

Healthy Foods for Healthy Families at Mount Vernon, Summer 2010 Update

Mt. Vernon Unitarian Church [MVUC] planted an organic garden on its property in order to deliver fresh produce to organizations working with the low income and at risk populations on Richmond Highway [Route 1]. The project is part of the church's food ministry and is funded by a grant from UUSJ. It is supported by the entire church community, particularly but not exclusively the social justice program, Green Sanctuary, the religious education program, and the green house group.

The rationale for the project is that low income and at risk populations cannot afford expensive, organic vegetables. Thus those less fortunate suffer from economic injustice on multiple levels. MVUC also launched an inter-faith call to other churches that might own sufficient land to cultivate similar gardens, to enhance the quantity of vegetables that are being delivered to organizations working with at risk populations.

In the summer of 2010, MVUC delivered an average of seven to ten pounds per week starting in mid-July, to two organizations working with the homeless on Richmond Highway: United Community Ministries and Rising Hope Methodist. They both feed low income families and homeless to the tune of over 500 a week. The need for food has quadrupled in the last few years due to higher levels of unemployment and home foreclosures. People found themselves in the streets and turn to these organizations for help.

Recently, Fall vegetables were planted based on these organizations' areas of need. Over 40 people were involved in the care of the garden, including families with children. Interestingly, kids who previously had no interest in [organic] gardening are now asking their parents why they do not have a garden at home. The project was thus a winner on several levels.

The project made the local news and the call to other churches to grow organic food for at risk families has been reinforced, see link
<http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/article.asp?article=343675&paper=88&cat=104>.

For information, contact Isabelle Arnold, [mi_arnold\(at\)msn.com](mailto:mi_arnold(at)msn.com)