

The Partnership Approach

A gardening project is your golden opportunity to get to know and work with others in the community. Consider the following scenarios. In each case, the individual is aware of existing weaknesses, but turns these into strengths by rallying others in the community. The program often has many more interesting “layers” as a result.

School-PTA-Historical Society Partnership

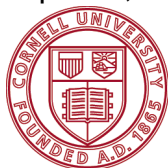
You are a school teacher with a full agenda and limited time. After you interest other teachers and the principal in the gardening project, you approach the PTA and the local historical society for their support. The historical society will help, if you are willing to plant heirloom flowers and vegetables. The PTA is pleased, because the city’s bicentennial is approaching, and they’ve been looking for a topic to delve into, so they choose the theme of horticulture, and will gladly help if they can use the garden as the focus of their bicentennial activities. You will tie the heirloom connection back to a social studies unit, which works well for you, too.

Museum-Day Care-Native American Partnership

You are a museum educator seeking a creative outdoor display. You decide to put in a “Three Sisters” garden of corn, beans, and squash as a way for your clientele to learn more about native people in a culturally sensitive manner. You enlist the help of preschoolers from a day-care center to plant in late spring. Later, you invite them back for a fall harvest celebration, at which a member of a local Indian Nation has generously agreed to come and provide some Iroquois stories. You gain from having the new exhibit and the extra help. The director of the day-care center is thrilled to have a meaningful way to expose her children to native culture; she offers to partner with you on another project. The kids enjoy getting their hands dirty, and meeting the storyteller. The storyteller is pleased to have the opportunity to share her art. She is also gratified that you have chosen to focus on the present, not just the past, with respect to Iroquois people, and the two of you look for ways to work together in the future. All this from planting a small garden.

Alternative School-Garden Center-Cooperative Extension-Master Gardener Partnership

You are a counselor in an alternative school and you have never gardened, but you have heard of the positive results of gardening programs, particularly in this environment. After reading everything you can get your hands on, you call a meeting with another school counselor, a local garden center owner, a cooperative extension educator, and two Master Gardeners. Although you are bursting with ideas, you all agree that it will be important to start the first year with a small group of motivated teenagers. The garden center will supply some vegetable plants, the extension educator will help you design a small



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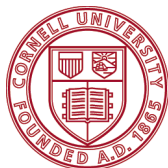
garden and the activities, and the other counselor will work closely with you in each initial session. The Master Gardeners will visit for two of the later sessions, and will assist the teens when they take produce to the county fair for judging. The other school counselor agrees to be the liaison between the administration and the project, while you focus more on the youth. You eagerly anticipate having these young people putting their produce on public display.

Establishing Partnerships

Have you considered reaching out to:

- A local 4-H club, neighborhood watch group, nursing home, food pantry, afterschool program, job training program, an arts foundation?

Brainstorm, who can be approached to help make the dream a reality? Make a list below:



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