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Meet the Summer Associates By Sarah Bachman



In May, the Wilmington College Center for Service and Civic Engagement welcomed 20 VISTA Summer Associates to the Grow Food, Grow Hope Community Garden Initiative family. They range in age from 19 to 26 and come from a wide variety of backgrounds. Some have a passion for gardening and were eager to put their skills to use. Others just wanted to give back to the Wilmington community and are learning about gardening as they go (like Ray Travis; check out his editorial on pg. 4).

The Summer Associates were put into teams based on their skill sets and put to work in the numerous gardens around town. There are four such teams. One is the Backyard Gardeners, which helps tend the plots of 27 area families on their own land teaches them the basics of gardening.

Another team is the self-described, Dream Team. They work in several areas including maintaining the Wilmington College “Friends of Hope” and Northland Court community garden and hosting garden nights. They also maintain the half acre garden plot at the home of Ian Ziegler, the proceeds of which are distributed at area food pantries. Half of the team also works on public relations for GFGH while the other half helps to run the children’s camps. A third group calling themselves the Garden Hands volunteers at the garden beds at area elementary schools, hosts youth days on the 4th Saturday of each month at the Farmer’s Market, hosts educational activities at the community gardens and works with residents at Cape May Retirement Village.

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Community Gardener Spotlight By April Mays

A perfect embodiment of the mission of Grow Food, Grow Hope is garden participant Christina Cunningham. She is a first year Friends of Hope Community Garden Member and she said she would certainly sign up again next year. “I may have my own garden and still

sign up so I have more produce to give to my family,” said Cunningham. This statement alone speaks volumes as to the impact this summer has had on her family. Christina’s garden will allow her to save money while feeding her family healthy fresh vegetables.



Cunningham was initially attracted to the program because she wanted to save money at the grocery. She is aware of the benefits of eating healthy and gardening.

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The fourth group call themselves the Rascal Rangers. They hosted last weeks Seed, Seed, Sprout Summer Camp and also volunteer at the Wilmington Childcare and Learning Center and the Mulberry St. Community Gardens. They lend a hand at the Crop Museum and come to Community Garden Night each week to read stories and play educational games with the children of the families with plots.

The days start early and the work week flows into the weekend for the teams that work the Farmer's Market and the Community Garden. It has been challenging for some of

them, but most of the Summer Associates say they have really enjoyed their time in the program up to this point, like, Kathryn Coy, who says she has "really enjoyed getting to be outside all summer gardening". All of them have learned valuable skills through working to serve those in need and many say they will take their new gardening skills with them when they leave. Their last day of work for will be August 1st.



The Dream Team from left to right; Ray Travis, Dan Bunnell, Destinee Bilotta, Justin Grimes, Angie Lauver, Ivory Elms, April Mays, Dom Parks & Adrian Boland



The Rascal Rangers from left to right: Brandon Thompson, Andrea Boudreau, Jennifer Kerschner, Zach Hughes, Jessica Fraley & Sahe Wright



The Backyard Gardeners left to right: Aaron Schuschu, Kaity Best, Casey Schaertl, Kathryn Coy



The Garden Hands from left to right: Rachel King, Michael Manfroni, Brad Fuller, Shabria Wilson & Crystal Bradley

Summer Recipe: Broccoli Salad



Ingredients

- 1 teaspoon salt
- 5-6 cups fresh broccoli florets (about 1 pound of florets)
- 1/2 cup toasted slivered almonds
- 1/2 cup cooked, crumbled bacon (optional)
- 1/4 cup of red onion, chopped
- 1 cup of frozen peas, thawed (or fresh peas if you can get them)
- 1 cup mayonnaise
- 2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
- 1/4 cup honey

Directions

- 1 Bring a large pot of water, salted with a teaspoon of salt, to a boil. Add the broccoli florets. Cook 1-2 minutes, depending on how crunchy you want the pieces. It will turn the broccoli bright green, and leave it still pretty crunchy. 2 minutes will cook the broccoli through, but still firm. Set your timer and do not cook for more than 2 minutes, or the broccoli will get mushy. Drain the broccoli and immediately put into a bowl of ice water to stop the cooking. Let cool and drain.
- 2 Combine broccoli florets, almonds, crumbled bacon, chopped onion, and peas in a large serving bowl. In a separate bowl, whisk together mayonnaise, cider vinegar and honey. Add dressing to the salad and toss to mix well. Chill thoroughly before serving.

Yield: Serves 4 to 6.



Summer Camp Success by Dom Parks

It's summer. Wouldn't it be great to have a place to take your child to ensure they have a good time while, at the same time, in a learning environment? Many parents from around the Wilmington area have found just that in the Seed Seed Sprout Children's Camp. This year, Grow Food, Grow Hope will host 2 different day camps. Seed, Seed Sprout is targeted at children ages 3 to 5 years old. This series ran from July 6th to the 8th. The camp introduced children to gardening and eating healthy with various fun and exciting activities.

During the course of the camps, children were dropped off every day at 1pm and then picked up at 4pm. Snacks were provided by the camp along with what the children prepared themselves during the various cooking activities. The next children's camp is scheduled for later in the month. This one will be geared at 6-12 year olds. The Junior Master Gardener Camp



The first day of *Seed Seed Sprout Camp*

begins on July 18th and runs through the 22nd.

During the summer it can be a daunting task to find activities for your child to do while you are busy. So, why not take them to a place that is safe, fun and full of knowledge to be learned. Spaces are already full for this camp, but children attending can expect to play games, do crafts and prepare healthy foods. There is also a good possibility that the giant parachute will make an appearance!

Grow Food, Grow Hope Needs YOUR Help!

We are in great need of a few items to make our season run a little more smoothly. Needed items are:

- Tomato stakes
- Food scale

If you would like to make a donation of any of these items, please call Meghan Otto at (937) 382-6661 ext. 321 or send an email to Meghan_otto@wilmington.edu

Spotlight cont'd

But the benefits of a garden do not stop at the produce, although that is a big perk. Christina hopes to learn how she will be able to garden in her backyard.

Working in the gardens has given Christina a sense of pride to see the things she has



nurtured grow into fresh vegetables. Her favorite part of garden

night is weeding and seeing the growth of the vegetables. She looks forward to harvesting in the coming weeks.

She was most excited about growing broccoli, her favorite vegetable planted this year, but the recent rabbit attacks on the broccoli have resulted in disappointment. Now she is looking forward to and hopeful for the tomatoes to succeed. She hopes to plant cabbage and egg plant next year and to maybe try again with the broccoli.

Family is a very important aspect at the

Grow Food, Grow Hope community gardens. For Cunningham, the gardens have positively affected her family because, "it gives us time together." There are also activities planned for the children each week. Christina said that her daughter enjoys the activities. She said that her daughter will say goodbye to the garden, and "I love you garden."

The best example of why Christina embodies the Grow

Food Grow Hope mission is her commitment to coming to every garden session and even coming during the week at unscheduled times to maintain her bed. Her advice to other Friends of Hope Community Gardeners is to "make sure to attend the scheduled garden nights and come during the week to keep up with the weeding so they can enjoy the garden and garden sessions more." She is certainly going to have fresh produce, as her garden is looking great and maintained and she is learning how to apply this knowledge at home for future gardens.

Want more information? Visit us online at www.growfoodgrowshope.com



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The **Grow Food, Grow Hope Garden Initiative** is a community food project dedicated to increasing access to fresh and nutritious food for the neediest members of our community. By increasing food security, we aim to eliminate the effects of poverty.

To that end, we facilitate a community garden for low-income families, we grow bulk vegetables for area food banks, we organize and fund backyard garden installations around our community, we teach children how to garden and we promote local farmers' markets and local businesses.

By growing a little food, we can sow a lot of hope.

Come grow with us.

