Grow a Garden, Feed a Family

Program Area: Public Relations & Information (PR/I)
County Farm Bureau: Grundy County Farm Bureau
State: IL
Membership Category: 3,001-5,000
Year: 2013
Phone: (815) 942-6400
Email: grundycfb@sbcglobal.net
Program Description: The Ladies Committee decided they wanted to help families and individuals grow their own food. By doing this, they hoped to improve nutrition by teaching how to grow a garden and provide the space to do so.

This idea was brought up by a member who had two idle gardens at her elderly parents' home. It then developed into a project that provided "garden hostesses" who supplied garden space at the family farm/home, guidance and assistance in weeding, planting and maintaining the garden. An application was drawn up and distributed to a local food pantry. Requirements included that the selected applicant must be able to provide transportation to and from the garden, and they must tend to the garden a minimum of 5 hours a week. The recipient selected was a local group home for the mentally challenged.

The planting was set to take place in May, weather permitting. Before the planting began, the committee secured donations for requested plants and seeds from local greenhouses. When it was time to start planting, five women from the group home and three committee volunteers assisted in planting a wide variety of vegetables and fruits, including tomatoes, green beans, beets, lettuce, melons and much more. From that point, the women came out to the farm weekly, sometimes twice a week to weed, water and pick produce.

The impact this project has made on the home, as well as the garden hostess, has been tremendous. By growing their own food, the residents are now trying vegetables and fruits they never would have in the past.