

- 47 -

## Selkirk

### “Look, a Carrot!”

Imagine the delight of a child who pulls a carrot from the ground for the first time. Thanks to the CDPI gardening project in Selkirk, a young family was able to have their very first garden and learn to freeze and preserve their vegetables for the winter as well. “She was so excited,” said Elaine Elliott of a young gardener. “She said ‘look, a carrot!’ She couldn’t believe her own eyes.”

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Elliott, coordinator of the Selkirk CDPI, said a family of seven was the only participant in the first attempt at a gardening program. However, that family ended up having a whole “church family” supporting them in their efforts. “We partnered with a little Catholic church out of town where nobody was going to tear the garden apart for us,” she said. St. Margaret’s Catholic Church members tilled up the soil and donated a tool shed which they also moved to the plot and fixed up free of charge. “They are so pleased, they want to make the garden bigger for next year,” said Elliot. The Selkirk Food Bank

also helped out by collecting Canadian Tire dollars which were used to buy gardening tools.

The garden produced a variety of vegetables, including about 25 pumpkins, many of which will be used for the Growing Years Halloween event. The gardening family will also be taught, through the Resource Centre, how to use pumpkin for cooking and baking.

Waltraud Grieger, Executive Director of the Growing Years Family Resource Centre, said at first they were disappointed that not more people were interested in gardening. But the lone garden was so successful and the produce so plentiful, “it was just a fabulous testimony as to how well this is going to go. Next year we’ll have more,” she predicted, adding, “The whole family was involved, which says a lot about how we’ll make a difference in the community.” The remaining garden space was used by Rene Gauthier, soup kitchen and garden project coordinator, to grow vegetables for the soup kitchen.

The garden isn’t the only project that is expanding. The Community Kitchen in Selkirk has also had to move to a larger facility in order to accommodate everyone who wants to participate in the nutrition and cooking classes. There used to be a waiting list for families wanting to learn to shop for and prepare economic but nutritious meals. Now, thanks to a cooperative effort between the Growing Years Family Resource Centre, the local soup kitchen, the food bank and the City

of Selkirk, the cooking program is run out of the large soup kitchen facility. The cooking class has brought in nutritionists, dietitians and even taught the art of good hand-washing. Participants have learned how to buy inexpensive cuts of meat and get value from it, how to use a crock pot, and how to can and freeze garden produce. There have even been field trips to the grocery store to show families how to consider sodium levels and trans fats in the food they are buying. Participants learn to plan a meal, prepare it in the soup kitchen, and then can take that meal home to their family for supper.

Elliott said the CDPI committee has noticed a big difference in the types of

snacks young parents are bringing for their children. “They are bringing celery and carrot sticks. They’re not bringing that pre-packaged stuff anymore,” she said. “We’re seeing results.”

CDPI funding in Selkirk has also been used for walks, distributing smoking cessation information, a Wiggle, Giggle and Munch program, and a “What’s in your Lunch” program for school children.

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Take Note

**Gardening offers many benefits including:**

- The satisfaction of watching something take root and grow.
- An opportunity to enjoy the outdoors and to introduce children to the joys of nature.
- An enjoyable form of exercise for all ages.
- An opportunity to beautify your community and improve property values.

<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/iyh-vsv/life-vie/garden-jardin-eng.php>