Agenda for the Full Teaching Day Document:

- Education Session Day Agenda.pdf

Feedback from Julia Spangler:

- Feedback from Julia Spangler.pdf
Appendix E
Pictures from Education Sessions

Pollination Activity
Meal Math Challenge

Victory Gardens
Appendix F
Pictures from Donation/Planting of Berry Bushes