

Community garden provides fresh produce for the hungry

By Kate Irish Collins
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Volunteers with the Scarborough Community Garden spent Earth Day, this past Saturday, planting cold weather seedlings, such as Swiss chard, kale, spinach and lettuce.

In its first, shortened growing season last year, the garden produced 200 pounds of food, which was all donated to the Scarborough Food Pantry.

This year volunteers hope to grow even more produce, according to Steffi Cox, executive director at Project GRACE, which helped to found the garden, along with the St. Nicholas Episcopal Church on Route 1.

The community garden, which is 350 square feet in size, is located on the grounds of St. Nick's, which also provides the water needed to grow the produce including more traditional vegetables like peas, plum tomatoes, cucumbers and string beans, among others.

In addition, the garden is also used to grow herbs from garlic to chive, to lemon thyme and oregano, which clients at the food pantry appreciate just as much as the fresh vegetables, according to Cox.

She said the mission of the community garden is "to grow healthy, organic food for our neighbors" and volunteers are needed to pick produce each Tuesday, and to weed each Wednesday, June through October.

In addition to Project GRACE and St. Nick's, other partners in the Scarborough Community Garden include St. Maximilian-Kolbe Church, the First Congregational Church of Scarborough, Scarborough Garden Club, Scarborough Rotary Club, Kitchen Gardeners International and the Highland Avenue Greenhouse & Farm Market.

Jane Ducott, a warden at St. Nick's who is also a member of the community garden's steering committee, said the garden "had a great first year and we're excited that conversation about fresh food has really taken off in Scarborough. We're really heading down the path of being able to feed the hungry."



Chris Taylor, president of the Scarborough Community Garden's steering committee, talks about the importance of the garden, which donates all its produce to the Scarborough Food Pantry.

And Cox called the garden "a wonderful example of planting hope. There's no reason for people to be hungry. It's a fixable problem. There's no reason (those in need) can't have access to fresh, nutritious food."

She added that "Mainers have a strong tradition of helping people out, neighbor-to-neighbor," which is what the community garden is all about.

Chris Taylor, president of the garden steering committee, said he got involved because he not only enjoys gardening, but also "liked the idea of a garden that feeds those in need. It's very exciting."

He said in the past year the steering committee has learned "a lot about what works and what doesn't" and he's hopeful that the whole process will be "a lot more efficient" in this second growing season.

In addition to providing fresh produce to the food pantry, Taylor said members of the community garden also put together recipe cards that provide a variety of uses for the produce provided by the garden.

He said that a number of clients at the food pantry were surprised at the uses that greens like kale and chard can be put to.

"What's been another nice outcome," Taylor said, is that clients at the food pan-



Working at the Scarborough Community Garden on Earth Day are Steffi Cox, left, executive director of Project GRACE, and garden volunteer Cathy Bennett.

Staff photos by Kate Irish Collins

try are now "talking about food and how to use fresh produce for healthy eating. People are really connecting with each other," which is great.

Cathy Bennett, a member of St. Nick's, decided to volunteer at the community garden this year after seeing "all the good work that was done last year. I really felt inspired and it's a good way to get my hands dirty."

Taylor said in addition to volunteers to help oversee the garden, the steering committee is also looking for any local high school students who might be inter-

A Closer Look
The steering committee of the Scarborough Community Garden is in need of volunteers to help pick produce, weed and provide general garden maintenance. See www.scarboroughcommunitygarden.org for more information and to sign up.

ested in creating a documentary about the community garden and the "big difference it's making. I think it would be really great to tell this story."



Jeff Jones (L) and Dan Warren

SWAN SONG

Today is my last column for the Current (see page four, Greetings From Zip Code 04074).

I've enjoyed writing them over the past decade. I have kept them in a scrapbook. I would like to hear from any of you who have read the 500-plus columns I have written over the years.

Did you love them? Hate them? Some of both? Will you be glad to see me gone? Or will you mourn my loss, and suffer each week without your 04074 fix? (Kidding!).

If you are so inclined, take a minute and drop me an e mail (at jonesandwarren@gmail.com), or a private Facebook message at the Jones & Warren Attorneys at Law page.

I will print them out and scotch tape them into my Current Scrapbook, just like my late mother would have done.

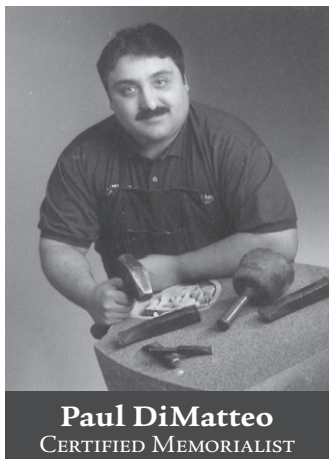
Thanks for letting me write.

I hope you have enjoyed it too.

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