

New Start Community Garden Annual Report 2017

Vision: We envision a garden park where everyone can come to learn, grow, and contribute to building food security, science education, and community.

Motto: Share what you know and share what you grow!

History:

The Shark Garden was founded in the spring of 2015 by the Community Advisory Board for New Start High School, a Highline District school for at risk teens, to support the summer gardening program, Youth Works, that summer. Several board members visited some 15 other area community gardens in the area and the Bradner Gardens, in Seattle, was chosen as our role model. While Seattle has nearly 100 community vegetable gardens, most with waiting lists, there is only one in the Burien area. A survey was created to determine what features the public was interested in. The survey was administrated to around 100 community members, including students, and a plan for the former play field was donated by a local landscape designer, based on the survey results. The plans dedicate about a third of the 1.6 acre site to a school garden, which came to be known as the Shark Garden after the High School mascot. The remaining two thirds would be divided between a community garden area and a pea patch style garden with plots for rent. A community orchard would form the northern border of the site and be the location for the gardens' bee hives.

The high school summer gardening program started in the summer of 2015 and the nearly 30 high school students began construction on the garden, using almost entirely donated materials. The small budget available went to buying enriched garden soil for the new beds. The students built a shed, compost bins, beds, and paths and then planted them with donated fruit trees, vegetables, and flowers. By the season's end we had produced enough vegetables to donate over 100 pounds of food to the White Center Food Bank. A Facebook page was created by a volunteer to document the amazing changes that were happening, recognize donors, and engage the students, neighbors, and others. With the help of tireless volunteers, donors, and summer program staff, the garden sprang to life.

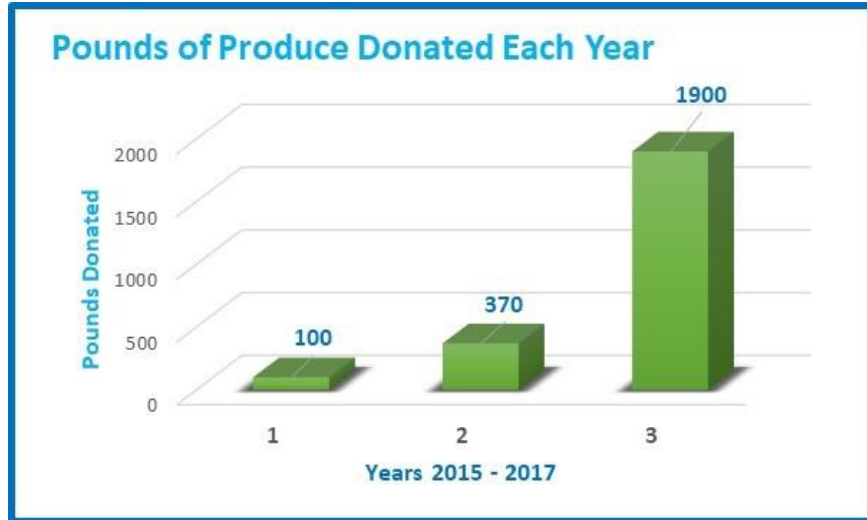
In 2016, we added a larger storage shed, dozens of raised beds, a stage, an access road, a main gate, and P-patch plots with the help of generous donations by NAIOP and others. Water service was added and our produce production tripled with a total of 370 pounds donated to the Food Bank and others.

2017 Achievements:

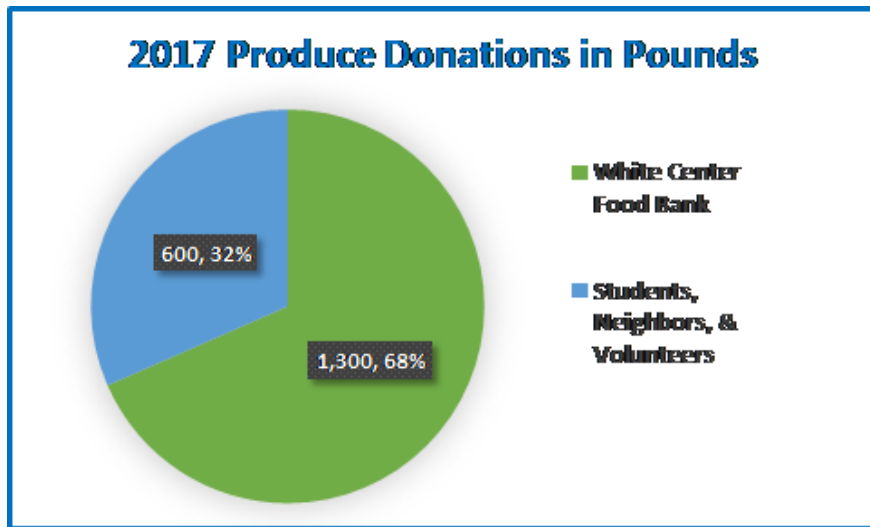
Our third season as a garden brought lots of exciting changes. We became a nonprofit! Under the fiscal sponsorship of the Weed Warriors, we became a 501c3 nonprofit. This means we can better accept donations and we have begun work on a website to facilitate sharing information and receiving donations online. Our P-patch program also started up in 2017, with about a third of the patches being used by local families. One gardener remarked that she'd met more neighbors working in her p-patch than in all the time she'd lived in the area. Our hope is that the Burien Parks Department will eventually add our p-patches to their existing community garden programs.

More volunteers started to support the garden in 2017. We started to piece together systems for volunteers to get involved and our Volunteer of the Year, Carol, served an amazing 400 hours in the

Shark Garden planting and harvesting veggies for the students and food bank. Two local Boy Scout troops helped us plant more fruit trees, mark the p-patches, and install the irrigation system, which now covers most of the site with hose bibs for the gardeners. We are tremendously grateful to all of our volunteers and volunteer board members for their efforts to further the garden! In total, they served over 5,600 hours during the year! Their tireless work helped us greatly increase the amount of produce that we donated to the community.



The majority of our produce donations went to the White Center Food Bank this year. These donations all came from the Shark Garden or school garden portion of the site, with volunteers planting, watering, tending, harvesting, and delivering it all. Over 1,300 pounds went to the food bank and another 600 pounds went to students, staff, volunteers, and neighbors.



Our growing relationship with the White Center Food Bank lead to the creation of a food pantry for students at the New Start High School campus. It's great to see how our support network is growing! We'd like to recognize the continued support of our returning donors too. Burien Press continues to donate their coffee grounds to us. McKinstry Construction donates building supplies for raised beds and other projects. The Burien Parks Department brings us wood chips for our paths. Our friends at NAIOP

donated soil and Burien Bark donated leaf mulch. We'd like to thank our new donors. Troy at Restoring Eden Nursery, in SeaTac, donated over a dozen plants and trees to add to our edible landscaping. Dwayne's Produce donated a bunch of vegetable starts to us, and, of course, our board members have all donated time and resources to grow the garden. A \$10K grant from the Port of Seattle is also helping us build our garden and community. Materials donations for the year were valued at over \$6,000.

New features in the garden this year include over 20 additional fruit trees, a hummingbird garden, and an area for edible flowers. The summer program students started to install a walking path along the eastern side of the garden that will eventually encircle the community garden area. More perennial flowers were added to attract pollinators and additional signage was created by the students. Our hoses hand on very cool metal hose brackets created by the students at the Skills Center.



Irrigation System Being Installed



New Hummingbird Garden Area

Looking Forward:

We have lots of plans for 2018. We hope to have the new website up to increase our outreach and marketed ability. It will be a place where people can find resources and learn about the garden. We may even start a blog to highlight stories from the garden.

Plans are underway for adding more beds for flowers and bushes that attract pollinators and butterflies. A new historical potager garden is being planned for a section of the community garden and it will highlight herbs, medicinal plants, hardscape, and classical formal European style. We are considering the addition of a Permaculture Demonstration Garden, as well. It would feature fruit trees with all kinds of companion plantings to illustrate the principles of Permaculture. That garden idea came out of a connection with the Highline Community College Urban Agriculture program, which we are hoping to coordinate curriculum with. We hope to hold a series of workshops in the garden with speakers from the college and other experts from our community. We thank Rick Schultz, from Highline, for kicking off the 2018 season with a workshop on fruit tree pruning and grafting. We also hope to add a community berry patch with blueberries, raspberries, thornless blackberries, goji berries, mulberries, and more. The berries have already been donated and we just need to build out the beds.



Our goals for 2018 are pretty straight forward. We want to build more relationships with the community and other organizations to help make the garden sustainable. We want to rent out all of the p-patches. We want to recruit more volunteers and build a system to organize them and track their support. And, finally, we'd like to find new sources of funding for new projects. We hope to increase our donations to the food bank and find ways to coordinate with other area nonprofits to support our community.

We thank all of our supporters and look forward to seeing you out in the garden!

To Get Involved, Volunteer, or Donate, Contact us:

info@sharkgarden.org or OurSharkGarden@gmail.com

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Coming soon: www.sharkgarden.org