

impact

University of Idaho Extension programs that are making a difference in Idaho.

UI Extension provides community development activities in Troy, Idaho

AT A GLANCE

Troy Community Garden provides a home base for UI Extension healthy living activities including gardening and walking.

The Situation

Troy is a small community in Latah County with a population of just over 900. In meetings with UI Extension faculty and community members, Troy residents expressed the need for more access to healthy physical activities as well as access to local, healthy foods. The town had a grocery store that recently closed. The landowner of the lot that houses the community garden was planning to remove the fence and garden due to a lack of community participation.

The Troy Community Garden was initiated and built by community members during the UI Extension Horizons project in 2009. Participation had waned in recent years without a community organizer or garden coordinator. The garden is located near the Latah Trail, recently paved in 2018.

Rural residency tends to increase the risk of overweight and obesity for adults and children. Data from *The Health and Well-Being of Children: A Portrait of States and the Nation, 2011–2012*, show that children living in rural areas are 25% more likely than children living in metropolitan areas to be overweight or obese. In Latah County, 23.9% of adults were identified as obese in 2011, with a cost of \$7.5 million. In the same



Preschoolers receive a bug lesson at the Troy Community Garden.

report 15.9% of youth in the Northern Health District were identified as overweight.

Our Response

UI Extension educators Kathee Tiff, Kirstin Jensen and Iris Mayes applied for and received a UI Extension Innovation Grant to fund “Healthy Troy,” a community development program centered around the Troy Community Garden. The Idaho Master Gardener coordinator for Latah County helped community members sign up for specific plots, promoted garden clean up days and organized other events such as the “Walk and Talk” and a cross-country ski day. Master gardeners provided over 20 hours of service in the garden, weeding and other maintenance activities.

UI Extension reached out to Troy residents through various means such as via Facebook, Troy Preschool, Troy High School and via fliers posted at the garden and library.

Program Outcomes

Fourteen events were held over 18 months. A “Healthy Troy” t-shirt was awarded to those who participated in three or more events. Twenty participants earned t-shirts and indicated on the post-activity survey that they had increased their level of activity by participating in the project. Of the events that were tracked by time (Walk and Talk events) 34 participants joined in four hours of activity.

The community garden participants produced approximately 20 servings of salad greens, 50 pounds of tomatoes, and approximately 30 pounds of squash, broccoli and pumpkins. Harvest Heroes volunteers (UI Extension’s Beginning Farmer Rancher program for U.S. military veterans) planted two grape vines at the June garden workday that are expected to produce table grapes in approximately two years.



Troy residents participate in a cross-country skiing session organized by UI Extension.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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High school seniors helped build new raised beds in the garden, moved soil and helped organize the garden shed. The students expressed that they felt appreciated and useful. Several will be attending University of Idaho in the fall of 2021.

Because of this project, volunteers maintained the garden and approximately 50 different individuals participated in events including master gardener volunteers and Troy community members for a total of 142 FTE. Volunteers spent additional hours in the garden on their own time, that was not formally tracked.

All sectors of the community were included in the project from preschool, elementary age and high school youths as well as adults and families. This program has given University of Idaho Extension increased visibility and goodwill within the community.

Healthy Troy Participation

Year	Walking Participants	Gardening Participants
2018	NA	5
2019	16	39
2020	18	109
Hours of Activity (tracked)	4 hours	14 hours

The Future

The walking group has continued to meet weekly since the initial scheduling without further support from Latah County’s UI Extension faculty or staff. The community garden has been maintained and will continue to be supported by UI Extension, Latah County in the next year with the intention of building the base of local gardeners.