

Community Gardens: Improving Health and Building Social Equity

Ruth Abad, MEd, MPH, Healthy Communities Specialist, WA State Department of Health; Pat Munts, Small Farms and Acreage Coordinator, WSU Spokane County Extension; John Polin, Executive Director, Housing Authority of Grant County; Rochelle Gause, Kitchen Garden Coordinator, Garden-Raised Bounty (GRuB), Tricia Mortell, Program Manager, Clark County Public Health; Tricia Pace, Public Health Nutritionist, Clark County Public Health; Theresa Cross, Health Educator, Clark County Public Health

© 2009 Washington State Journal of Public Health Practice. All Rights Reserved.

Abstract: Community gardens increase access to fresh produce, support community cohesiveness, and improve economic vitality. The cities of Spokane, Moses Lake, and Mason and Thurston Counties established community gardens in low-income communities. They are successful in developing partnerships to design, build, and sustain their gardens and increasing access to fresh produce for low-income residents. Spokane's garden is located in a Slavic neighborhood; one of Moses Lake's gardens is sponsored by Grant County Housing Authority and the Job Corps; and Garden-Raised Bounty (GRuB) has mobilized volunteers and neighbors to build 2,000 backyard gardens for low income families in Mason and Thurston Counties. The panel will share critical steps needed to establish and sustain gardens, the role community gardens play in improving access to healthy foods for low-income residents, and how community gardens are part of land use policy and zoning.