

Community Gardening

The Amherst Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Spotlight
October 2009

*The Social Justice Spotlight is a piece written monthly by Individual Social Justice Committee members. This month's Spotlight comes to us from **Bob Berwick**.*

Community gardening is often thought of as an urban activity providing green space for city dwellers to grow some fresh food. Community gardening is also a suburban and rural activity in many other places. It can be a valuable resource for those in need and those who want to reach out to less fortunate folks. It can be an avenue for social justice.

People who till plots in community gardens can grow fresh food for their own tables, improving the nutrient value for their own families. Often excess food is grown. It would be a simple thing to donate that extra food to a local food bank. We've seen the appreciative faces of recipients of locally grown food at Not Bread Alone.

Other forms of community outreach may not be as obvious when it comes to community gardens. Interested people can help elderly folks tend garden plots, and the produce can be brought back to senior centers or individual homes. This takes a special kind of commitment, but it can be rewarding to help avid but elderly gardeners who no longer can to tend their own plots once again.

Community gardening is also a way for our children to reach out to others. Community garden plots tended by groups of young people under the supervision of parents can yield food that could then be donated to soup kitchens, food banks, or senior centers. Such efforts would teach children about gardening and about giving back at the same time.

There are community gardens in our area. In Amherst, contact David Ziomek (ziomekd@amherstma.gov, 413-259-3045). In South Hadley, contact GRO.SoHadley@gmail.com, 413-534-4487. Contact the Town Hall in your town to see if there is a community garden established. If there isn't, perhaps you'd like to start one.