



Agency Happenings

Grounds for Growth



Community volunteers begin planting the garden

Ashtabula. The project, called Grounds for Growth, will provide fresh, healthy food to those needing assistance.

The location in Ashtabula is near one of two identified “Food Deserts” in the county. “Food Deserts” are geographic areas where mainstream grocery stores are either totally absent or inaccessible to low-income shoppers. Though these stores may be located in the vicinity, they remain unavailable to low-income residents because of high prices and inadequate public transit. “ACCAA is very committed to increasing access to fresh, locally grown food for individuals and families who otherwise could not obtain or afford it,” said Carmen Kuula, coordinator of the project.

With the help of community volunteers and the local vocational school’s Agriculture program, ACCAA planted the garden the first week of July and had their first crop by July 26. “Though the summer was extremely dry, the garden was quite productive and by the end of the season - roughly 8 weeks - ACCAA had delivered bushels of vegetables 21 times to the local soup kitchens and food pantries,” Kuula explained. “That is approximately two to three times per week helping to feed the hungry in Ashtabula County.” ACCAA and the volunteers

also harvested around 60 pumpkins that were sold at the roadside to create some starter funds for next year’s garden. In October, the students from the vocational school helped to clean-up the garden and prepare it for winter.

“Additionally, ACCAA is committed to increasing economic stability for low and moderate income households,” Kuula said. “As part of the Rural Wealth Creation Committee, we hope to pursue activities that will provide training and job opportunities through the production/distribution of local foods.”

The garden is almost an acre in size, 200 feet by 200 feet, and grows zucchini, summer squash, butternut squash, pumpkins, tomatoes, green beans, jalapeno peppers, cauliflower, cucumbers, parsley, herbs and sunflowers. In the first year of the garden, ACCAA delivered approximately 30 dozen zucchini and summer squash, 14 dozen butternut squash, 11 boxes of tomatoes, and multiple bags of beans, carrots and peppers to local soup kitchens and food pantries! Plans are already underway for the 2013 garden.



Volunteers harvest the bounty and prepare for winter