



## News and Events

# Rebel in the Garden: Student Peter Russell Works from the Ground Up to Donate Food to the Community

Late into the fall, long after the first frost has whitened the ground, student Peter Russell is still harvesting fresh vegetables at the Indiana Community Garden, where he volunteers two to three hours a week.



*Student Peter Russell (right) and Kay Snyder (left), professor emeritus of sociology, volunteer at the Indiana Community Garden, where they keep the harvest coming late into the fall.*

All the produce grown at the garden, located in Mack Park at the corner of South Sixth Street and Carter Avenue, is for the community.

The garden was built by community volunteers in April, and since then has been furnished with a lean-to pavilion, a manual water pump, and compost bins. Russell, who noticed the garden as he arrived in town for freshman orientation, has already been part of many of its add-on projects.

"My passions focus on community and environmental sustainability," said Russell, a fine arts studio major. "Every time I'm there, I learn something. It's so educational for me."

Russell has been around gardens all his life. His mother grew flowers and started her own community garden at her workplace, the pharmaceutical company Lancaster Laboratories. But after a visit at age 13 to a

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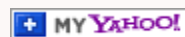
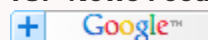
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Massachusetts farm associated with Heifer International, Russell became obsessed with gardening.

"There's something incredibly fresh and almost rebellious about growing your own food," Russell said.

IUP students have been involved with the garden since its creation. About 100 IUP students helped community members build 20 raised beds and filled them with soil during the annual Into the Streets service event last spring. Students from the American Language Institute, the Upward Bound Math and Science program, and the Food and Nutrition Department Student Dietetic Association have also done volunteer projects in the garden.

One of the garden's latest projects, low tunnels designed to shelter plants, lets Russell extend the growing season for spinach, scallions, and other hardy greens as temperatures drop. He planted donated seeds and helped transplant them into the low tunnel in the community plot.

Kay Snyder, an IUP professor emeritus of sociology, coordinates volunteers for the garden, working to "connect student organizations and community members."

"The community garden is much bigger than all these little parts," Snyder said. "We connect people. If you can bring people together in such a positive way, that's huge."

The [Indiana Community Garden](#) project is led by a group of volunteers with connections to organizations such as the Penn State Cooperative Extension of Indiana County, IUP, Indiana Garden Club, the Evergreen Garden Club, and Indiana schools.

The construction and maintenance of the garden are made possible by donations from individuals, local businesses, and a grant from the Indiana County Endowment.

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