

Brown County UW-Extension Community Gardens

Situation

The community garden program was developed as part of an overall initiative to increase food security in Brown County. Local applied research conducted in 1998 and 1999 by the Brown County UW-Extension Office in cooperation with the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay Social Work Professional Program found that some individuals and families did not have access to culturally appropriate, affordable and nutritious foods. The Hmong population suffered the highest levels of food insecurity of all ethnic groups surveyed in Brown County.

Response

Brown County UW-Extension in conjunction with the Brown County Food & Hunger Network has established community gardens throughout the county. Community gardens are one way that individuals and families can have access to culturally appropriate, nutritious foods. In addition to installing community gardens, gardener education was also offered. A total of 23 Hmong gardeners attended training sessions in 2004.

Results

A total of 170 families participated in the program this year. Seventy-five percent of these families were Southeast Asian, 22 percent were Caucasian, and 3 percent were Hispanic.

The formula developed by the USDA for determining the value of crops produced in community gardens shows that \$310,256 of food was produced in 2004.

Two new garden partnerships were established in 2004. A new garden was established on land owned by Brown County with a groundbreaking ceremony led by County Executive Carol Kelso. A new partnership was also established with the Oneida Tribe and resulted in a four-acre, organic garden site just west of Green Bay.

Evidence

The program was evaluated by determining the number of participants, the additional partnerships established, and the value of the food produced based upon the USDA formula.