

COMMUNITY GARDEN PROVIDES ‘HARVEST OF PLENTY’ FOR FOOD PANTRY

Last year, College of DuPage’s 10,000-square-foot Community Garden provided the People’s Resource Center (PRC) in Wheaton with about 140 large grocery boxes “filled to the brim” with fresh vegetables.

This year, an even greater number of DuPage families will receive fresh, organic produce when they pick up their non-perishables at the PRC food pantry. Since June, more than 50 varieties of organic vegetables and herbs in the garden, including carrots, several varieties of lettuce, spinach, tomatoes, pumpkins and zucchini, have been delivered to the pantry, located at 201 Naperville Road in Wheaton.

“Thanks to better soil and a better understanding of organic gardening this year, we have certainly doubled and possibly tripled our harvest,” said Shamili Sandiford, a Wheaton resident and associate professor of biology and field studies at C.O.D.

Located on the southwest corner of Lambert and Fawell behind the Field Studies Center on the college’s Glen Ellyn campus, the garden had its beginnings last year as an interdisciplinary effort to establish an additional service-learning project at the college. Offering a combination of classroom learning and hands-on community service, the Service-Learning program provides a way for students in environmental and biological classes to help others and “put into play” what they’re learning in class, Sandiford said.

“The garden has helped students understand the full-circle of service – they learn about food production and get to see the end result of helping the poor in their community,” she said. “Our service-learning students have been incredibly helpful throughout this summer and fall. It’s been a great experience for everyone involved.”

For more information about the Community garden, call (630) 942-2123, e-mail: sandifor@cdnet.cod.edu. For information on the college’s Service-Learning program, call (630) 942-2655, e-mail: svlrm@cdnet.cod.edu.

#