

URBAN AGRICULTURE ADDRESSING FOOD SECURITY NEEDS OF BAYVIEW HUNTERS POINT

COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE (CSA)

This summer, the Urban Agriculture team at SLUG has been concentrating its efforts on making fresh, local and organic produce readily available to the Bayview Hunters Point communities. We looked beyond our own farms, St. Mary's Urban Youth Farm and the Double Rock Community Garden, for new sources of organic, local and affordable produce for the community. To this end, we have established a connection with Winter Creek Gardens, an organic farm based in Rumsey, CA. Winter Creek runs a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program, which can best be described as a direct marketing program between the farmer and the consumer. The principle of a CSA is to link food producers to their consumers through weekly deliveries of fresh produce. This program gives the consumer the opportunity to know exactly how their food is grown and who is growing it. Many small, organic farms operate CSA programs, giving them a niche market when competing with large-scale industrial farms.

Members of the Winter Creek CSA pay one month upfront for four weekly installments of fruits and vegetables. The farmers at Winter Creek drop off a box of produce every Wednesday to the SLUG office where members can pick up their box the same day. The farmers have worked with us to make their weekly boxes of produce as affordable as possible – just \$10 to \$13 dollars a week for a big, beautiful box of organically grown vegetables and fruits. (If you are interested in joining the CSA, contact Paula Jones at SLUG.) The experience of the CSA at SLUG has led us to explore other options for providing fresh organic fruits and vegetables to the community, such as the creation of a local Farmer's Market in the Bayview Hunters Point area. As part of our outreach efforts to expand the CSA, we have donated boxes of Winter Creek Gardens' produce to many local community and senior centers. Most of the produce grown at St. Mary's and Double Rock is also donated to senior centers, centers for the disabled, or distributed to the local community.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Many people contribute to the success of St. Mary's Urban Youth Farm and Double

Rock Community Garden. The folks in Urban Agriculture would like to recognize the efforts of these hard workers for the contributions they have made to the success of our farms. Students from Lick Wilmerding and Oceana High Schools worked hard at St. Mary's Farm planting collards and zucchini while fulfilling the community service component of their curriculum. A group of 20 Americorp volunteers recently planted potatoes, and



A GCETP volunteer and a youth from the community team up at Double Rock Community Garden to learn about gardening, food, and sharing experiences.

Boy Scout groups and Bike Aid volunteers have helped out at St. Mary's Farm by planting crops and removing weeds.

Summer is the busiest time at the farms, with tours and volunteer groups, flowers blooming and vegetables to be harvested, not to mention the Youth Gardening Internship which brings 60 youth to work at St. Mary's and Double Rock! We are stepping up our outreach efforts through surveys, flyers and workshops at the farms to increase community participation. Both farms organized successful Earth Day events last spring where community members planted vegetables and learned about food production. The Earth Day celebrations were focused on the community garden areas of St. Mary's and Double Rock. These areas contain raised beds or boxes that can be planted and maintained by community mem-

bers throughout the year. Members of the Alemany and Alice Griffith Housing Developments participated in the plantings at their respective sites and are now harvesting delicious vegetables from their flourishing boxes.

YOUTH GARDENING INTERNSHIP

Many of the projects at St. Mary's and Double Rock are a part of the Summer Youth Program at SLUG. The youth work hands-on at the farms for eight weeks out of the summer and learn many different aspects of gardening and horticulture. Some of the projects this summer included planting fruit trees at St. Mary's, installing irrigation, building new pathways, aerating the pond, and working in the native plants area. At Double Rock, the youth landscaped the garden pathways and planted natives in the garden's borders. The youth also got experience harvesting and distributing the food to local communities.

CLEO NELSON COMMUNITY GARDEN

One of the highlights of this past spring at SLUG was the recent renaming of the Sunnysdale Community Garden. The garden was dedicated and named after Cleo Nelson, one of the most enthusiastic gardeners at the Sunnysdale site. A beautiful new garden sign, painted by SLUG artist Bruce Hills, was unveiled at the naming ceremony attended by Sunnysdale community members, friends and family of Miss Cleo (as she is affectionately called), SLUG staff, and the San Francisco Public Housing Authority. Due to Miss Cleo's health, she has not been able to tend to the garden in recent months as she has since the garden opened in 1997. However, to anyone who enters the Cleo Nelson Community Garden, it is apparent that Miss Cleo has blessed the garden with her vivacity and loving spirit. The Cleo Nelson Community Garden is an inspiration to us all, and we appreciate the beauty that Miss Cleo and her garden have brought to the community. She has shared a great deal with the Sunnysdale community – good food, garden wisdom and lots of love.

— JENNIFER PISKIN

Many thanks go out to Mark Bibbo, Double Rock Garden Manager, and Melanie Gaier, St. Mary's Farm Manager who left SLUG this winter. We wish them the best in their future endeavors. They will be missed!