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Waukegan Local Food Resource Guide

This resource guide was compiled by the Liberty Prairie Foundation as part of the Waukegan Local Food Project. The capacity building and technical assistance initiative was designed to support Waukegan organizations pursuing local food projects and ultimately strengthen the community's local food system.

This document is intended to provide organizations and residents with information about local food projects underway in the community. Each listing provides contact information and a website when available. Organizations are grouped according to their main function, however, there is crossover within several projects. Please click on the links to the left to see specific listings.

As initiatives change and new projects emerge, staff will continue to update this document. If you would like to add your organization's information to this document, please contact Emily Weber at emilyweber@prairiecrossing.com.
**Be Well Lake County**

Contact: Christina Arnold RD, LDN, CDE, Diabetes Program Coordinator
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www.northshore.org/community-events/community/be-well-lake-county/

Be Well Lake County takes a comprehensive approach to help patients manage their diabetes so they can maintain healthy, active lifestyles and prevent complications associated with the disease. The program is a collaborative effort amongst NorthShore University HealthSystem, Lake County Health Department and Community Health Center, and several community partners.

As part of the organization’s nutrition education and support components, Be Well Lake County created a community garden program to teach patients how to grow and prepare healthy, fresh food. Established in 2010, the garden is located on the Lake County Health Department’s North Chicago Community Health Center Campus. Patients plant, water, weed and harvest produce throughout the growing season. The harvested vegetables are split between participants each week so they can prepare healthy, fresh food at home. Be Well Lake County donates a growing box to any patient interested in growing food at home to further encourage them to lead a healthy lifestyle.

**Green Town Project**

Contact: Nada and Newton Finn, Green Town Project Directors
128 N. West Street
Waukegan, IL 60085
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http://www.waukegan.com

GreenTOWN Waukegan, Inc. is a nonprofit organization working to re-green the original Green Town, as Waukegan was named in novels by its own Ray Bradbury. The organization created and maintains the Madeleine Fuqua Community Garden in downtown Waukegan and partners with local schools, churches, civic groups and local government to create additional sites to grow produce. GreenTOWN focuses on educating everyone from elementary school students to seniors about the possibilities of urban agriculture and the necessity of healthy eating. Future goals include bringing a hydroponic urban farm similar
to Milwaukee's Growing Power to Waukegan, along with a green jobs training program. All who support their goals are invited to join in reclaiming Waukegan's heritage as a 21st Century Green Town.

▪ Ten Thousand Gardens

Contact: Roland Kuhl, Ten Thousand Gardens Director
rgkuhl@gmail.com
info@lovingneighbor.org
www.lovingneighbor.org/2652/index.html

Ten Thousand Gardens seeks to provide healthier food options by providing produce for families and people in need within Lake County. This volunteer-run organization identified a need for fresh food donations at local food pantries and social service agencies. As part of the solution, Director Roland Kuhl found that fruit and vegetables could be gleaned and gathered in larger quantities to provide the foundation for a healthier diet for persons and families in need in Lake County.

The grassroots organization works with Prairie Crossing Learning Farm on a community gleaning program where volunteers glean produce from Prairie Crossing farms and distribute to the Manna Garden Initiative’s free farmers market, COOL Food Pantry and Avon Township Food Pantry.
**College of Lake County**

Contact: Rory Klick, Horticulture Department Chair or Gianna Fazioli, Local Food Coordinator
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Grayslake, IL 60030
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www.clcillinois.edu/programs/hrt/index.asp

The College of Lake County Horticulture program has incorporated sustainability topics across its curriculum to better prepare students for employment in the green industry. Graduates enter a range of employment including local landscape companies, environmental consulting firms, municipalities and park districts, public land management agencies and entrepreneurial ventures.

Sustainable agriculture is an emerging specialty field that is growing quickly as we seek to find economically viable ways to maintain farmland and sustainable ways to support local food production. To capture this momentum, CLC rolled out a new sustainable agriculture program in 2012, which offers an associate in applied science degree and a certificate option. In this program, students take a variety of hands-on courses in topics such as permaculture, extended season production, and seasonal fruit and vegetable production. Graduates are prepared for work as skilled farm laborers and managers or for entry into entrepreneurial support programs.

**Fuller Center for Housing-Hero Project Lake County**
(Manna Garden Project)

Contact: Yvette Ewing, President
312-450-7680
mannagarden@fullercenterlakecounty.org
yewing@atp-ent.com
www.atp-ent.com

Started in 2010, the Manna Garden Project is a collaborative effort amongst many community partners such as nonprofit organizations, churches and local businesses to create a free farmers market in Waukegan to feed the hungry. The project created a network of more than 30 community gardens and trained more than 100 community heroes in gleaning and growing food to supply the market.
Now under the umbrella of the Fuller Center for Housing-Hero Project Lake County, the project has expanded to include job skills training, an urban agriculture component, affordable housing, green initiatives and more. Part of the vision for the Hero Project includes creating a community facility that will house job training and green initiatives, health and wellness programs, help launch entrepreneurs and more.

▪ Habitat for Humanity Lake County

Gardening Together Program

Contact: Susan Baron, Gardening Together Coordinator
847-529-6299
susanbaron@sbcglobal.net
www.habitatlc.org

The Gardening Together Program helps beginning gardeners who purchase homes from Habitat for Humanity Lake County to start their own garden. This 3-year program partners the new homeowners with a gardening mentor to help them with the process. Families receive donated compost, plants and tools as they begin the program. The mentor and mentee meet several times over the course of the program to plan, implement and maintain the home garden. The program also includes educational opportunities such as cooking demonstrations to educate families on how to prepare healthy food from their own yards.

▪ Roberti Community House

Contact: Maribeth Roberti
919 8th St.
Waukegan, IL 60085
Phone: 224-209-3717
mroberti16@gmail.com

The Roberti Community House is host to many community activities and resources for residents of the south side of Waukegan. The Roberti Foundation purchased and rehabilitated the Community House in 2011 to create a warm and inviting environment where neighbors of all ages could come together to support, encourage and learn from one another. The House features two large kitchens where cooking classes that focus on healthy, nutritional and low cost meal preparation are held for both adults and children. These classes will be expanded in the fall of 2013 to include participants from a number of local community groups. In addition, the House offers support groups for mothers, yoga, art classes
and English classes. The House also provides an expanded facility for the B.I.K.E.S. program that makes viable transportation alternatives available for adults.

In partnership with the Chicago Botanic Garden, the Roberti Community House features 12 raised beds that are cultivated by the Junior Green Youth Farm. This program helps youth learn about sustainable agricultural practices, healthy food preparation and nutritional eating habits. Offering a hands-on gardening experience, cooking classes and a variety of field trips, the program integrates team building activities with individual goals that serve to reinforce self-esteem and positive group interaction. In addition, the Roberti House assists the neighborhood with maintaining the community garden sponsored by the Holy Family Food Pantry which is located across the street. Programming at the Roberti House is continually expanding to meet the needs and interests of the community.

**University of Illinois Extension**

Contact: Kim Isaacson, Horticulture Program Coordinator
100 S. US Highway 45
Grayslake, IL 60030
847-223-8672
kimisaac@illinois.edu
http://web.extension.illinois.edu/lm/

The University of Illinois Extension is part of the flagship outreach effort of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. This organization offers educational programs to residents in all of Illinois' 102 counties—and far beyond. The Lake and McHenry County Extension Office particularly provides programs in five areas: healthy society, food safety, environmental stewardship, sustainable and profitable food production and the enhancement of family and community wellbeing.

The local Extension Office’s Horticulture Program provides valuable education to numerous nonprofit organizations, community groups and faith-based groups working on gardening initiatives. Staff members train volunteers to host workshops, provide educational materials and consult with groups to help them create and implement their gardening projects.
As a hub of the community, the Waukegan Public Library offers relevant programs and services to help residents be successful, including adult and family basic education, computer classes, ESL programs, citizenship preparation, and pre-GED courses in Spanish.

The library also offers a variety of educational opportunities related to local food initiatives and healthy eating. In late 2012, the library opened its Early Learning Center exhibit, “Oink, Baa, Moo: Farm Fun” to portray the significance of farming on local communities. The Early Learning Center is a 2,200 square-foot learning museum in English and Spanish with interactive displays and hands-on activities that include a barn slide, apple orchard, chicken coop, play garden, farm stand, and a life-sized fiberglass milking cow. In addition, live baby chicks are hatched every five weeks and the Lake County Farm Bureau presents a program each month on a variety of topics related to farming.

The library offers a Diggin in the Dirt Family Gardening Club in the summer for families with children ages 4-8. Kids plant, tend and harvest vegetables throughout the summer while learning about the value of growing food. The Waukegan Public Library also hosts the annual Lake County Monarch Festival, which focuses on art, nature and the environment. Local organizations set up educational booths to teach families about being healthy, staying active, and living green. The Green Youth Farm sells fresh vegetables at the festival to engage residents in their local food system.
### Andrew Cooke Magnet School

Contact: Todd Freer, K-5 Science Teacher  
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Waukegan, IL 60085  
847-360-5463  
tfreer@wps60.org  
http://schools.wps60.org/cooke/greenhousereandgardenprograms.html

For the past several years, Cooke Magnet School has been working to improve its greenhouse to make it a valuable learning facility for students. The Greenhouse Rehabilitation Project, led by science teacher Todd Freer, is an effort to make better use of the greenhouse, which sat idle and was used for storage until the early 1990s. After receiving a Pepsi Refresh Grant in the 2009-2010 school year to assist with the rehabilitation project, the school has replaced the greenhouse roof, added an irrigation system and fixed the facility’s ventilation system.

Freer wrote new science curriculum for the school called Growing Green. The newly rehabbed greenhouse was integrated into the coursework, which focuses on soil, energy, sunlight, seeds, pollination, hand-on activities and more. The school hosts a plant sale fundraiser each year where students take an active role in the planting, planning and implementation process. Cooke also is home to three gardens planted by students, parents and staff.

### Beacon Place

Contact: Barb Karacic, President  
2300 Northgate Street #45  
Lake Forest, IL 60045  
224-572-9330  
B.karacic@beacon-place.org  
http://beacon-place.org

Started in the fall of 2012, Beacon Place strives to feed, educate, activate, train, and empower children and families with food and technology resources that will enable them to improve the welfare of themselves and their overall community. Programs and training offered through Beacon Place will be delivered by trained individuals through a central facility as well as through extension sites best suited for specific programs. Each program will have a critical ‘give back’ component that will foster commitment, responsibility to others, and self-reliance with an aim toward development of the individual, the family and the broader community. As a center develops, the goal is for it to become self-supporting and run by the respective community.
The Youth Garden at Beacon Place, BEACON GREEN, was developed in partnership with the University of Illinois Extension of Lake County to engage disadvantaged children from the Waukegan community. The summer-long program will build their knowledge and awareness of nutrition, gardening, food preparation, and self-sustaining food opportunities. Youth enrolled in the program acquire the skills to grow their own produce through real work experience, and gain the satisfaction of seeing how their hard work can improve their lives and their communities. In 2013, 12 participants will be targeted for participation in the BEACON GREEN program, held at Carman Buckner Elementary School in Waukegan.

Cool Learning Experience

Contact: Barbara Waller, Director
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Waukegan, IL 60079
847-707-4544
barbarawaller1@comcast.net

Cool Learning Experience is a year-round, nature-based environmental learning program for 4th-8th graders. Its primary focus is the delivery of an 8-week summer session that is sustained by a collaboration of partners and sponsoring organizations. The organization’s program goals are to:

- Help students identify key science and math principles as they explore watershed ecosystems.
- Engage students in environmental issues by cultivating a sense of place.
- Explore the natural world and creatively express their experiences.
- Stimulate a love for nature and a commitment to conservation.

As part of the program's interdisciplinary curriculum, the children and CLE volunteers maintain two raised bed gardens. These gardens—while providing fresh vegetables for children to sample—serve primarily as laboratories to teach them about soil composition, pollination and other factors related to food production. The program has installed a rain barrel and the children learn, hands-on, the principles of composting as they maintain two compost bins. Youth also visit the Green Youth Farm and Prairie Crossing Learning Farm to participate in learning activities on real, working farms.
**The Chicago Botanic Garden's Green Youth Farm**

Contact: Eliza Fournier, Manager  
847-835-8352  
efournier@chicagobotanic.org  
www.chicagobotanic.org/greenyouthfarm/

The Chicago Botanic Garden’s Green Youth Farm is an agriculture-based youth development program that offers students the opportunity to learn all aspects of sustainable farming, from seed to market. Programming is offered at five sites: a one-acre site in North Chicago; a community-based Jr. GYF program at Roberti Community House in Waukegan; a quarter-acre site in the North Lawndale neighborhood of Chicago; a three-quarters-acre site in Washington Park in Chicago; and a school-based Jr. Green Youth Farm site at Reavis Elementary on the south side of Chicago.

Participants across the sites grow fresh produce, herbs and flowers, sell produce at community farm stands, and present healthy cooking demonstrations at WIC offices, all as part of a motivated team dedicated to sustainable food systems and healthy eating. Students are paid a stipend to work on the farms May through October, all the while learning valuable job skills, teamwork, growing a support system and discovering a new way to look at the food they eat.

**Waukegan Park District**

Contact: Jennifer Dumas, Recreation Coordinator  
2000 Belvidere St.  
Waukegan, IL 60085  
847-360-4705  
jdumas@waukeganparks.org  
www.waukeganparks.org

The Waukegan Park District Children’s Garden supports the organization’s efforts to get kids outdoors, experience the wonders of nature and become more physically active. The garden, established in 2011, is located in Bowen Park in Waukegan behind the Jane Addams Center. It provides a playful and informal setting that inspires children to connect with the environment and develop a lifelong appreciation of growing and caring for living things.

Waukegan Park District day campers from Bowen Park Rangers, Belvidere Park Explorers, and Special Recreation of Northern Lake County’s Teen Camp, as well as local Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops and Midwest Generation employees each care for their own individual garden tending flowers, vegetables and herbs planted in their
container. Other features of the garden include a learning circle for educational programs, a demonstration box used for hands-on learning, a compost box, and a worm box. Rain barrels collect water and demonstrate an effective means of recycling water, storing it and using it for gardening.

- **Youth Conservation Corps of Lake County**

  Contact: Rob Sherry, Green Initiatives Coordinator  
  1020 West Greenwood Ave.  
  Waukegan, IL 60087  
  847-623-0900  
  rsherry@youthconservationcorps.org  
  www.youthconservationcorps.org  

  Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) has three decades of experience helping young people develop their leadership skills and build foundations for successful futures. The organization is dedicated to: developing young leaders and empowering youth to make a positive impact on their community; protecting and conserving natural resources and instilling among young people an appreciation and respect for the environment, helping to create life long stewards; serving as a catalyst for community and economic development by working with community partners to build affordable housing and participating in widespread community service projects.

  YCC Green Initiatives Coordinator, Rob Sherry, works with youth on several green projects such as an on-site garden that youth help tend and harvest, work with Green Town Project, rain gardens, seed starting and more.