

EXTENSION SNAPSHOT

Fulton-Mason-Peoria-Tazewell Unit

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Illinois Extension

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

New garden in Havana looks to fill a gap for families in need of food

Fresh, local produce will be easier to access in the Havana community soon thanks to a new community garden project based at Mission of Hope. This garden's purpose is to help feed neighbors in the Havana area. A group comprised of University of Illinois Extension SNAP-Education staff, horticulture staff, and Extension Master Gardener volunteer Carol Cihla co-lead the effort.

"Feeding families can be a complex issue," stated SNAP-Ed Educator Rebecca Crumrine. "Through the new garden, we hope to address a missing resource for local families by helping provide hope one seed at a time."

The Havana Community Garden project has developed over the course of a couple of years and has already seen substantial community support. As of the end of May 2024, the garden's "Fill our Shed!" campaign had collected about 60% of the needed funding and/or supplies to kick-start the garden project. Sponsorships and donations have been received through the Alpha Rho Women's Sorority, New Central Elementary's 2023-2024 third grade class, and several local individuals. The garden is still accepting new sponsors and donations. The current items on the wish list include soaker hoses, watering timers, herb plants, and colorful paints for garden boxes and fences.

As the garden continues to grow, additional community support through ongoing volunteering and/or short-term volunteering on scheduled community work-days will be needed to help the garden thrive. The garden welcomes all volunteers, regardless of gardening experience, offering a chance to learn about gardening together while contributing to the community's future. Regular community workdays will be scheduled throughout the summer as well as the opportunity for volunteers to help with day-to-day garden tasks such as watering, weeding, and harvesting.

"In our conversations with the community about the project, many people indicated they were interested in helping garden, but they didn't feel like they had the knowledge necessary to help out," stated SNAP-Ed Instructor Skye Mibbs. "However, the great thing about the garden is that we want to help teach skills like gardening and nutrition as well as support our community with food."

The Havana Community Garden is here to serve the community, thus input and support from the community will be essential to its success. Everyone can stay connected to updates about the garden online at go.illinois.edu/havanagarden. For those interested in learning more about the Havana Community Garden, or who wish to contribute to a garden, donate to a need, or become a volunteer please contact Skye Mibbs at svmibbs@illinois.edu or 309-543-3308.



The Havana Community Garden officially held its first workday on May 29, 2024. The garden is serving the community to help meet the need for more local, fresh produce. Local residents can get involved as short-term or ongoing volunteers at the garden.

Rebecca Crumrine

Illinois SNAP-Education Educator
[racrumri@illinois.edu](mailto:racruz@illinois.edu)