

**Indiana Community Garden**  
**Overall Garden Evaluation: 2012 Season**

**I. Summary of accomplishments**

- **Construction:**
  - 20 raised beds built: 15 individual plots, 3 larger community plots, 2 garden club plots
  - Manual water pump installed by PAWC
  - Entrance arch juxtaposed with 2 flower beds
  - Lean-to garden pavilion with attached storage shed
  - 2 compost bins
  - 3 temporary compost bins (may be replaced with permanent bins in Spring, 2012)
  - 3-barreled rain water collection system (pending)
  
- **Activities in the garden**
  - Community Building Day
  - Community Planting Day
  - Yoga sessions
  - Picnics
  - Catered candle light dinner under pavilion
  - 3 workshops on food and nutrition
  - Workshop on heirloom seeds and square foot gardening
  - Students from IUP's Upward Bound Math and Science Program and the American Language Institute did community service projects in the garden
  - Continually maintained garden plots
  - Obtained soil test results at beginning and end of season in order to amend soil as needed
  - Planted raspberries and blueberries
  - Created low tunnel (mini-hoop house) and transplanted cool season crops into it
  - Scheduled to plant garlic and shallots (November 2012)
  - Shared garden produce with numerous ICG visitors and answered questions

- **Public relations**
  - Created an ICG logo
  - Distributed flyers and brochures
  - Articles, editorial, and photos about ICG appeared in *The Indiana Gazette*
  - Did a spot for an Indiana radio “Morning Show”
  - Created a website ([www.indianacommunitygarden.org](http://www.indianacommunitygarden.org))
  - Scheduled program about ICG for WIUP-FM (November 10, 2012)
  
- **Finances**
  - Income: \$6438
  - Expenses: \$5373
  
- **Community Connections**
  - IUP Food and Nutrition Department
  - Master Gardener Program through Penn State Cooperative Extension
  - Indiana Garden Club
  - Evergreen Garden Club
  - Indiana Arts Council
  - Indiana County Endowment

## **II. Projections**

- **Fall/Winter2012**
  - Experiment with cool season crops in a low tunnel and straw bale cold frame
  - Design and build an artistic cover for the gas well under the leadership of Indiana Arts Council
  - Consider planting fruit trees
  - Develop a new partnership with Downtown Indiana to create connections from the garden to Horace Mann through the Elm Street Project
  - Fundraise and submit grant applications

- Develop a regular presence in the local paper and the radio
  - Further develop the website
  - Review the garden rules
  - Develop plan for garden based on results of 2012 season, and begin planting seeds for ICG in greenhouse
- **Spring/ Summer 2013**
    - Build more beds according to the community interest (minimum of 6, maximum of 12)
    - Replace temporary compost bins with more permanent bins as needed
    - Start more seeds in greenhouse or inside
    - Select seeds and local plants for the garden, and develop a planting schedule
    - Organize a construction day and a planting day
    - Designate part of the community plot as a children's educational garden sponsored by the Master Gardener Program
    - Organize a volunteer pool to work in the garden throughout the season
    - Organize an event for Friends of the Parks, "Taste and Tour Indiana Community Garden"
    - Hold a series of workshop on gardening, nutrition, cooking, and sustainability
    - Develop more connections with the community and local organizations
- **Long-terms goals**
    - Apply for federal, state, and community development funding through grants money to develop at least a part-time position for a garden coordinator
    - Develop strong connections with the Indiana Areas Schools, IUP, health agencies, and other local organizations
    - Promote education on gardening, nutrition, cooking, and sustainability through additional programs and activities at ICG
    - Secure a permanent presence of Indiana Community Garden within Indiana

### **III. Narratives:**

- **Construction**

This past year has been very busy with much construction going on in the garden. Sandi Petkus was a major organizer and builder of the projects. Working with members and the ICG deciding on what type of beds was the first step. Once raised beds were voted on, Sandi calculated what materials would be needed and placed the orders with Lezzer's and Risingers for delivery of the materials on April 14th for "Building Day". The basic garden design was created by Sandi and improved upon by Geology and Regional Planning students from IUP, with the community bed portion being built in the shape of the letter "I" for Indiana.

While working with the local garden clubs, Sandi was able to have the cost of each 4' x 20' street side beds sponsored and planted by the Indiana Garden Club and the Evergreen Garden Club. The Indiana Garden Club planted a very useful and educational herb bed, and will continue to plant and maintain their bed. The Evergreen Garden Club chose to plant some permanent shrubs and roses and also to release the bed's care and future additional planting to the ICG. ICG members planted additional plant for 2013 including lilies, foxglove, and daffodils.

Water was the next need to be addressed. Sandi met with Bill from Pennsylvania American Water Company and worked out the arrangements to have a lawn pump installed on the property. A photo opp of the installation was also held by the water company for their PR.

The hot summer temperatures created an immediate need for a shelter in the garden. Sandi Petkus worked on the design of the structure utilizing the back side for an attached garden shed which blends into the building and does not stand out alone in the garden, thus hopefully attracting less attention for potential vandalism. Marie and Sandi initially met with Daryl Martin of the Mennonite community for the construction needs. Fundraising began and on a large scale, with the grant from the Indiana County Endowment grant of \$1,000, some individual donations, and the great yard sale by Paulette Blaise-Thompson that raised over \$1,000 bringing in enough to complete the project. The permit was secured from White Township and construction took place in mid-July, just in time for meetings, educational workshops, and gatherings. In the near future, large rain barrels will be used to build the rainwater gathering system from the metal roof of the ICG Pavilion. The gutters have been installed along the lower back of the roof and the downspout is ready for gathering water.

To end the season of construction, Sandi sent out a request to the Master Gardeners for the construction of a compost bin system for the garden. Charlie Venturella and Jim Kluchurosky answered the request by building, delivering, and installing a 2-bin compost system in the garden. In addition to being used for composting from the garden beds, the compost bins are intended to help educate people about composting. Since the original compost bins were not large enough to contain all of the plant material coming from the beds this fall, Charlie and two other Master Gardeners have built three additional, temporary compost bins. If needed, Charlie will build more permanent compost bins in Spring 2013.

- **Finances:**

In a brief period of about six months, our group of volunteers working on establishing the Indiana Community Garden successfully raised over \$6,000. Additionally, many individuals and businesses have made various in-kind donations: plants, seeds, soil, seed trays, greenhouse plastic, tools, and other needed materials. With available funds, and a great deal of support from volunteers in the community, in the area

of Mack Park designated by the Mack Foundation for the Community Garden we have built 20 raised beds; the Garden is marked with a welcome archway, has a Lean-to pavilion and tool storage area, composting bins, and now a low tunnel for extending the season with cool weather crops. We have surpassed our goals for Season One, and are ending Phase One of the Indiana Community Garden Project with a positive balance in our account. We have funds available to continue work on Phase Two of the project, and begin our second planting season.

**Income**

\$2,602 - Individual donations and bed rental

\$1,082 – Donations from community organizations and local businesses

\$1,500 - Grant funding (PAWC & ICE)

\$1,254 - Miscellaneous fundraising (yard sale, pay pal, donation jars, misc. events)

**TOTAL INCOME - \$6,438**

**Expenses**

\$1,978 – Raised beds (construction materials and supplies)

\$93 - Spring planting supplies

\$2,590 – Lean-to pavilion (materials and labor)

\$334 – Materials for composting bins

\$72 – Miscellaneous gardening materials (shrubs, materials for low tunnel)

\$194 – Miscellaneous supplies for PR

\$112 – Water bills, June through September

**TOTAL EXPENDITURES - \$5,373**

**BALANCE as of 10/20/12 - \$1,065**

- **IUP Department of Food and Nutrition Involvement with ICG**

Nicole Dann-Payne, MS, RD, LDN and Jodie Seybold, MS, RD, LDN, both instructors and Registered Dietitians in the IUP Food and Nutrition Department, have been actively involved in the ICG. Both serve as ICG Committee members.

To promote and raise awareness of the garden, Nicole and Jodie created an educational presentation board describing the health benefits of gardening. Both presented the board at IRMC's Day of Dance at the Indiana Mall in February of 2012 and at the IUP Department of Food and Nutrition's Nutrition Expo in

March of 2012.

Nicole and Jodie offered the IUP Department of Food and Nutrition's Student Dietetic Association (SDA) the opportunity to be involved in the actual building of the ICG, which took place on Saturday, April 14<sup>th</sup>. Approximately 15 IUP SDA members volunteered building the ICG that day.

Nicole and Jodie presented a monthly food demonstration, along with a nutrition newsletter during the months of August, September, and October. During the food demonstrations and within the newsletters, Nicole and Jodie offered practical tips for using fresh garden produce and nutrition information. All three food demonstrations took place in the ICG. The August food demonstration topic was "Summer Appetizers and Salads", which included bruschetta, hummus, cucumber tomato dill salad, and salad dressing recipes. September's focus was on home preservation, addressing canning, drying, and freezing fresh garden produce. October's presentation involved winter squash; addressing the nutrition benefits of winter squash, how to use and prepare winter squash varieties, a roasted pumpkin apple soup, and pumpkin cupcakes. Nicole and Jodie involved three IUP Dietetic Interns in their October newsletter and one dietetic intern during their food demonstration. The average attendance at each food demonstration ranged from 10 to 15 attendees. The purpose of the food demonstrations and nutrition newsletters is to teach ICG and Indiana community members the health benefits of garden produce and how garden produce can be used.

Both Nicole and Jodie plan to continue their monthly ICG food demonstrations and nutrition newsletters in the early spring months through early fall of 2013. As was done this year, they plan to focus their monthly sessions on seasonal garden produce and topics with an emphasis on nutrition and health. It is also in their interest that they further strengthen and develop the IUP Food and Nutrition Department's involvement with the ICG in 2013.

- **Additional Community Outreach and Educational Activities**

Even during this first season, the Indiana Community Garden has become well enough known that local organizations have begun viewing ICG as a place where students and community residents can do important community service. On Building Day, approximately 100 IUP students joined nearly as many community residents in constructing and filling 20 raised garden beds. On Planting Day, numerous volunteers helped with planting, including students from Horace Mann Elementary School who planted a square foot garden. We expect that such volunteer efforts will continue in the coming year.

Other organizations have contacted ICG so their students could get involved with community service projects at the garden. Under the supervision of ICG volunteers who are Master Gardeners, 12 high school students in IUP's Upward Bound Math and Science Program helped with a variety of garden activities, and enjoyed learning about science and math from their hands-on garden experience. Approximately 20 international students in IUP's American Language Institute participated in two community service projects at the garden, also learning new English words and of course sampling fresh garden foods in the process. One student from Saudia Arabia was so excited when she saw okra growing, which she had been unable to find in the grocery store, that she wanted to reserve a plot next season for her family. We anticipate that many community service projects such as these will occur at ICG in the

future, with the garden also providing a vehicle for positive interactions across cultures and age groups.

One IUP student who has become particularly involved with ICG is Peter Russell, an IUP freshman who came to IUP in part because of seeing the garden on his campus visit. This fall Peter has worked with Master Gardeners and other IUP students he has recruited on composting, designing and constructing a low tunnel for cool season crops, planting seeds in a greenhouse that were later transplanted into the low tunnel, and is currently helping design a straw bale cold frame to protect some of the mature cool weather crops currently in the garden. Through such experiments, Indiana Community Garden is contributing importantly to the available knowledge about year-round gardening in the region.

Board members from Friends of the Parks have also contacted ICG, with two programs now planned for 2013. A February program will highlight (among other things) some of the efforts at ICG to plant season extending crops, construct low tunnels, and create simple cold frames. A July program at the garden, "Taste and Tour Indiana Community Garden," will provide an opportunity to learn more about gardening, foods and nutrition, composting, water collection systems, and to sample garden produce. We expect that such community involvement will expand as additional organizations become involved with the garden and view it as an important community resource.

Many of the most meaningful moments at ICG have been much more informal. Every day people visited the garden, and volunteers have often generously shared produce with them and answered questions. First-time gardeners have appreciated the mentorship of more seasoned gardeners; one even squealed with delight as she pulled their first radish out of the garden. Often garden visitors have had an opportunity to help with whatever garden activities were occurring during their visit. A six year-old boy who was visiting the garden with his father eagerly helped take soil samples, for example, and in the process received a valuable, hands-on science lesson. Such "magical moments" will clearly continue to occur at Indiana Community Garden, and we hope to find ways to expand on them in the coming seasons.

- **Conclusion**

The Indiana Community Garden has been amazingly successful this first season, and we are proud of all its accomplishments. At the same time we fear that some, or most, volunteers are going to feel exhausted or burned out after seeing all the work that is coming ahead. We strongly recommend raising funds so that we can hire a part-time coordinator, starting at 20 hours per week. It will become difficult to work only with volunteers if we expect to coordinate all of the different events, organize and attend meetings, have monthly reports, and continue to grow ICG.

At the same time, in order to raise the necessary funds to hire a part-time coordinator, we need to show to the potential funding institutions some, or full stability, a guaranty of prevalence. Seed money and large grants are given to proposals that can assure long-term results. Therefore, if we expect to realize more of the potential that the garden has to offer, we would like to show that we can have some stability in calling Mack Park the site for the ICG.