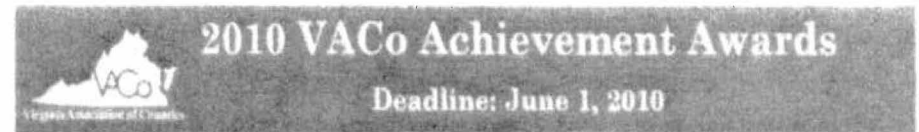


2010 VACo Achievement Awards Program  
 Virginia Association of Counties  
 147 East Apple Street, S.W., Suite 200  
 Tallahassee, Florida 32301  
 www.vacounty.org

Call for Entries



Application Form

All applications must include the following information. Separate applications must be submitted for each eligible program. Deadline: June 1, 2010.

Program Information

Locality: **Franklin County, Virginia**

Program Title: **A Community Gardening Program for Youth and Adults**

Program Category: **1**

Population Category: **4**

Contact Information

Name: **Shewana Hairston**

Title: **Extension Agent, FNH/ Unit Coordinator**

Department: **Virginia Cooperative Extension-Franklin County Office**

Complete Mailing Address: **90 East Court Street  
 Rocky Mount, VA 24151**

Telephone #: **540-483-5161** Fax #: **540-483-0807**

E-mail: **shhairst@vt.edu**

Signature of county administrator or chief administrative officer

Name: **Richard E. Huff II**  
 Title: **County Administrator**  
 Signature: **Richard E. Huff**

\*Entries without this signature will not be accepted



Growing Better Health:  
A Community Gardening Program for  
Youth and Adults

**Growing Better Health: A Community Gardening Program for Youth and Adults**  
**2010 VACo Achievement Awards**  
**Program Overview**

Recognizing the need to address the problem of increased incidence of overweight and obesity, *Growing Better Health: A Community Gardening Program for Youth and Adults* provides an excellent opportunity for Franklin County Extension faculty and Community Government agencies to work together to improve the health of youth and adults in Franklin County.

The community garden program provides educational sessions and hands on experience that will equip participants with the knowledge that will increase the amount of fresh fruits and vegetables consumed, increase the daily amount of physical activity, increase the amount of quality time each family spends together, decrease monthly food expenditures and increase gardening skills.

Improve overall health of participants and decrease incidents of overweight and obesity in participants.

**2009 Results**

Twelve families and two youth groups reported spending 1.5 hours in the garden each week on average. This equals 18 hours of physical activity per participant. Clients harvested 8 lbs of produce on average (96 lbs total). 100 percent of participants agreed that they increased their physical activity, increased their consumption of fruits and vegetables to at least 6 servings a day, decreased their produce bills, and increased their knowledge of agriculture.

# Growing Better Health: A Community Gardening Program for Youth and Adults

## 2010 VACo Achievement Awards

### Principal Investigators

The principal investigators consist of the Franklin County Virginia Cooperative Extension faculty and SCNEP staff as listed below:

- Amber Wilson, Extension Agent, 4-H Youth Development
- Shewana Hairston, Extension Agent, Family and Consumer Sciences
- Beverly Cox, Extension Agent, ANR, Dairy Specialty
- Carol Haynes, SCNEP program assistant
- Tom Boylan, Franklin County Master Gardeners
- Jennifer Cook, Franklin County Extension Leadership Council

### Principal Units

Dr. Martha Walker, Community Viability Specialist Virginia Cooperative Extension, Central District Office Danville, VA	Head Start Step, Inc. Daphne Hancock, Head Start	Town of Rocky Mount Roger Seale, Vice Mayor of Rocky Mount
	Virginia Cooperative Extension Faculty and Staff Shewana Hairston-FCS, Extension Agent Amber Wilson, 4-H Youth Development Carol Haynes-SCNEP program assistant	

## **Program Relevance**

*Growing Better Health: A Community Gardening Program for Youth and Adults* provides an excellent opportunity for Franklin County Extension faculty and Community Government agencies to work together to improve the health of youth and adults in Franklin County.

Studies (like the one conducted by Lackey and Associates) have shown that community gardeners and their children eat healthier, more nutrient rich diets than do non-gardening families (Bremer et al, 2003, p.54). Scientific studies show that crime decreases in neighborhoods as the amount of green space increases and that vegetation has been seen to alleviate mental fatigue, one of the precursors to violent behavior (Kuo and Sullivan, 2001).

## **Purpose Statement**

According to the Centers for Disease Control, CDC, obesity has increased dramatically for adults and children over the past 30 years. Poor nutrition and lack of physical activity are listed as primary reasons for this trend. Research also shows that there is a link between higher obesity rates and low-income families. Approximately 28% of Franklin County residents were living below the 200% poverty level in 2005. Recent data show that 66% of adults are overweight, with Virginia demonstrating the fastest growth rate of obesity in the country. According to the Virginia Atlas of Community Health, based on 2005 Census data, 58% of the adult population in Franklin County is either overweight or obese. Furthermore, the Virginia Atlas of Community Health data for 2005 shows that 22% of the Franklin County's adult population did not regularly exercise (percent not exercising in the past 30 days) and an astounding 77% of adults report

consuming less than five fruits and vegetables a day. Overweight and obesity increase the risk for several health conditions including chronic diseases, such as heart disease and diabetes. In Virginia alone, these two diseases account for over \$4 billion in health care costs. Further, the CDC reported that chronic diseases accounted for 5 of the 6 leading causes of death in the United States in 2002. The Growing Better Health: A Community Gardening Program for Youth and Adults project will help the participants learn about proper nutrition and healthy lifestyle choices to improve their health and reduce their risk of developing chronic diseases. The program targets families, individuals and youth serving agencies.

Recognizing the need to address the problem of increased incidence of overweight and obesity, poor nutritional habits, lack of regular exercise, and the link between limited income and obesity; Virginia Cooperative Extension proposed an innovative comprehensive program that has empowered participants to change their health status and improve their self-sufficiency. *The Growing Better Health: A Community Gardening Program for Youth and Adults* encompasses all of the major program areas of Virginia Cooperative Extension, encourages community partnership and has provided participants with the knowledge and skills that they need to improve their overall health and increase their self-sufficiency.

In order for the community garden project to be successful each family received a Square Foot Garden box, a basic set of gardening tools, seeds to plant and garden resource guides. Participants also attend quarterly gardening and nutrition workshops conducted by VCE-Extension Agent or a VCE County Master Gardeners will be available for questions and advice.

## **How Program was Conducted**

Carol Haynes, SCNEP program assistant, recruits SCNEP clients to participate in the program, will work with VCE faculty to coordinate the program, and will provide hands-on nutrition education lessons to the participants using the SCNEP curriculum. Shewana Hairston, FCS agent, coordinates the program, and assists Carol Haynes in providing nutrition education classes, cooking classes, and a canning clinic for participants. Amber Wilson, 4-H Youth Development, provides hands-on learning experiences for the youth participants using National 4-H Cooperative Curriculum System project books. Beverly Cox and Tim Johnson, ANR agents, work to coordinate the program, and provide technical support and leadership to the gardening and food production activities. The Franklin County Master Gardeners work with VCE faculty and staff to provide leadership to the gardening program and assist with providing hands-on instruction in gardening techniques and food production. The Franklin County ELC supports this program by providing volunteer hours to implement the program as well as serve as advisors for the program. All educational programs are opened to community garden participants and the general public to generate interest and families for the next year's garden.

Dr. Martha Walker, Community Viability Extension Specialist, will provide leadership in working with the local farmers market and the health department to help participants to develop ideas for displaying and marketing their produce. This will enable program participants to sell their produce and increase the family's income.

Our community partners include the Town of Rocky Mount which has donated a garden plot for the community garden. The Town of Rocky Mount donated the use of the land and the water, the county also provides land maintenance such as weeding and mowing. Roger Seale, Vice Mayor of Rocky Mount, is working with us on this program and he is a member of our Franklin County ELC.

VCE- Franklin County is working with Step, Inc., and media sources are being used to market the *Growing Better Health: A Community Garden Program for Youth and Adults* to its clientele.

### **Program Outcomes**

The community garden program provides educational sessions and hands on experience that will equip participants with the knowledge that will increase the amount of fresh fruits and vegetables consumed, increase the daily amount of physical activity, increase the amount of quality time each family spends together, decrease monthly food expenditures and increase gardening skills. Improve overall health of participants and decrease incidents of overweight and obesity in participants.

### **Program Evaluation**

*Growing Better Health* will evaluate behavior changes in families and individuals participating in the project, including choosing more nutritious foods, increased physical activity, spending more time together as a family, adoption of gardening techniques and understanding of basic food production practices (from growing to processing foods) in adults and youth.



## 2009 Results

Twelve families and two youth groups reported spending 1.5 hours in the garden each week on average. This equals 18 hours of physical activity per participant. Clients harvested 8 lbs of produce on average (96 lbs total). 100 percent of participants agreed that they increased their physical activity, increased their consumption of fruits and vegetables to at least 6 servings a day, decreased their produce bills, and increased their knowledge of agriculture.

## 2010 Update

There are currently 25 community garden plots and all are full this growing season. We are currently working with 7 families, The Boy Scouts of America, The Girl Scouts, Goodwill and Emotional Health Services.

## Budget

<b>Supporting Materials</b>		
Tools for Families	\$30.00X 25=750.00	Work in and Maintain Garden
Boxes for families	\$70.00 X 25=1750.00	Using Square Foot Garden
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wood</li> <li>• Mel's Mix</li> </ul>	<b>Total=\$2500.00</b>	
<b>Line Item</b>	<b>Amount Requested</b>	<b>Rationale</b>
<b>Facility Fees</b>	\$0.00	Facility meeting place is free to non-profits
<b>Transportation and Travel</b>	\$500.00	To take principal investigators on field trips to research surrounding Community Gardens- Martinsville, Roanoke and Richmond and to provide transportation to gardening site if needed
<b>Other-Incentives</b>	\$40.00 X50=2000.00	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vegetable Steamers</li> <li>• Hats VCE-Logo</li> <li>• Water Bottles-VCE-Logo</li> <li>• Sealers</li> <li>• Meat Thermometers</li> <li>• SCNEP Cookbooks</li> </ul>		Items used as incentives will promote healthy cooking habits and encourage water consumption

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Refrigerator</li><li>• Thermometers</li><li>• Crock Pots</li><li>• Pedometers</li></ul>		
	<b>Total=\$2500.00</b>	
	<b>Total -\$5,000.00</b>	

