

Cornell Cooperative Extension | Steuben County

PLANNING A SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL & COMMUNITY GARDEN PROGRAM

Canisteo Community Food Pantry Garden

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Introductory Statement

Elected public officers within the Village of Canisteo, NY expressed the need for a community food garden. Much of the area surrounding Canisteo is considered low income and low food access by the USDA Food Access Research Atlas. This area was also impacted negatively by local flooding events during 2021 and again in 2024, with many people losing homes and personal belongings, contributing to strained finances. The community food pantry garden model will help to support community members with a basic need—Food!

The Village of Canisteo, Canisteo Wesleyan Church/Pastor Shannon Brumfield, and CCE Steuben will work together to get a garden management system in place to help improve community food assistance programs that support a broad region surrounding Canisteo.





Program Goals

1. Increased Nutrition Awareness
2. Improved Health and Wellness
3. Advancing Life Skills
4. Community Building and Social Connections
5. Environmental Awareness

The Canisteo Community Food Pantry Garden Program will strive to:

- Increase in the amount of fresh produce available at the Food Pantry.
- Improved quality of produce available at the Food Pantry.
- Improved household finances through food pantry participation and decreased food costs.
- An increase in number of volunteers as well as volunteer skills and knowledge.

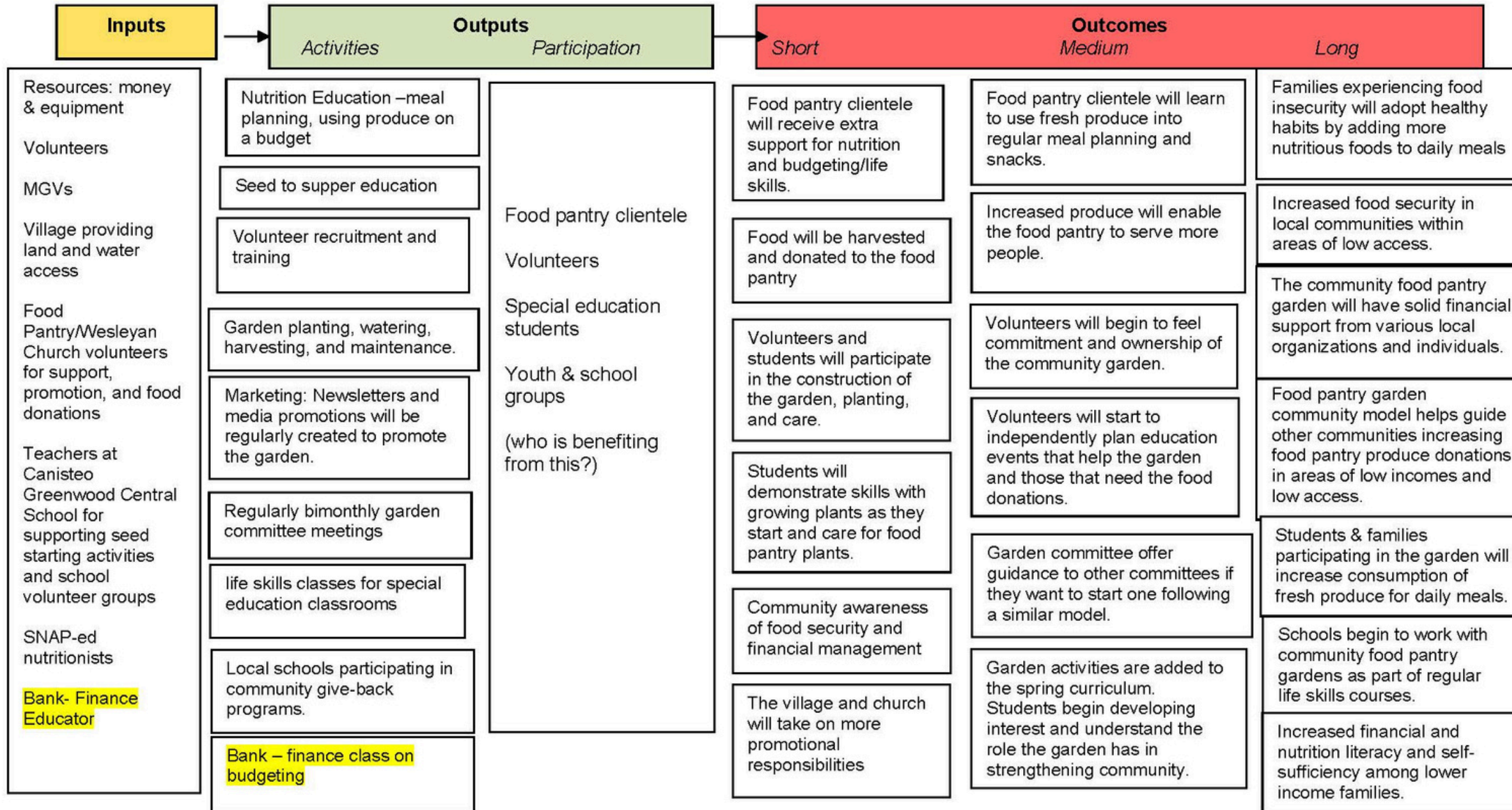




Logic Model

Program: Canisteo Community Food Pantry Garden Logic Model

Situation: The Canisteo, NY community had expressed the need for a community food garden. This area was impacted negatively by local flooding events with many people losing homes, and personal belongings contributing to strained finances. This has increased the importance of community support and assistance. This food pantry garden model will help to support community members with a basic need—Food! The Village of Canisteo, Wesley Church/Pastor Shannon, and CCE Steuben will work together to get a garden management system in place for longevity.



Assumptions
 People will be motivated to help and learn.
 Teacher and students will be able to make time during their school days to take care of plants.
 Volunteers will be committed and manage the garden well. Produce will grow well without pest or disease.

External Factors
 Social factors affecting volunteers and school teachers – time and health
 Continued interest within the community to support
 Commitment and ability to fundraise to support this year after year



Canisteo Community Food Panty Garden

Why Canisteo?

Canisteo is a region that has suffered tremendous losses due to flooding over the past 4 years
community members need extra support now more than ever.

CCE Steuben's Mission:

CCE Steuben puts knowledge to work by providing access to a network of evidence-based resources to strengthen our communities to thrive in a rapidly changing world.

As an entity that also serves local communities, a partnership with you would further strengthen our local efforts to increase gardening self-sufficiency within communities and improve food access throughout our County.

What is Achievable with Your Support?

- Working to increase the number of community food pantry gardens throughout our region that improve food access and strengthen life skills while building community support.
- Install and manage a community food pantry garden at the Canisteo Village Hall.
- Food grown will be used to supplement the summer food program at Canisteo-Greenwood School District as well as the Food Pantry at the Canisteo Wesleyan Church.
- Educate those receiving food assistance to increase their knowledge of growing their own food, improve their understanding of how to incorporate fresh produce into easy, healthy daily meals, as well as improve their understanding of financial budgeting and planning meals on a budget.



Partnerships

Current Project Supporters:



- **Canisteo Wesleyan Church & Food Pantry**
- **Master Gardener Volunteers**
- **Canisteo-Greenwood Central School –
Highschool Special Education Classes**
- **Cornell Cooperative Extension Steuben
County**
- **Finger Lakes SNAP-ed**
- **CCE Steuben**



Evaluation Plan

<p>Short-Term Outcome Measured:</p> <p>Food pantry clientele will receive extra support for nutrition and budgeting/life skills.</p> <p>Food will be grown and donated to the food pantry.</p> <p>Community awareness of food security and financial management.</p> <p>Garden volunteers will gain knowledge and increase skills to teach others and spread knowledge of self-sufficient garden skills.</p>	<p>Long-Term Outcome Measured:</p> <p>Families experiencing food insecurity will adopt healthier habits, adding more nutritious foods to daily meals.</p> <p>Increased food security in local communities within areas of low access.</p> <p>The food pantry garden model will help other communities to increase food pantry donations in areas of low access and low income.</p> <p>Life skills classes become a regular program contribution for the community contributing to increased self-sufficiency among volunteers and community members.</p>
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Method Used & Group Evaluated	Objective Evaluator	When to Evaluate
Evaluation of the change in the amount of food (lbs.) available in area of low access - Record Amount (lbs.) fresh produce available at the Food Pantry Prior to the Garden.	Garden Manager and Food Pantry Lead	Record the amount (lbs. and servings) of fresh produce available each month of the growing season PRIOR to the garden being started.
Survey/Food access	Food pantry lead	Recording the amount (lbs. and servings) of fresh produce available each month of the growing season during years 1 – 5 and beyond AFTER the garden has been implemented.
Survey/Quality Circles (possibly)	Extra Volunteer if available to assist	Food Pantry clientele will complete a survey on access to fresh produce BEFORE the garden and in the months the garden is not able to produce as well as immediately following the growing season to assess how they feel access and availability improved.
Survey/Garden Knowledge (Quick Whip can be used if short on volunteers)	Garden Volunteers leading education	Dependent on the willingness of participants to stay after providing feedback as well as the availability of enough volunteers. Use this after different teaching methods are used i.e. hands-on independent versus hands-on team. Used 2 or more times withing a particular course or learning series.
Evaluate changes in the number of people participating in classes, garden volunteering, as well as the number of people seeking assistance at the food pantry.	Garden volunteers leading education with assistance from food pantry volunteers.	Pre-course assessment questions as well as administering the same questions post-class to assess what was learned. A pre- and post-growing season survey to assess comfort with understanding of hands-on growing skills. Reading and doing are two different things!
Survey/Community Awareness	Village employee/Food Pantry Lead	Collect data on the number of participants and changes over the first 5 years and then again at 10 years. Note: Number of food pantry clients may increase due to increase in ability of the pantry to provide fresh produce and increased community awareness of the food available.
Garden Growing Success Evaluation – Straight Talk: A Peer Evaluation Model	Everyone involved in the program meets to discuss (village employees, garden volunteers, food pantry volunteers, MGVs, CCE staff, Church Staff, and any others)	Surveys to food pantry clientele and all community members assessing knowledge of the community garden and its contributions and objectives in years 1, 3, and 5 of the programs. See if an increase in awareness and understanding occurs.
		Bi-monthly meetings if possible.





Concept Map

Food Pantry Community Garden & Education
 Outdoor classroom teaching participants to grow food for themselves and for the community garden.

Pre-requisite skills (in any): NONE
 Participants ideally have a basic understanding of the basic needs of plants – water, sun, nutrients. But everything can be taught so no pre-requisites are necessary.

Program Overview

Target Objectives
 Participants will be introduced to the objectives of the garden and education for life skills and the community development.

Learning Activities
 Introduction to the community garden – goals and objectives.
 Introduction to the needs of plants.
 Discussion of what supplies are needed to get started with an introduction into the garden planning.

Planning The Garden

Target Objectives
 Participants will learn how to space plants based on growth form and size. Decide what plants to plant. Plant what you'll eat and only what you need. Garden goals and functions will be determined. Prepare planting plans.

Learning Activities
 Planting plans will be created. The needs of different plants will be discussed. These will include footprint, planting window, plant height, 2-3 season plans, and succession planting.
 Garden plans for the community garden will be discussed and why those plans will differ from personal gardens.

Getting Started with Healthy Soil

Target Objectives
 Participants will learn about soil structure and the nutrients plants need to be healthy. Participants will also learn techniques for amending and working the soil to prepare garden beds.

Learning Activities
 Cornell GBL lessons will be used to teach soil structure, pH, and nutrients and needs of plants. Compost will be available to mix in and if possible, compost bins will be worked on site. If possible, sheet mulching techniques will be used to start inground beds for plants the food pantry would like to grow.

Planting the Garden

Target Objectives
 Participants will learn about seeds and seedlings, proper seed and plant care, and how to get started growing in the garden.

Learning Activities
 How to read a seed packet.
 Direct Sow basics.
 Watering seeds.
 Transplanting basics.
 Timing outdoor planting based on plant needs.
 Proper care.
 How to use containers if you are lacking space.

Caring for the Garden

Target Objectives
 Participants will learn that gardens need continual care, and plants are living things with daily needs. Proper care methods will be discussed and implemented.

Learning Activities
 Watering basics. Plant problems to watch for caused by improper watering. Options for watering systems.
 Weed control- options.
 Pest Scouting and management.

Harvesting the Garden

Target Objectives
 Participants will learn to identify when and how to harvest different types of produce. Nutrition (SNAP-ed) classes will be offered to help teach skills in using these foods in healthy meal planning.

Learning Activities
 Hands-on harvesting of each crop as it becomes ripe.
 What to look for, how to harvest, how to use the seed packet to have a rough estimate when it will be ready, and how to store.
 SNAP-ed will provide education on using fresh produce in easy budget friendly meals.

Proposal for Project Support

by
Newly appointed Canisteo Village Mayor and board members

Current Project Supporters:

- Canisteo Wesleyan Church & Food Pantry
- Master Gardener Volunteers
- Canisteo-Greenwood Central School – Highschool
Special Education Classes
- Cornell Cooperative Extension Steuben County
- Finger Lakes SNAP-ed

Garden Site: Village Hall Property.

- Excellent Suitability – Full sun, lots of space, Protected from vandalism (not necessarily the furry kind 😊) and wind, close proximity to shade/cover for volunteers, and excellent accessibility.
- Village assistance with water accessibility for hoses and drip irrigation.

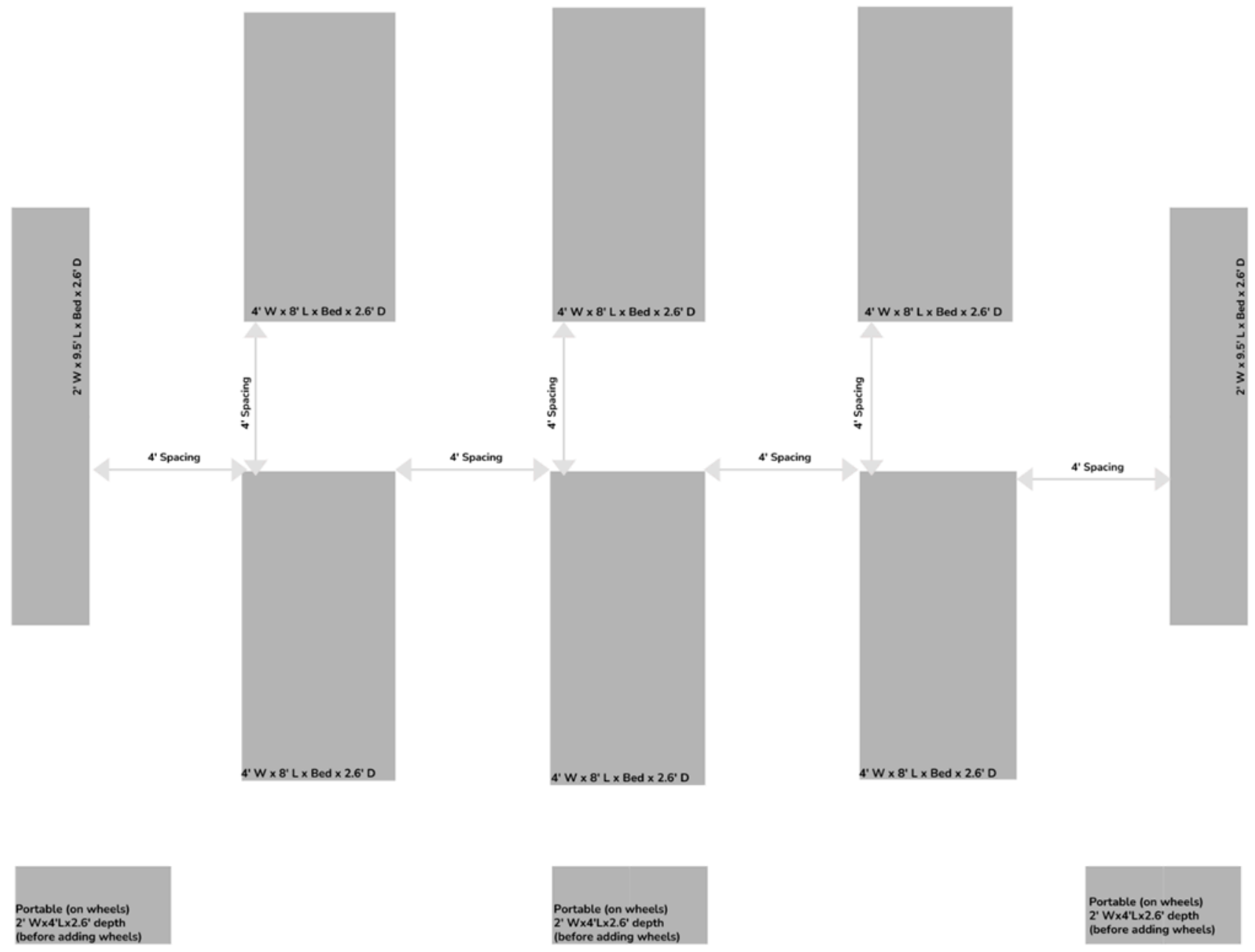
Garden's Community Role:

- Primary: The garden would serve as a food pantry garden to help supplement produce available at the Canisteo Food Pantry.

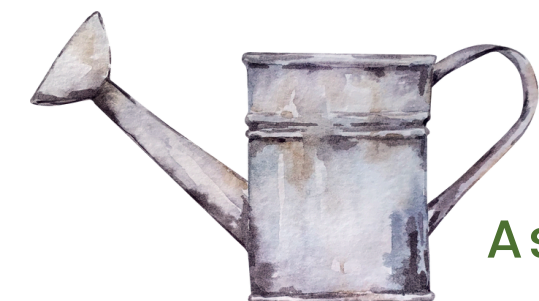
Additional:

- Community Education
- Canisteo-Greenwood Highschool special education assistance – life skills
- Supporting the Summer School Food Program – providing additional fresh food resources to families receiving summer food services and offering nutrition education.
- Local for community events.

CANISTEO COMMUNITY FOOD PANTRY GARDEN SITE PLANS



3 beds during the first year, 3 during the second year and others as funding allows.



Assignment 5.1

Sustainability & Support Plan for the Garden Program

Garden Team Volunteer Recruitment:



Dedicated Volunteer base needed but not limited to:

Garden Manager – Planning, delegating, garden planting, watering, weeding, maintenance, harvesting, coordinating and communicating with food pantry volunteers for donating food and planning produce to grow for each year based on most desired/best produce. Assist with volunteer recruitment and retention.

Garden Workers – Planting, watering, weeding, and other maintenance, harvesting, transportation of food donations. Assistance with garden planning from year to year. Assist with volunteer recruitment and retention.

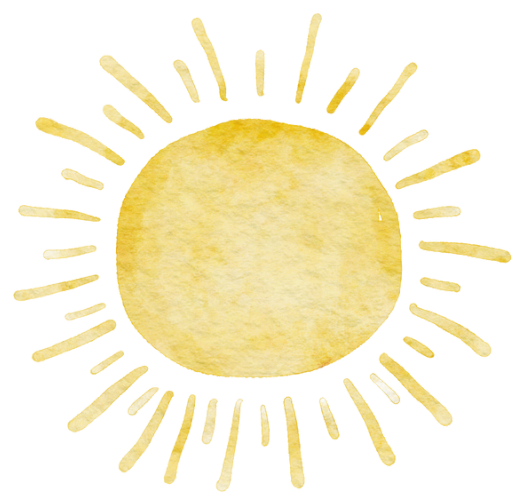
Communication Coordinator – Helps with communication of garden activities and event to the community, press, and village board and mayor. Additionally, this position helps coordinate and plan fundraising activities. Assist with volunteer recruitment and retention.

In-service & Education:

CCE Steuben, SERVU credit union, SNAP-ed.



Assignment 5.1



Fundraising Plan

Seek financial support

- Local community grants
- Donations from local businesses and community members
- Fundraising events – i.e. Plant Bingo

Draw Upon Local Organizations for specific needs:

- Rotary – i.e. assistance with local funding or building raised beds
- Eagle Scouts – i.e. garden shed construction

Your help making these connections will be important!

List of Needs:

Raised beds 4' x8' (6 or more)
Storage shed
Topsoil
Compost
Fertilizer
Seeds and plants
Shovels and hand tools
Weed barrier
Drip irrigation/Hoses and spray heads
Produce collection bins
Scale for weighing produce
Refrigerator

Seed Starting Equipment:

Standing Shelving
2-3 grow Lights
3 Heat Mats
Timer Power Strip
Seed Starting Trays
Seed starting mix
Seeds
Potting Tray
Scoop



Community Food Pantry Garden Program Development

TIMELINE



Date	Task	Action steps	Contact Person	Date Completed
Spring 2025	Proposal to the new Village Mayor and Board	Elections will take place on March 18th and I have already contacted the Village Clerk about scheduling a project proposal meeting once the new Mayor is settled.	Village Clerk, Katrina Oliverio Mayor	Partial/Underway
Summer & Fall 2025	Seek Funding Sources	CCE ED, Tess McKinley, and I will look for funding sources to help develop and support this garden program (for the first 1-2 years of operation)	CCE Steuben	
Summer & Fall 2025	Develop Committee & Seek Volunteers	Schedule a first committee meeting & get input on current plan	Master Gardener, Kathie Boccia Pastor of the Wesleyan Church, Shannon Brumfield	
Summer & Fall 2025	Coordinate Small MGV Fundraiser to start Community Garden Project Funds	Meet with MGVs and see if they would help run a lemonade stand (lavender infused) at the 4H summer showcase as well as help hold 1-2 plant bingo events.	All active Master Gardener Volunteers- set a fundraising meeting	
Winter 2025/2026	Secure funding & start purchasing supplies. Garden Committee Meeting	Use CCE community garden program funds & any grants secured to start purchasing supplies Ensure Garden Manager Delegating responsibilities for completion of this	CCE Steuben & Garden Manager (not sure if this will be MGV Kathie Boccia)	
Spring 2026	Install and prepare 4- 8 beds depending on funding. Plan and plant. Assistance from CCE Steuben.	Garden manager will have delegated roles and volunteers will be completing tasks as needed. We will ensure regular weekly work meetings for garden tasks and communication of needs.	CCE Steuben & Garden Manager (not sure if this will be MGV Kathie Boccia)	
Summer 2026	Garden maintenance and work every week or more as needed. Assistance as needed by CCE Steuben.	Garden manager will have delegated roles and volunteers will be completing tasks as needed. We will ensure regular weekly work meetings for garden tasks and communication of needs.	Garden work team	
Spring - Fall 2026	Communication of the garden and activities to the public by the garden communication team with help from CCE Steuben.	Whatever the garden team is comfortable with, but this could include Fox News, social media page, newspaper articles, newsletter creation and one home with students in the school district making them aware of the program, volunteer needs, and how it will be contributing to the summer school food program.	Food Pantry Volunteers/Garden Work Team/Village of Canisteo	

Canisteo Community Food Pantry

Garden Goals

- 1) The garden will donate fresh produce to a local Food Pantry and the Summer School Food Program (boxes to families participating in the free lunches).
- 2) The Community garden will partner with the Canisteo-Greenwood School to help increase life skills to student groups that need it most and make a connection between community families and the garden.
- 3) The community garden and its donation work will serve as a catalyst for educating the people who need food assistance on how to budget, plan meals using healthy, fresh produce, and how to grow their own foods at home.





Increase Local Food Security

Encourage Healthier Eating Habits

Improve Environmental Stewardship

Community Empowerment

Increase Physical Activity



Contact

Information:

Master Gardener Volunteer Program & Community Gardens

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<https://putknowledgetowork.org>



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