

Community Garden A Growing Success

BY JAMES COOPER
For the Plain Talk

For years, farmers and their families have relied on gardens to help feed their families. While the times may have changed a bit, the joy and accomplishment of having a personal garden has not. Accompanying the change, there has also been a lack of available space in residential areas for personal gardens. Thankfully Vermillion boasts a community garden that is as beautiful as it is functional for those who cannot otherwise garden at home.

For apartment dwellers, first timers, or those who are just busier than others, gardening can seem like an activity best saved for someone else, but a the community garden offers plots of varying sizes that come standard with all of the water, tools, mulch, mowing, and education on gardening one could ever need for no extra charge. With plots ranging from \$5 to \$20 for the entire summer season, this is an affordable way to learn a new skill, help fight food insecurity, and stay active.

Christine Ahmed, a retired professor of Health at The University of South Dakota, serves as the Coordinator of the Community Garden. About ten years ago, in the back lot of the then Catholic Church in Vermillion, the Community Garden was born as nothing more than a few inches of



COURTESY PHOTO

Vermillion Community Garden is an all organic space located behind the Vermillion Area Art Council building at 202 Washington Street.

soil above a gravel lot. In order to continue to build soil Ahmed said, "we use a lot of soil building techniques...I moved our compost to a rotating compost system that rotates every summer." This rotating compost system uses a fallow plot in the garden as the dumping place for mulch, trimmings, weeding, and organic matter that packs down into new soil over time.

The garden also encourages the use of organic gardening techniques in order to keep the soil healthy and the food pesticide and herbicide free. Ahmed commented on some of the techniques and said, "Well, some people do till, but I don't encourage tilling because it breaks up the soil structure, and it encourages weeds, so if you plant

your seeds and your plants right into the ground, that's one of the things that helps keep weeds lower...using a variety of different mulches, like if you use green and brown grass clippings, and leaves or bark, so it's really a combination...also, hand weeding." Certainly, these techniques for healthy gardens can aid even the seasoned gardening veteran, as well as the newcomer.

Preparing the Community Garden for planting every year requires more than just the gardeners. Volunteer groups from Vermillion High School, SESDAC, and USD help to keep the garden in tip top shape as the growing season begins. Helps does not just come in the form of physical labor, but also in the form of monetary support from the community.

Grants have provided the garden with a tool shed and spigots that will not freeze. Other major contributors are the Dakota Hospital Foundation, Vermillion Now, Hy-Vee, First Bank and Trust, Walmart, Kalins Indoor Comfort, and of course, Christine Ahmed and her husband, Michael.

With the issues being raised about Food Deserts and Sustainability, global communities are now considering options that allow them to provide, for themselves and their loved ones, foods free from poisons or non-GMO (Genetically Modified Organism) products. The want for accessible, healthy, organic produce is growing in the Vermillion community just as strongly. Local resident and USD student Emily Roberson chose to set up a plot at the Community Garden because, "I want to build a better personal connection with two things I think are most important to creating a sustainable future: the food I eat and the community I live in a care about. Plus, it's just fun to garden!"

As the love or gardening spreads, the Vermillion Community Garden is sure to expand. There is already a Children's garden near the official site, but as funding and interest continue to grow, this project will only follow suit. Plots are available every summer and more information on how to obtain a plot can be found on the Vermillion Community Garden Facebook page.

'Crafting Democracy' Open House Set

The Vermillion Public Library will host "Crafting Democracy," an artistic and political open house, from 10:30 a.m. - 4 p.m. on Saturday, June 20. In preparation for the June 30 Special Election, the Library staff has arranged a democracy studio that will provide community members with crafty campaign materials, sample ballots and other information regarding the election. Attendance is free and open to all members of the public.

Various crafting supplies and an artistic environment will provide a creative approach to raising political awareness. Two button machines will be available, allowing attendees to design and create political buttons, as well as materials for crafting banners, signs and posters. All materials will be provided by the library.

For additional information, please contact the Library at 677-7060.

Student Earns \$11,000 Fellowship

The National Board for Certified Counselors has selected Patricia Roth, recent USD graduate, as recipient of the Minority Master's Fellowship for addictions counselors. Worth \$11,000, the money will support Roth's efforts to become a licensed addictions counselor.

Roth attended Mount Marty College in Watertown, where she obtained a bachelor's degree in psychology, and graduated from USD in May with a master's degree in addiction studies. She has worked as a certified addictions counselor at the Dakotah Pride Center and Inpatient Treatment program on the Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate Reservation for four years.

"I am so grateful for the NBCC Minority Fellow Scholarship because it means I get help that I never knew was out there," said Roth, who plans to use the money to cover living expenses, commuting costs and student loans.

Fallan Wins 4-H Scholarship

Erika Fallan, daughter of David and Julie Fallan, was chosen as the recipient of the Janice L. Miller 4-H Scholarship sponsored by the Family of Janice L. Miller. Erika is a 2015 graduate of Vermillion High School will be attending South Dakota State University pursuing a career in Ag Education. She is a ten-year member of the Meckling Livestock 4-H Club.

Janice Miller was a life-long resident of Clay County, growing up in the Meckling area. She farmed with her husband Clifford and raised four children, Michelle, Celeste, Carlton and Jason, who were all active in the Clay County 4-H program. She encouraged their involvement in all aspects of 4-H, understanding the skills obtained through 4-H would serve her children well into their adult lives. Janice believed in the ideals of the 4-H program - "To Make the Best Better."

Janice was a Home Economics Education Graduate from South Dakota State University. She taught home economics in Parker, Viborg, and Vermillion, SD. She enjoyed her teaching career and inspired many students to explore their talents in the arena of domestic sciences.

The family of Janice L. Miller is proud to offer an annual \$100 college scholarship to a current or former Clay County 4-H member who plans to attend a South Dakota college or university and displays active involvement in Youth in Action, Leadership and Civic Involvement. For more information, contact the Clay County Extension Office at 605-677-7111.

Dalesburg To Hold Midsommar

Music, fun for the family, homemade pie, smorgasbord! Midsommar at Dalesburg, a celebration of family, faith and friendship, is Friday, June 19, at Dalesburg Lutheran Church, a country church in rural Clay County that draws members from the Vermillion, Centerville, Beresford and Alcester areas. The festival includes two free programs, at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m., and free activities for kids. The fun closes after the 7 p.m. program as everyone is invited to dance around the Midsommar pole.

The afternoon program, at 2pm in the air-conditioned church, features the Sergeant Creek Band, group singing and more.

During the afternoon, kids will be able to play, free, in an inflatable obstacle course and ride a miniature train.

The 7 p.m. evening program includes the Dalesburg Cornet Band, Saxophone & Piano by Coggins, and the Allnighters Barbershop Quartet. After the show, everyone gathers around the Midsommar Pole for traditional Scandinavian dancing.

The 146th annual Scandinavian festival tempts the tastebuds with a Smorgasbord from 4:30-6:30 p.m. It features homemade ethnic specialties like meatballs, potatis korb, fruit soup and more. Informal dining is available from 1-10 p.m. at the Dalesburg Lutheran & Komstad Youth Food Stand.

Dalesburg Lutheran Church is 12 miles north of Vermillion on the University Road; or 5.5 miles west of I-29 exit 38 (Volin); or 9 miles south of Hwy 46 on University Road or 3 miles east of Hwy 19 on 306th St. (Volin Road).

The festival is the 146rd celebration at the church and is a joint effort of three traditionally Swedish rural churches in the area - Dalesburg Lutheran, Dalesburg Baptist and Komstad Covenant.

The festival dates back into the late 1860s, when settlers from Dalarna County of Sweden came to Dakota Territory, to the area that is now Southeastern South Dakota.



Little Scientists Gather At Library

BY SARAH WETZEL
For the Plain Talk

Little scientists of all ages gathered at the Vermillion Public Library Monday to participate in weekly science experiments based on the classic superhero: Superman.

To Nolan, 6, Superman is a favorite hero who flies just like the balloons and foam airplanes made at the library.

But how?

"I don't actually know," Nolan said. "I don't watch Superman. I can't because it's too violent."

Other flying things Nolan likes include rockets and jets.

But how can big, heavy rockets and jets get off the ground without super powers?

"They fly with their jets," Nolan said. "It's something that makes them go fast. I don't really know lots of stuff about jets."

But he will.

"I'm going to be an airplane driver and an astronaut," Nolan said.

Nolan has his eyes on traveling as far as the moon but not to Mars.

"Nah, it's too far away maybe," he said.

Nolan, like other kids at the library, created a glider out of a foam plate, straw and rubber band.

"It's a foam airplane," he said. "You cut the hole and then you write your name and then you put the rubber band on and the straw and then you tape it."

Hope, 6, also made a glider.

"I'm making it," she said. "It's an airplane. You pull the rubber band and it

flies."

Hope reported having a lot of fun, this being her first time participating in experiments of this kind and learning about real airplanes.

"They have a lot of stuff like motors," she said. "I like learning."

Hope's other scientific interests include flowers, her favorite being red roses.

Skylar, 6, also made a glider.

"I'm going to write my name on it so I know whose it is," she said. "I'm going to take some tape and tape it to the back. I'm not going to put the rubber band over it, i'm going to put it right here and pull it back and it's going to fly."

Kids also made airplanes that moved along a string by power of a filled balloon.

"Doing the airplane balloon was my favorite part because I get to have lots of fun," Hope said.

To Skylar, it was obvious what made the balloon fly across the room: Air.

"We had a string a straw and a balloon and we blew up the balloon and we taped

it to the straw and then we let go until the balloon would go to the other side of the string because the air inside of the balloon was going out and so it was pushing the balloon away to the other side," she said.

"It's really crafty and I really like doing stuff that has to do with crafts. I like to draw pictures of animals.



SARAH WETZEL/FOR THE PLAIN TALK

Up, up and away went the gliders made by the participants of the superman-themed science experiments at the Vermillion Public Library as part of the Summer Reading Program.

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Cheetahs are my favorite because they run really fast, 75 miles an hour."

Super-themed science experiments will be held Monday mornings at the library during the Summer Reading Program.

For a schedule of these and other events visit vermillionpubliclibrary.org.



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