

Growing, Healing, and Nurturing.

A plan for developing healing gardens and a small farm at the Bluegrass Domestic Violence Program

BDVP Farm/Garden Vision Statement.

It is the mission of this project to create an agricultural-based healing environment for residents and staff of BDVP that will, over time, become an economically self-sustaining program. Development and operation of this project will focus on the aesthetic, nutritional, environmental, emotional, and physical healing of all those involved. We envision a farm project at BDVP that promotes education, empowerment, healing, and nourishing of earth, mind, body, and spirit through cultivation and production of wholesome, organically grown fruits and vegetables as well as medicinal herbs, flowers, honey, and value-added products. We hope to develop potential for small business opportunities for women with a focus on teaching skills in production, processing, and marketing of crops and value-added products grown and processed on site. We hope that education and collaboration associated with production can build community and healing relationships and promote opportunities for communication and connection between residents, staff, and volunteers.

Keeping these visions in mind, it is important to allow time for development of economically feasible production practices that do not compromise our focus on healing, education, and empowerment. It is essential that fundraising, foundation money, and grant opportunities continue to be pursued so as to allow for time and space to cultivate appropriate systems and infrastructure and to employ a part-time (and eventually full-time) farmer. We hope to have the time to develop profitable enterprises without financial pressures compromising the focus on healing, education, and empowerment.

Vision for Jessica's involvement in this project.

Year One.

I see myself as a facilitator of education and production in association with this project. In year one I aspire to serve as a volunteer coordinator and production manager. I see this year as a foundation year for getting to know the land, developing and visioning a number of gardens for landscaping and production of perennial vegetation including native medicinal herbs and flowering plants, culinary herbs, blackberries, strawberries, asparagus, rhubarb, and

horseradish as well as incorporating an aesthetically pleasing flower garden that can also be used for cut flower production. I would like to design a large meditation garden that incorporates all of this plant material into a beautifully landscaped sitting area surrounded by a blackberry hedgerow and filled with aromatic herbs and flowers. I hope that this area can be a site for journaling, meditation, group discussion and relaxation as well as an evolving production site. Residents can observe growth and changes in this area as it is utilized for a number of purposes.

My intention for annual production includes the ongoing development of substantial residential food production to cut kitchen costs and nourish tenants while involving them in the growth, harvest and preservation process of bringing food to table. This should help to cut BDVP food costs while providing a consistently healthy menu for families living here. We can continue to utilize existing raised beds for this and also allow space in a larger garden plot for storage crops and vegetables for preserving such as peppers, potatoes, sweet potatoes, carrots, winter squash, beets, onions, and garlic for winter consumption for residents. Several $\frac{1}{4}$ acre plots may be created for potential marketable produce or be cover-cropped and prepped as necessary for the following season. Market produce for year one should be limited to less intensive crops that may be processed, sold, or utilized in the off season. Market produce may include sweet potatoes, dry beans, potatoes, and garlic. I would like to have dried herbs, chiles, beans etc. for packaging in the off season. This way, we can build stock for our marketing opportunities in year 2. If budget is sufficient, I would like to devote one quarter acre plot to strawberry and asparagus production for upcoming years.

In year one I would also like to experiment with early strawberry production in the initial hoop house and an early lettuce crop with ongoing cutting throughout early spring. Depending on yield, these crops may be marketable to local restaurants, however, I would like for the fruits of labor to be available for residents as well, as this production is experimental and we want to keep this all inclusive and available to the residents.

By the end of the first season, I hope we are finding ways to involve residents in utilizing some of our harvest through cooking and canning together and developing home processing skills. We can work to find systems to involve residents without overwhelming with hard farm labor.

Year 2.

A goal for this year could be to increase market production with a farmer's market stand for

sales of value added goods, greens, garlic, berries, flowers, herbs, etc. This may open up potential for on-line marketing options where customers can pre-order for market through our web-site or an alternate site such as Local Harvest. This year we can also continue to build relationships with local restaurants, utilizing their feedback for prospective sales. Goals for this year include additional installation of berry plants (raspberries, blackberries, strawberries), asparagus. I would also like to look at putting in another hoop house to begin to develop a rotational winter production system for winter greens, micro-greens, overwintering herbs, and a dynamic lettuce mix.

Year 3.

Experiment with small CSA, (pick-up through farmer's market), continue with on-line and farmer's market opportunities, continued relationships with local restaurants, look at installing another hoop house for increased extended season production, rotation. Funding for more labor hours, cultivating rotational field space with appropriate cover-cropping options harvest asparagus, blackberries, strawberries, raspberries for market