

Hamilton Community Garden Networking Program 2017 Annual Report

What is the Hamilton Community Garden Networking Program?

The Hamilton Community Garden Networking (HCGN) program is run by Neighbour 2 Neighbour to sustain and expand the garden community of Hamilton and support Hamiltonians in using gardens to build the community, enhance the environment, and promote wellness.

The HCGN serves as a hub of the garden community by helping people:

- **Access Resources and Tools** to start, run, or participate in gardens through guides, and fact sheets, and get connected to supplies
- **Find Gardens** through the interactive garden directory and map
- **Learn and Connect** through list-servs, events, workshops, and meet-ups

Mission

The HCGN program engages and connects community garden organizers, members, and supporters as well as the public to collaboratively build and sustain the garden community of Hamilton.

Vision

A community in which everyone has the opportunity to participate in and benefit from gardens grown to meet their needs.

Definition

Community Gardens are spaces where plants are grown by a community to meet its needs.

History

In 2007, guided by community interest, Hamilton Public Health Services approached North Hamilton Community Health Centre about resurrecting a Hamilton-Wentworth Garden Network. Interested parties came together and the HCGN was formed.

In 2010, stakeholders came together with the Community Food Security Stakeholder Committee to develop and pass the Hamilton Community Garden Policy. In 2011 and 2012, Green Venture developed the HCGN to include branding, outreach tools, and workshops with support from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, the City of Hamilton Public Works, Public Health Services and many partners.

In 2013, the Ontario Trillium Foundation supported Green Venture and Neighbour 2 Neighbour in continuing to grow and define the HCGN and support food growing garden projects in Hamilton. Today Neighbour 2 Neighbour continues to grow and support community gardening initiatives in Hamilton through the HCGN program. Learn more at hcgnc.ca.

Annual Report Overview

The HCGN program provides support for garden coordinators, gardeners and community members wanting to connect with community gardens in Hamilton. An annual report is produced to reflect on the program and for the greater community to see what was accomplished. In order to assess how Neighbour 2 Neighbour provides support to community gardens, an annual program survey is conducted with garden coordinators. The results help to adjust programming and improve the ways help is provided to gardens in the city. The findings of the survey are included in the Annual Report.

2017 HCGN Annual Report features:

- Current partners and supporters of the HCGN program
- The ways Neighbour 2 Neighbour has engaged community through the HCGN Program
- The ways Neighbour 2 Neighbour has provided support to gardens
- The successes of the community gardens in the city
 - These success are organized into 3 areas: building community, enhancing the environment and promoting wellness
- Hamilton Community Garden Networking Program Statistics

Partnerships and Supporters of the HCGN Program

In 2017, Neighbour 2 Neighbour leveraged partnerships and worked with a diversity of Hamilton groups to strengthen the HCGN program.

Partnerships included:

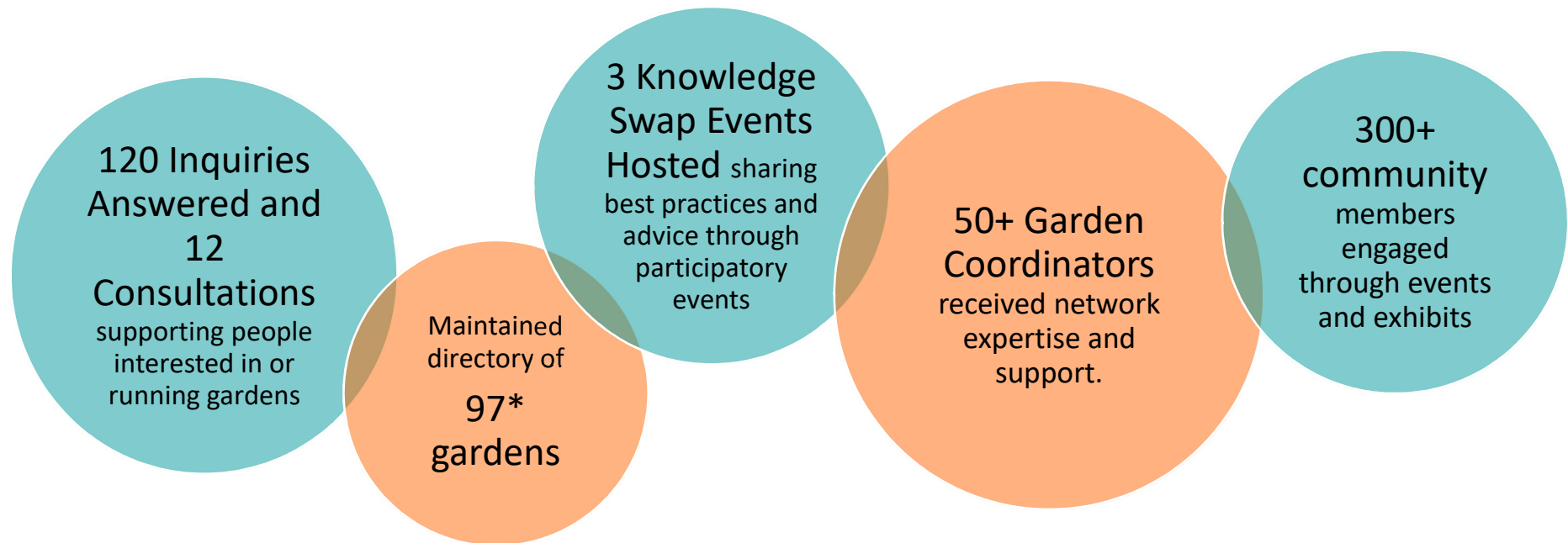
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Hamilton, Public Health Services and Public Works • CityHousing Hamilton • Hamilton Victory Gardens • North Hamilton Community Health Centre (NHCHC) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Royal Botanical Gardens • McMaster University • Hamilton Mountain Paramedics • Mohawk College • Hamilton Wentworth Public and Catholic School Boards | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green Venture • Local suppliers • Community Food Centres Canada • McQuesten Urban Farm • Dundurn National Historic Site, Kitchen Garden |
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Support was provided by:



TD Friends of the
Environment
Foundation

HCGN Program Engagement



Additional Network Engagement and Community Outreach

- Hosted 4 Gardening Workshops for garden coordinators and garden participants on Pest and Disease Management, General Garden Maintenance and Winter Garden Prep and Garlic Planting.
- 23 youth interns participated in 3 garden skill-building workshops taking place at various partner gardens throughout Hamilton such as Mission Services and 541 Eatery and Exchange to learn more about urban agriculture and the impact on emergency food and social services in Hamilton.

*97 out of 101 total gardens were featured in the directory. The final page of this report shows total gardens for 2017 by ward and by garden type.

HCGN Program Support for Gardens

Neighbour 2 Neighbour has been able to offer annual Resource Boost opportunities for community gardens to access tools, equipment, and materials to improve their community gardens. In addition to this support a website featuring an online Hamilton Garden Directory, interactive map and library of online resources for coordinating gardens is maintained, a garden coordinator email list-serv is provided and moderated, and monthly winter Knowledge Swap meetings for garden coordinators are hosted.

- Resource Boosts in the spring and fall of 2017 provided \$5,700 of in-kind donations and financial support for gardens and coordinators in the HCGN program.
- 96% of coordinators surveyed said that the Resource Boost was a useful way that the HCGN provided support to their garden.
- 44% of garden coordinators reported that the Resource Boost helped cover seasonal garden expenses. Rental fees, other grants and donations were other significant source of funding for gardens.
- 60% of gardeners surveyed said that they were able to get resources for their gardens through donations.
- Top 3 garden expenses in 2017 were: 1. building materials (for planters, raised beds, fences, sheds, etc.), 2. Equipment (tools, hoses, etc.), and 3. Seeds and plants.
- 74% of coordinators reported that the coordinator email list-serv was a major benefit to being in the program allowing them to be in touch with other garden coordinators in the City of Hamilton.
- The online garden directory and online resources were useful to 50% of gardeners surveyed.
- 75% of coordinators surveyed said the online resources and tools provided on the HCGN website were useful for running their garden.



Community Success Stories

The HCGN program supports coordinators of gardens to improve life in the City of Hamilton in the following ways:

Build Community

People develop and leverage relationships out of gardens leading to other projects and partnerships.

- Opening of Hamilton Victory Gardens VON and HHS General Hospital donation gardens, Stinson community garden in Carter Park and the Corridor Garden in the Gibson neighbourhood.
- Neighbour 2 Neighbour provided consultation to Kindertown Child Care and Learning Centre in developing a children’s vegetable garden at their child care centre on the East Mountain.
- N2N built a community garden in Captain Cornelius Park in the Rolston neighbourhood.
- Completion of the greenhouse at the North Hamilton Community Health Centre extended gardening season programming for their Grub Club and seniors gardening club.

Improved community access to gardens...

- Many of the community gardens surveyed have participants who speak a variety of languages with several gardens having 5+ languages represented.
- 60% of gardens do not charge rental fees. 30% offer cost assistance for those who cannot afford the fees.
- 40% of gardens surveyed are partly physically assessable, 13% are completely accessible.

Enhance the Environment

Community gardens help the ecosystem in many ways.

- Of gardens surveyed, **67%** have on-site composting, **75%** use organic practices, and **67%** have pollinator species planted to promote pollinating insect and bird populations.
- **11 000 sq ft** of green space was created in 2017 through community gardens
- There is approximately **177,000 sq ft** of community garden green space in Hamilton.

Promote Wellness

Community gardens increase access to fresh produce while promoting an active lifestyle and community involvement.

- **67, 139 lbs** of produce was donated to over **15 food agencies** in 2017
- In 2017, the HHS General Hospital garden was built. The garden is designed with patients’ needs and recovery in mind. The garden was built in partnership with Hamilton Victory Gardens, Hamilton Health Sciences and Population Health Research Institute.

Grow with your community

Success Stories...

“One 6 year old boy was so thrilled with the tomatoes he helped plant that he asked to regularly stop by to check the tomatoes and when he found ripe tomatoes, it was like a celebration!” - Community garden coordinator

“The gardeners continue to find a sense of belonging, something that we try to encourage through various social events.” – Community garden coordinator

“We have noticed amazing things because of our garden! Great student and staff interaction and involvement, the students learning about healthy food and they really enjoy eating what they plant!” – School garden parent volunteer

Hamilton Community Garden Networking Program Statistics

HCGN Program Stats by Ward	
Ward Number	Number of Gardens 2017
Ward 1	12
Ward 2	18
Ward 3	14
Ward 4	7
Ward 5	4
Ward 6	8
Ward 7	9
Ward 8	13
Ward 9	1
Ward 10	0
Ward 11	3
Ward 12	5
Ward 13	4
Ward 14	1
Ward 15	2
Total	101

HCGN Stats - Total Gardens Per Year by Type to 2017									
Type	Pre 2010	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Plot	7	10	14	17	19	22	21	24	26
Youth/School	2	3	5	10	12	13	11	12	13
Donation	1	1	2	2	5	5	5	3	3
Hamilton Victory Gardens	0	0	1	4	5	9	15	15	17
Communal	1	1	1	2	2	2	8	7	8
CityHousing	0	0	7	20	28	33	33	34	34
Total	11	15	30	55	71	84	93	95	101