



HealthVisions Midwest

in collaboration with Purdue Extension Service and the Junior Master Gardener National Program is sponsoring *Health & Nutrition from the Garden* Pilot Projects in Northern Indiana. This project is part of a HealthVisions *Kids Health Initiative* aimed at improving the health habits of minority and low-income youth in the communities served by HealthVisions. The Program began in Lake County in June 2004.

Our goals are:

- To increase consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables
- Raise self-esteem
- Increase physical activity

HealthVisions of Fort Wayne

Purdue Extension Office's Junior Master Gardener (JMG) is a 4-H project that engages children in hands on group and individual learning gardening. Children participating in gardening benefit from greater self esteem but are also more likely to gain better nutritional habits as well.

We accomplished the following:

- Applied and received grant from Indiana Department of Health for \$9,776.00 to implement a physical fitness and nutrition program to combat obesity in adults and children using exercise and gardening
- Partnered with Come As You Are Church/ Fort Wayne Parks Department, and Phoenix Manor Housing Complex and Purdue Extension Office
- Conducted JMG training on May 24, 2004 with Purdue Extension Office in Fort Wayne.
- Implemented gardening program the last week of May.
Phoenix Manor: 5 children 2 volunteers;
Come As you Are Church: 15 children and 6 volunteers





Health Ministry Partnership

launched an amazing gardening program this summer with children from the Center for the Homeless in South Bend. 11 children in 3rd, 4th and 5th grade tended a large garden plot on the campus of St. Mary's College during the months of June, July and August. The children planted, watered, mulched and tried several methods of "critter control". The bountiful harvest is returning to the kitchen at the Center for the Homeless. The summer ended with a picnic using all the vegetables grown by the children.



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LAKE COUNTY GARDENS

Currently, there are four gardens planted in Lake County: Tradewinds Rehabilitation Center of Gary, Indiana; Hobart YMCA and The Katherine House Boys & Girls Club of East Chicago; and St. Timothy's Community Church of Gary, Indiana. In July, each site received ten garden beds along with all the necessary supplies and support in the planting effort. The beds were planted later that same month. The children planted a variety of flowers, fruits and vegetables. The children prepared the garden beds, planted the seeds and are currently maintaining and tracking the gardens. For example, the children are responsible for measuring the plants, tracking the growth and the weather each day in their individual gardens. The children are clearly proud of their efforts and enthusiastic while working in the garden beds.

Approximately fifty children, from seven to thirteen years of age, participate in the program. Throughout the program, the students complete various health and nutrition activities from the *Health & Nutrition from the Garden* workbook. One site has visited a local Farmer's Market and invited local speakers to talk to the students about insects and how they help and hurt plants. St. Timothy's Community Church is waiting for the supply order – and is planning on having their student parishioners plant a fall crop.

This program was partially funded by Lake County Step Ahead.



Our Collaborators and Supporters:

National Junior Master Garden Program

Purdue University

County Extension Services

Indiana Department of Health

Lake County Step Ahead

Earthworks

Menards

Burpee Seeds

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