

WESTWIND CHURCH COMMUNITY GARDEN

1300 SARAH BROOKS DRIVE

KELLER, TX 76248

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WWW.WESTWIND-CHURCH.ORG

MISSION: "Plant Hope. Grow Faith."

Gardening and giving back... providing a positive environment for inexperienced and experienced gardeners to work the soil to grow fresh produce for their families and to donate 50% of crops to people in the community in need. The garden provides the opportunity to learn, share, give back, make friends, and enrich our lives with healthy food and communing with nature. The garden promotes organic methods and nearby compost bins help encourage and educate on green, sustainable gardening.

GENERAL FACTS:

Approximately 20 members of the community, including a Boy Scout troop and Indian Guides, in addition to five members of WestWind initiated gardens in 2011. It is composed of raised beds – twelve 4'x16' (subdivided to 4'x8') and eight 4'x4' beds, expanded to six additional 4'x16' beds in August 2012. We also have three waist-high beds for physically challenged gardeners! Yearly plot charges are as follows: 4'x 4' \$20.00, 4'x 8' \$25, 4' x 12' \$30, 4'x 16' \$35 per year (Feb. 1st to Jan. 31st). Included is the bed and water. Mulch, compost and soil amendments are provided as available.

HISTORY:

The WestWind Church Community Garden dealt with poor soil quality, initially, in the first year, followed by several months of the 2011 hot, extremely dry Texas summer. However, we had good irrigation thanks to the efforts and know-how of church member, Jim Buresh. The garden has really been a learning experience for many of the gardeners, some of whom have never grown anything. Several gardeners even plant winter crops so the Keller Community Storehouse receives some fresh produce throughout the winter. The garden was built primarily with donations from church members and local vendors. The garden is a non-profit organization coordinated by WestWind Church. We continue to seek sponsors and community support with monetary and material donations, and labor to maintain and expand the garden.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

In 2011, the garden's first year, despite a slow start due to poor soil quality and extreme heat, a wide variety of produce was harvested including many kinds of squash, peppers, lettuce, tomatoes, cantaloupes, watermelons, okra, eggplant, snow peas, cucumbers, radishes, beans and pumpkins. Total pounds donated to Keller Community Storehouse from June 2011 through January 2012: 570 lbs. In 2012, 761 pounds were donated to the storehouse and additional pounds were donated to Sharing the Harvest, a program of Metroport Meals on Wheels. A small orchard was planted in the Fall of 2012 with 12 fruit trees – apple, nectarine, peach, pear and plum.

We have hosted several children's field trips since beginning the garden. 100 Kindergarteners from Shady Grove Elementary walked over to visit near the end of the 2011 school year to explore what was growing and to bring items for the compost bin. Since then the Shady Grove Kindergarteners plant their 4'x16' bed in the spring and then make trips to care for the garden or to help harvest. The Primrose Daycare brought vans full of children in July 2011 and they observed and identified all of the vegetables growing and learned about composting. Gardens encourage kids to make more nutritious food choices when they take part in planting, caring for and harvesting produce. We encourage families and individuals to join us or to have their own raised bed or container garden at home, including a compost bin, to eat healthier and to save money. Many consumers

are concerned about rising food prices and chemicals in foods. An organic garden is a terrific teaching tool for addressing these issues at home.

GOALS:

The garden team plans to eventually expand the garden with an herb garden and shaded pavilion/shed with rainwater collection barrels. A third compost bin has been added with the goal of the garden becoming sustainable. We will continue to harvest and weigh produce on a weekly basis, as produce is available, to provide donations to the Keller Community Storehouse and Sharing the Harvest. Garden team meetings or workdays are planned approximately every first Saturday of the month, as tasks and weather permit, to learn and share ideas and to accomplish garden goals. We also wish to provide a service to the community with educational opportunities and as a field trip destination for children. We encourage students from schools, churches and organizations to earn service hours on garden workdays while gaining insights on organic gardening. Community gardening promotes good health and strong communities. The WestWind Church Community Garden nurtures community spirit and enriches lives with the common goals of growing nutritious food for our families and also sharing with the needy in our community. The garden exemplifies the joy of planting a seed and watching it grow.