

**Washington County**  
**Summer Garden Intern—Youth Garden Project**

**Situation:** The Washington County Family Living Program coordinates the five year old *Children's Summer Garden Program* through the *Washington County UWEX Community Garden Learning Center*. The program is funded by grants and local donations. A review of past programs has indicated that when children learn about gardening they also learn about nutrition, science, and social interaction. They also share these experiences with other family members. We find limited gardening experiences available for children in Washington County. Moreover, there are families in Washington County that lack the resources needed to provide adequate food and nutrition for their families. The Children's Summer Garden Program is rated highly by students, parents and volunteers. Each year a summer intern is hired to coordinate garden activities. Without this position the garden program would not exist.

**Response:** The Children's Summer Garden Program uses the "Buds & Spouts-Growing with Kids" curriculum including lessons in botany, nutrition, ecology and personal & social growth through indoor education and outdoor garden experiences. The program audience includes, but is not exclusive to 2<sup>nd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> grade children in families with limited resources. Children in the program work in teams with a volunteer leader to plant and tend to their gardens meeting once a week for 2 hours. They harvest the garden produce for use by their families and excess is given to the local food pantry. In addition to a planting Saturday in May and a garden clean-up Saturday in October, children and parents have the opportunity to participate in three additional educational events including a harvest activity for family members. Children are enrolled as members of the 4-H Buds & Sprouts Club and enter items at the fair. Family Living Educator Marma Jean McIntee provides direction for the program and expertise is provided by UW-Extension staff. The summer garden intern coordinates all garden activities including garden and equipment maintenance, preparing materials for volunteers, supervising NOVA community service youth in garden tasks, writing the garden newsletter, and teaching when a volunteer is absent.

**Results and Evidence:** 21 children from 19 families were involved in the 2006 summer program. There were 5 teaching volunteers and countless others to assist in garden maintenance. The 2006 program saw hundreds of pounds of produce go to families and donated to the food pantry. Evaluations from parents have consistently been high in all areas and parents would enroll their children again. Evaluations from children indicated that they were satisfied with the program and that learned new things from the experience. Experience with planting, special activities and the fair were rated the highest by the children.

The summer internship is a critical component to the success of this program. Without this position, the summer garden program would not exist.

**Expenditure Report:**

Resource Mgt. Dollars Allocated: \$3500.00

Expenditures: Summer Intern (350 Hours): \$3500.00