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## Planting a Community Garden Builds Relationships

By [Marie Powell](#) on July 2, 2010 - 8:51pm

One of the most important components of successful community development is building and strengthening relationships among community members. It builds trust – and strong, trust-based relationships go a long way toward moving a community forward.

Building these relationships can happen in a number of ways. A project we're involved in – the Siouxland Community Garden – is building relationships and community by creating opportunities for small business start-ups and developing community leaders.

The garden project is bringing people together for community building and education. The Center for Rural Affairs, with the assistance of the community and through a USDA Farmers Market Promotion grant, is providing training to gardeners of all skill levels. The training covers organic practices, presentations from local farmers, small business training, and hands-on training in the garden.

Teaching people how to grow fruits and vegetables is important, but the project goes a few steps beyond that by training potential market gardeners and new farmers. Business planning, learning how to negotiate farmer's market protocols, and more are some aspects of the business development of the project.



*New gardener Gloria Lopez prepares the soil for planting earlier in the spring.*

Gardens enhance the quality of life by increasing a sense of community ownership while building community spirit and pride. This project is bringing diverse groups together and is well supported by the community. The City of South Sioux City, the Public Library, the University of Nebraska, Extension, and local businesses all play important roles.

Bilingual community members donate their time and talents translating at all meetings and workshops, making

sure everyone is included. The gardeners are giving back by growing food for their own families and for those in need. The harvest from several church plots and the extra harvest from individual plots will be donated to the local food bank.

Family ties are strengthened as families work together in the garden planting, weeding and harvesting. It offers possibilities of bridging a gap between cultures and creating a new sense of community and allows for intergenerational connections. A community garden is a tool for community development as it builds and strengthens relationships and becomes a source of community pride.

Find out more about the Siouxland Community Garden at <http://cfra.org/node/2735>, or contact Stephanie Kennedy, [stephaniek@cfra.org](mailto:stephaniek@cfra.org).

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