

Press Release: Victory Gardens at Arlington Public Schools Donating to Local Food Pantries

Descripción

Community-led initiative has goal to produce 2,500 pounds of fresh vegetables.



Victory gardens poster by Wakefield student Renee Whiffen

(Arlington, VA) In response to the COVID-19 global health crisis, Arlington Friends of Urban Agriculture (FOUA) is working to support and expand efforts to grow fresh produce here in Arlington. This global crisis will have long lasting health and economic impacts for our local community, and has pushed thousands into food insecurity. Access to fresh, nutritious produce will become an ever increasing need that can be met, in part, by growing our own food. FOUA is supporting individuals, churches, schools, and other sites who are growing food for our neighbors in need.

Friends of Urban Agriculture and Arlington Virginia Cooperative Extension are partnering with Arlington

Public Schools (APS) to turn classroom gardens into Victory Gardens to grow fresh vegetables to support the community. We are working in partnership with APS Garden Coordinators at Wakefield High School, Thomas Jefferson Middle School, Hoffman-Boston Elementary, and Tuckahoe Elementary to maximize their gardens' capacities. Our goal for this community-led initiative is to produce 2,500 pounds of fresh produce to donate to local food pantries.

"The community response has been amazing. The garden coordinators and school communities wanted to continue growing even though the schools were closed," said Emily Landsman, FOUA Board Member. "To date, we have recruited over 70 volunteers and several Master Gardeners to assist the APS Garden Coordinators, and have donated over 500 pounds of fresh vegetables."

"When Friends of Urban Agriculture reached out to me in April, I was very happy to learn that they could help us keep our garden going and even expand it," said Ilana Rea, School Garden Coordinator for Hoffman-Boston Elementary School. "We've been able to donate over 145 pounds of fresh vegetables to food pantries here in our own community. We are looking forward to donating much more in the coming months."

"Our local Master Gardeners are providing hands-on, direct support in the gardens, helping plan the gardens and provide technical assistance," said Aisha Salazar, FOUA Board Member and Associate Extension Agent, Family and Consumer Sciences, Virginia Cooperative Extension. "In addition, we hold regular Zoom calls with the garden coordinators, Arlington Virginia Cooperative Extension and volunteers to share experiences and get advice on how to handle pests and issues in the gardens."

We thank Healthy Communities Action Team (HCAT) for donating funds through the Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth to support the school gardens. HCAT is part of the Arlington Partnership for Children, Youth, and Families.

In a related effort, over 2500 pounds of fresh vegetables have been donated to local food pantries by a network of residential, church, school and other gardens in Arlington. Rock Spring Church located at 5010 Little Falls Road, Arlington, Virginia 22207 accepts produce donations on Mondays and Thursdays from noon to 2:00pm. This effort is a partnership between the church, FOUA, Arlington Virginia Cooperative Extension, Master Food Volunteers, Master Gardeners, and Marymount University. In addition, FOUA is coordinating with multiple food pantries throughout the County for targeted distribution to communities in need. More information found here.

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Link to Photo Folder

Link to videos of gardens

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Arlington Friends of Urban Agriculture's mission is to build a resilient, community-driven urban agriculture sector that provides a fair, healthy, sustainable food system for all Arlingtonians. FOUA, an Arlington based nonprofit organization incorporated in 2019, is run by a volunteer board of directors.

Categoria

1. Press Release
2. School Gardens

Etiquetas

1. school gardens
2. victory gardens

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