



Welcome to the Be Healthy QC Newsletter!

Summer is in full swing and our gardens are producing a bountiful crop! Do you have a garden at home? If not, our PICH Community Garden Coordinators would love to bend your ear! This month's newsletter showcases the new wonderful community gardens in development and has some resources for those who may be interested in trying their hand at growing food at home.

Community Gardens



One of the four PICH community gardens in Rock Island

What are Community Gardens?

Community gardens are defined by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) as: collaborative projects on shared open spaces where participants share in the maintenance and products of the garden, including healthful and affordable fresh fruits and vegetables.

Some benefits of having community gardens are:

- Participants eat healthy fresh fruits and vegetables
- Participants engage in physical activity, skill building, and creating green space
- Gardens beautify vacant lots
- Gardens can revitalize communities in industrial areas
- Gardens can revive and beautify parks
- Gardens can create green rooftops
- Gardens can improve social well-being through strengthening social connections

Developing Community Gardens in Rock Island

As part of the Be Healthy QC project funded by the CDC through the PICH grant, Broadway Presbyterian Church has hired two Community Gardens Coordinators to oversee the gardens project. The Coordinators will manage the gardens established in Year 1 of the grant, oversee the creation of new gardens in Year 2, and provide educational opportunities for local residents interested in learning about gardening, food preparation or preservation, and healthy eating. This objective will facilitate greater access to healthy foods by involving local residents and school children in gardening.

Project Progress

Our Year 1 project goal was to establish 4 gardens within Census Tract 236 in Rock Island. We are excited to say that we have met that goal with flying colors! Initial complications with the weather delayed the planting of one of the gardens, but once the seeds were in the ground we were off and running! We now have two community gardens and two international gardens where local immigrants and refugees are growing herbs and vegetables from their countries of origin. Residents have produced a bumper crop of beans and have been sharing them with other local families, it truly is a sight to see! Vegetables of all kinds are being harvested and shared among the local community. The Burmese gardeners have a plentiful crop of chin baw that they shared with neighboring residents - along with instructions on how to prepare it.

When is a weed not a weed?

When it is a delicious edible! Check out a recent article in the Radish Magazine titled "Unexpected edibles: Common garden weeds may be blessings in disguise". Brian McMaster, Year 1 Community Garden Co-Coordinator, was interviewed about his work on local gardens and how his perceptions of some of those pesky weeds have changed over time. Head on over to the [Radish Magazine](#) website and check it out!



Meet a Community Garden Coordinator! -- Vikki Blair

Vikki is a farm girl from Lanark, IL. Growing up her family had a major truck garden, fields of corn and soybeans, and livestock. Vikki graduated Lanark High School and attended Freeport School of Nursing.



Most of her work has involved serving others: through food, clothing, teaching life skill classes, and just loving people. After working in the East Moline School District and at Toys R Us she began a career working at churches - first at Beulah Presbyterian Church and then Broadway Presbyterian Church in Rock Island. She has been with Broadway for 25 years and has seen great changes in the city of Rock Island in that time. She completed commissioned ruling elder classes at Dubuque Seminary and leads the second worship service each Sunday. "In looking back over my life, I realize that God has put me right where I am needed and I look forward to helping Be Healthy Quad Cities grow and prosper." She and her husband have two grown children and three grandchildren.

Want to be recognized for the work your organization or business is doing? Take our Worksite Wellness Healthy Workplace Assessment here!

Be Healthy QC recently unveiled a new healthy workplace recognition program. Businesses that meet at least 10 of the 20 items on the assessment found at the link below will receive a letter and certificate of recognition for their worksite wellness efforts, as well as a window cling to display at the entrance of their business. If you would like your business to be recognized for your progress in creating a healthy workplace, please download and complete the assessment linked below and return it to: quadcitieshealthinitiative@gmail.com.

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