



# RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS

## COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR THE SCHOOL GARDEN

### VOLUNTEER SUPPORT

Don't be afraid to ask for help. Everyone wants to make a difference and some people just don't know how. Having many people working together for a common goal builds social capital and creates safety and security for future generations. The more responsibility and ownership an individual feels in the garden the more likely they will be to keep coming back.

Use your skill sets effectively. Know the strengths of your core group and seek support where you need the most help. Ask yourself these questions:

- Is the garden falling behind on basic maintenance needs?
  - Create weekly volunteer work days. Promote to after school programs, local churches, colleges, girl/ boy scouts.
- Are there concerns about the financial stability of the garden?
  - Recruit a volunteer grant writer or sales person. You may have parents that love to go to the farmers market; encourage them to take turns selling their kid's produce on the weekends. Reach out to PTA, neighborhood associations, and local colleges.
- Are students gaining a well-rounded experience in the garden?
  - Maybe you're really good at maintaining the garden but struggle with teaching in the garden. Reach out to Anne Wallenmaier, MU Extension, and master gardeners for curriculum assistance and support.
- Am I able to make daily social media updates, weekly blog posts and newsletters, and host monthly events?
  - Some people may be interested in supporting the garden, but would rather work with computers than dig in the dirt. Reach out to the media departments in area high schools and colleges.
- Do I feel comfortable managing unexpected variables such as weather changes, pests, and weed control?
  - Maybe you are an excellent leader with minimal gardening experience. Reach out to community gardeners, master gardeners, and MU extension.
- Is the garden aesthetically pleasing and functional?
  - Reach out to art departments (K-college) and local artists for help with garden designs, painting your garden beds and fencing, and creating informative/ decorative signs around the garden.

If you feel confident with your answers to all of these questions, then use your volunteer support to expand on what you already have in place. If you feel insecure in your answers to these questions, then ask yourself what areas you are willing to focus on. It's okay if you've reached max capacity. Don't feel bad for not being able to give more, you're doing your best! This is exactly why volunteer support is so important. Assess which areas you need the most help in and reach out to specific groups or individuals who can be the most effective in those areas.

Once you've developed a network of volunteer support you can start using your experienced volunteers as teachers and mentors for new volunteers.

