

ECUMENICAL MINISTRIES *of* OREGON

Media Release

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Fences make good (garden) neighbors at Westside Community Gardens

A thriving community garden with a special emphasis on serving the Latino community of Corvallis isn't taking any chances with the produce that gardeners have lovingly tended. Deer are increasingly frequent visitors to area's community gardens, and home grown vegetables are especially tantalizing. Westside Community Garden (WCG) is a project of Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon's (EMO) Interfaith Food & Farms Partnership, funded through a U.S. Department of Agriculture grant in partnership with Westside Community Church. The deer fence, to be installed on June 30 and a recent expansion for a winter garden are supported by a grant from Providence Partners in Health, part of Providence Health & Services, Oregon Region.

The garden serves as a vital resource for families on a tight budget to access healthy food, as well as providing opportunities for physical activity and socializing. In addition, many people benefit from WCG, thanks to St. Mary's Catholic Church's Neighbor to Neighbor project, which maintains a 5,000 square-foot garden. The garden provides fresh produce to the Stone Soup meal program for people with low-incomes and the St. Vincent DePaul food pantry; any extra produce is made available, after services at the church, to those who need it.

At least three congregations including St. Mary's, Immanuel Inglesia Quadralangar and Westside Community will be contribute their time tonight to build the deer fence. Already 25 youth have volunteered to make preparations for the work party.

As part of the overall EMO project, gardeners also have the opportunity to learn how to can their bounty, as well as a space to do it with a series of canning sessions at the kitchen at First United Methodist Church. A June 17 workshop equipped other congregations and organizations in the Willamette Valley to open up their kitchens for community benefit.

MEMBER DENOMINATIONS

African Methodist Episcopal Church 8 American Baptist Churches of Oregon 8 Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) 8 Christian Methodist Episcopal Church 8 Church of the Brethren 8 Community of Christ
Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Oregon 8 Episcopal Diocese of Oregon 8 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America 8 Greek Orthodox Church 8 Presbyterian Church (USA)—Presbytery of the Cascades
Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) 8 Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Portland 8 United Church of Christ 8 United Methodist Church 8 Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches

To find out how you or your group can volunteer at the garden, contact Sue Domingues, garden manager, at sue_domingues@hotmail.com or (541) 754-7239. For information on canning sessions and classes, contact Rebecka Wienstieger, community kitchen coordinator, at rweinsteiger@emoregon.org or (541) 231-1907.

The mission of the Interfaith Food & Farms Partnership is to empower faith communities, farmers and neighborhoods to build rural-urban alliances and create innovative partnerships for just and sustainable food systems that promote community health. EMO is a statewide association of Christian denominations—including Protestant, Roman Catholic and Orthodox bodies—congregations, ecumenical organizations and interfaith partners working together to improve the lives of Oregonians through community ministry programs, ecumenical and interreligious dialogue, environmental ministry and public policy advocacy.