

growing a healthier community since 1998



The Garden Project of Southwest Colorado 2008 Year End Report

Main Contributions and Programs:

- Community/ School Garden Support Services
- School Garden Resource Guide and Curriculum
- Southwest Colorado Farm to School
- Manna Soup Kitchen Garden
- Durango Senior Center
- Fort Lewis Mesa Elementary Garden
- Healthy Lifestyle La Plata Local Foods Group
- Buy Local Campaign, Tour de Farms

Garden Program Sites:

- Durango High School
- Manna Soup Kitchen
- Fort Lewis Mesa Elementary
- Needham Elementary
- Durango Senior Center
- FLC Backyard Days

Additional Populations Served:

- Manna Soup Kitchen and Clients
- Useful Public Service
- La Plata County School Students
- Fort Lewis Mesa Elementary Community
- Master Gardener Volunteers
- La Plata Youth Services
- Upward Bound – FLC Program

The population served ranged from preschoolers to seniors. Kids of all ages participated in programming from Fort Lewis Mesa Elementary (190), Needham Elementary (80), Durango High School (20), La Plata Youth Services (6), Southwest Youth Corps (6) and Upward Bound (12). Adult participants included clients and staff from Manna (10), volunteers from the Useful Public Service Department (4), Master Gardener volunteers (6) and (30) parents of participating youth. We served an additional 150+youth and 100+adults at varying outreach events including Barnyard Days and the Tour de Farms. In total over 550 people were served directly and indirectly through gardening activities. Other community members were served indirectly through the gardens, the harvests, and community education campaigns.

Garden Projects

YOUTH GARDENS

- FORT LEWIS MESA ELEMENTARY:** (2006- CURRENT) The Garden Project served as a classroom garden organizer for the school. The Garden Project worked directly with each grade

level Pre-K through 5 with hands on activities and curriculum integration. The Garden Project led students to identify a classroom theme garden for 10 distinct raised beds reflecting the class's character and/or curriculum. Each bed was designed, built and planted in 2008.

COMMUNITY GARDENS

- MANNA SOUP KITCHEN:** (2005, 2007- CURRENT) Food grown from the Manna Soup Kitchen provided high quality locally grown food for daily lunches. Great volunteer work forces from Master Gardener volunteers, Upward Bound, Useful Public services and La Plata Youth Services helped Manna have its most successful year. Handmade garden signs, a tool shed, and cooking programs all added to the infrastructure and sustainability of this garden.
- DURANGO SENIOR CENTER:** (2008- CURRENT) The Durango Senior Center now has two wheelchair accessible raised beds for use by the staff and clients of the Senior Center. The beds were built with students from Fort Lewis's Upward Bound program, CSU master gardeners and The Garden Project. Wood was sustainably harvested by Lorax Forestry and the herbs, flowers, and vegetable filling each bed were donated by Botanical Interests. A series of gardening classes for 2009 are being organized to offer to the seniors.

OTHER FOOD RELATED PROJECTS

- TOUR DE FARMS** (September 2008) The Garden Project helped to coordinate the 2008 Tour de Farms, a bike tour of La Plata County's farm and gardens. A long and short ride were held including a stop to Manna and FLM Elementary.
- IRON CHEF EVENT:** (August 2008) In collaboration with several other sponsors, and as a member of HLLP member, TGP helped coordinate an Iron Chef Event at the Durango Farmers Market, featuring a cook off, using 90% local ingredients. Four Durango chefs competed for the name Iron Chef.
- FARM TO CHEF SPEED DATING:** (February 2008) A farm to chef speed dating was held to introduce and connect local farmers with potential buyers, including restaurants, and school food services.