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History of the Garden
In 2013, the New River Valley Health District received funding to support a community garden project in collaboration with the WIC (Women, Infant, and Children) program. Virginia Cooperative Extension-Montgomery County Agriculture and Natural Resources Agent, Kelli Scott, and Virginia Family Nutrition Program’s, Meredith Ledlie Johnson, were approached to think of creative ways to collaborate with the project. Maureen McGonagle came on board as the Farmacy Garden Coordinator, supported by the New River Valley Health District and the WIC program.

The goal of this collaboration was to broaden partnerships and increase participant food security and fruit and vegetable consumption through a community garden project aimed at a low income audience.

How the Farmacy Garden has enhanced each partner’s work:
- Connects health with food production and preparation
- Nutrition Education – use the garden as a nutrition classroom
- Promotes horticulture and awareness of where food comes from
- Supports healthy eating, physical activity, and mental health
- Increases collaboration between organizations serving the same population

The Garden Prescription Program
Health providers at the Community Health Center of the New River Valley write “garden prescriptions” to patients they feel will benefit from activity in the garden including gardening, a walking club, and nutrition education.

The garden prescription program would be replicable in other community gardens. Steps would include approaching local health providers to explain the concept, identifying who in the clinic will be the one to “prescribe” the garden to patients (nurse, social worker, or doctor), training garden volunteers in Motivational Interviewing and other applicable skills for working with participants, and doing ongoing outreach to health providers to maintain interest in the program. The Farmacy Garden’s program outreach includes leaving garden produce with information on the garden in the waiting room of the Health Center.

Why Does This Work in Montgomery County, VA?
- Public transportation is available to the garden site
- Located in a suburban area with a larger population
- Nutrition and gardening education are tied to access
- The garden is physically close to the WIC, DSS, and FQHC offices

Model of Collaboration
The Farmacy Garden is a community garden located in Christiansburg, Virginia. Built in 2014, this garden was created as a way to promote health, increase food security with vegetables, and cultivate a sense of community amongst individuals at or below the 200% poverty line. The Farmacy Garden serves numerous programs with targeted outreach (including SNAP, EFNEP, area food pantries and low-income housing communities), while emphasizing outreach through the WIC program, as well as to patients at the Community Health Center of the New River Valley—a federally qualified health center that writes garden ‘prescriptions’ to their patients as part of their wellness program.

Evaluation
Common Metrics to be Observed starting in 2015:
- Number of volunteers
- Number of volunteer hours
- Number of WIC participants
- Number of Farmacy Garden participants
- Pounds of produce collected from the garden

Pre and Post Surveys of the participants to measure:
- Eating habits and Behavior change
- Expectations of the Program

Contact Info for the Montgomery County Farmacy Garden
- Maureen McGonagle Maureen.McGonagle@vdh.virginia.gov
- Meredith Ledlie Johnson meredil@vt.edu
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Historic Community Garden Projects
- Virginia Cooperative Extension programs and employment are open to all, regardless of age, color, disability, gender, gender expression, gender identity, genetic information, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, ancestry, veteran status, uniformed service, and age.

The Audience
Women, Infant, and Children (WIC) Clients and the broader lower income population of the area (Montgomery County) Expanded to the patients of the New River Valley Community Health Center in Christiansburg, VA, a neighbor of the garden.

The Farmacy Project Garden Prescription Program

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