

Hamilton Community Garden Networking Program 2024 Annual Report

Annual Report Overview

Neighbour 2 Neighbour's Hamilton Community Garden Networking 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.

2024 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
- Hamilton Community Garden Networking Program Statistics for 2024

Partnerships and Supporters of the HCGN Program

In 2024, Neighbour 2 Neighbour leveraged partnerships and worked with a diversity of Hamilton groups to strengthen the HCGN program.

Partnerships included:

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| • City of Hamilton, Office of Climate Change Initiatives | • Hamilton Mountain Paramedics | • McQuesten Urban Farm / Niwasa Kendaaswin Teg |
| • CityHousing Hamilton | • Mohawk College | • The Children's Garden Project Canada |
| • Hamilton Victory Gardens | • Green Venture | |
| • Compass Community Health Centre | • Roots to Justice Community Garden | |

Support was provided by:



TD Friends of the
Environment
Foundation

HCGN Program Engagement



"Working with HCGN in the early stages of setting up our community garden has been an absolute pleasure. The support and encouragement that we have received has smoothed the way of a sometimes rocky path."

- Community Garden Coordinator in the HCGN

"The Resource boost is invaluable to our community garden as it helps to cover the 'basics' and make our garden low cost to participate in which eliminates barriers that might prevent some of our gardeners from having access."

- Community Garden Coordinator in the HCGN

HCGN Program Support for Gardens

Neighbour 2 Neighbour offers annual Resource Boost opportunities for community gardens to access tools, equipment, and materials to improve their community gardens. In addition to this support, a webpage featuring an online Hamilton Garden Directory, interactive map and library of online resources for coordinating gardens is maintained and a garden coordinator email list-serv is moderated.

- Resource Boosts in the Spring provided over \$3,665 in new gardening equipment. Through the HCGN, \$600 in native pollinator plants and shrubs were distributed to community gardens in 2024. Donated vegetable plants and seeds of \$1,700 value distributed to gardens in the HCGN program
- 84% of gardens surveyed said that the HCGN Resource Boost was a significant means of financial assistance. Rental fees (45%), grants (31%) and donations (37%) were the next most significant sources of funding.
- Top 3 garden expenses in 2024 were 1. Garden Equipment (tools, hoses, etc.) 2. Soil/Compost and Water (for those not receiving water in-kind from the City of Hamilton), and 3. Building materials (for planters, raised beds, fences, sheds etc.).



Success Stories

“Morale was very low after COVID. This year the sense of community among gardeners and stewardship towards shared spaces has greatly increased. We’ve returned to having community potlucks, gardeners are communicating and working together to help maintain the space, and we’ve started having volunteer days open to anyone on the waitlist to come help with shared tasks, meet other members, and get an orientation to the garden.”

- Community Garden Coordinator in the HCGN

“Our gardens are maintained by the residents in the Kiwanis Homes and used to grow vegetables from their native country that cannot be found here. They are then distributed to friends and family.”

- Community Garden Coordinator in the HCGN

Community Gardening Benefits

Community Gardens improve life in the City of Hamilton in the following ways:

Build Community

People develop and leverage relationships and form new partnerships out of gardens.

- In Central Park Community Garden, Fratellanza Racalmutese Italian Club sponsors a vegetable plot for donation of harvest to Welcome Inn Food Bank and Hess Street Elementary School students contributed art now installed on the garden fencing.
- Gage Park Community Garden accepts the garden trimmings from the neighbouring Gage Park Children’s Garden and composts them in their compost bins.
- Students from St. Lawrence and Bennetto elementary schools helped out in Compass Community Health Centre Garden.

Enhance the Environment

Community gardens help the ecosystem in many ways.

- Nearly all community gardens surveyed report using ecologically sound gardening practices including on-site composting (58%), planting native plants (76%), creating habitat for indigenous plants and insects (68%), rainwater collection (23%) and crop-rotation (42%) and mulching soil (47%).
- Approximately 709 square feet of community garden space was created in 2024.

Promote Wellness

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

- 2258 gardeners representing 623 families grew food in community gardens in 2024.
- An estimated 3,880 lbs of produce were donated to food banks, meal programs and community fridges.
- Plot gardeners at Flamborough Community Garden supported the Food with Grace food bank program at Grace United Church in Waterdown.
- The donation gardeners at Church of the Resurrection celebrated their 10th year of growing food for Neighbour to Neighbour’s food bank.

Hamilton Community Garden Networking Program Statistics

HCGN Program Stats by Ward	
Ward Number	Number of Gardens in 2024
Ward 1	7
Ward 2	15
Ward 3	14
Ward 4	8
Ward 5	3
Ward 6	4
Ward 7	4
Ward 8	9
Ward 9	1
Ward 10	1
Ward 11	1
Ward 12	1
Ward 13	6
Ward 14	3
Ward 15	3
Total	80

HCGN Stats - Total Gardens Per Year					
Type	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Plot	19	19	21	25	25
Youth/School/Education	0	1	7	7	8
Donation	9	9	9	11	11
Hamilton Victory Gardens	6	6	4	5	4
Communal	4	4	5	4	4
CityHousing + Tenant	23	24	24	23	23
Other	2	2	2	5	5
Total	63	65	72	80	80

Garden Openings and Closures:

The St. Helen's site of Hamilton Victory Garden was removed from the Ward 4 and HVG counts.

St. Michael's Catholic Elementary School Garden planted native plants in 2024 and was added back into the Ward 8 and Youth/School/Education garden counts.