

# Mt. Aloysius Community Garden... An Inter-Generational Project

by: Jenny LaRue

## YOUR INVOLVEMENT IS KEY

Want to get involved? Join the Perry Neighborhood Connection. We are working to connect our residents to resources and organizations that may have similar interests. Are you interested in the local food movement or do you have a passion for healthy living? We can connect you to others who feel the same way. The Perry Neighborhood Connection meet on the 3rd Tuesday of every even numbered month. Contact the Perry County Health Department at 740-342-5179 for more information!



## SUMMARY

The Mount Aloysius Community Garden Project offers raised and in-ground gardening beds. The area is fenced. "Plant friendly" soil and water are provided. Plants are available from an on-site greenhouse. Gardening skills and knowledge are shared among the growers and staff of Mount Aloysius. Growers range in age from 27-70 and include several young families. Plans for 2017 include an extension of the garden site, an orchard area and an on-site honor system produce stand. This intergenerational garden area has become a social, community-building space, capable of bringing vitality into our rural community.

## CHALLENGE

Perry County, an Appalachian county located in rural southeastern Ohio, is characterized by small communities often isolated from one another due to geographic location. The region is considered a food desert area as access to grocery stores is limited due to distance and economic disparity. The area is plagued with high obesity and high rates of cardiovascular disease. Data collected from the Perry County Community Health Assessment notes that only 5% of Perry County residents consume the recommended number of fruits and vegetables. Creating Healthy Community's challenge was to establish a community garden in a location that provided access to land at a minimal cost, education for those needing gardening skills and resources such as water, suitable soil and fencing.

"The partnership between the CHC project and Mt. Aloysius is such an excellent opportunity to increase the locally grown produce available to our residents. Being able to provide Perry County citizens with access to a greenhouse and community garden increases active living, fresh produce and will create an opportunity for intergenerational social engagement."

- Angela DeRolph

## Success Stories

<http://nccd.cdc.gov/dchsuccesstories/>

## SOLUTION

### Contact

#### Jenny LaRue

Perry County Health Department  
409 Lincoln Park Drive  
PO Box 230  
New Lexington, OH 43764  
740-342-5179 phone  
740-342-5540 fax  
<http://www.perryhealth.com/>

Mt Aloysius, a private live-in facility for developmentally disabled adult men, expressed interest in a partnership with Creating Healthy Communities in early 2015. While Mt Aloysius was not previously open to the public, the property boasts a greenhouse and acres of green space. Plans for 2016 grew to include a 83 foot by 86 foot garden area consisting of eight raised garden beds and seven in-ground beds. Plants would be made available from the already existing greenhouse. Water, soil and fencing were provided and maintained by Mt Aloysius. Gardening expertise was also available as the project director for Mt Aloysius has a degree in Botany and a passion for community engagement.

## SUSTAINABLE SUCCESS

Mt. Aloysius and the Creating Healthy Communities grant provided start-up cost, operating expenses and maintenance of the area. Mt. Aloysius staff are working with many community organizations to create a plan for continued support of the garden and orchard. Board members attend the progress meetings to communicate improvements to their Board. Stanton Villa and Evolutions Treatment Centers have agreed to work at Mt. Aloysius to maintain the tobacco-free community garden areas and the herb garden. Community partners will work to secure grant funding to assist Mt. Aloysius with the cleaning and improvement of the existing trail. Additionally, the partnership between Creating Healthy Communities and Mt. Aloysius will continue throughout 2017, as we work to gain more community involvement, support and access to community grant dollars.

## RESULTS

Twenty-eight gardeners, ages 27-70, participated during the 2016 growing season raising nine different varieties of vegetables and 20 varieties of plants and herbs. Community partners include the New Lexington High School Future Farmers of America, Hocking College, Evolutions and the Village of New Lexington Tree Commission.

Plans continue for 2017. Seven gardening spots will be added to the garden site. Fruit trees and berry vines will be planted and educational classes will be taught by Perry County OSU Extension. An honor system vegetable stand will be built at the entrance to the property. Conversation has begun with local school officials to bring youth and families to Mt. Aloysius for help with the gardening projects and learning experiences. These partnerships are working to create a healthier Perry County!