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Community-Based Education Program



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Promotional Copy

#4262 Sustainable Market Store: Education and Promotion

Organization Information

Organization/Business or Individual: Abbey Gardens

Contact Person: Cara Daw

Student Supervisor: Cara Daw

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Email: abbeygardens.ai@gmail.com

Overview – The original vision of the Abbey Gardens project was the inspiration of John Patterson after a visit to the Eden Project in Cornwall, England. This project reclaimed a large China clay mining pit by building large domed greenhouses and educational infrastructure. The Eden Project attracts visitors from around the country and the world, has helped to rejuvenate the local economy and has become a self-sustaining entity and the catalyst for many environmental movements.

The vision put forth by John Patterson in 2007, has evolved into the Abbey Gardens Community Trust, which is a not-for-profit organization focused on a community-based effort to reduce Haliburton's carbon footprint and to foster community-based action research and sustainable initiatives that will contribute to the ecological, economic and cultural vitality of the community and the health and well-being of its residents.

Abbey Gardens Community Trust has begun to gain some traction in Haliburton County by initiating local efforts towards environmental awareness and self-sustainability. Some of these efforts include involvement in establishing the first Farmers Market in Dysart et al (2009), building raised garden beds at three local community gardens (2010), creating a market garden in an old gravel pit (2010/2011) and hosting a community awareness event on the importance of local food (2012).

Abbey Gardens participates in the weekly farmer's market in Carnarvon, operates a CSA program and grows free-range chickens that are fed organically and are available for purchase.

Gardening Methods

Abbey Gardens practices organic farming principles, such as crop rotation, composting, and biological pest control to keep soil fresh and full of nutrients, allowing for increased productivity, and healthier plants.

Companion planting is an important part of Abbey Gardens, which we use to keep pests under control, and to enhance the quality of our produce. While we are not certified organic, we promote and follow organic gardening principles and practices, ensuring that our garden is chemical free.

Project Information

Abbey Gardens currently hosts a 1 acre market garden. They produce vegetables for a local farmer's market and a CSA program. In the spring/summer of 2012 the Fleming Sustainable Building Program will be constructing a building at the Abbey Gardens site to house a creative exchange mart and community kitchen. The vision for the space is that it will provide local businesses with an outlet to sell their products and a kitchen to create value-added products. The community kitchen will also serve as a public programming site for information on local food (growing, preserving, cooking, etc.) The purpose of this project is to develop educational materials for the site and provide a plan for virtual promotion.

This project will involve:

1. Identifying the opportunities for educational information on site. For example, signage and pamphlets about the building practices and net-zero energy use. Other topics could include basic information on the local food movement and sustainable gardening practices.
 2. Research specific topics and design promotional material accordingly. Each topic should have a brief paper and a short promotional piece.
 3. Research social media opportunities for promotion and provide recommendations about how Abbey Gardens can utilize them to promote their facility (blogs, facebook, twitter, etc.)
- The final product with this project would be a series of papers with accompanying promotional sign/pamphlet and a social media plan.

Benefit to the Community

This project will help the host identify opportunities for education within their market store. It will develop education material to enhance the customer experience and help make the store a destination. Promotion through social media will help the host get the word out about the initiative quickly.

Potential Learning for the Student

Students will learn about sustainable building practices and will have the opportunity to choose topics of interest to explore. Students will learn about how to use social media in a not for profit setting and the pros and cons of this approach.

Resources Required for Project Provided by Host

Host:

- Photocopying and office supplies if required to complete the project.
- All communication should be by e-mail or verbal communication while on-site.

U-Links:

- The cost of a rental vehicle **OR** reimbursement for fuel (student owned vehicle) to travel to and from Haliburton County for up to **four (4)** visits.
- All costs for transportation beyond the four visits, including rental and fuel costs, as well as fuel costs for project related travel within the county are the responsibility of the host organization.

Screening or Training Requirements

n/a

Skills that Would Be an Asset to the Student(s)

Knowledge of gardening and sustainable building

Knowledge of social media techniques

Secondary Research skills

Critical thinking

Time Management