

Sow and Reap

SHARING STORIES - LOCAL ACTION ON FOOD SECURITY

Determinant of
food security:

Access to healthy and
affordable food

Sub-determinant:

Skill development

Location & year:

Smithton, 2013

Story teller:

Dianne Murphy, Manager
Rural Health Tasmania, Inc.



Summary/Description

Rural Health Tasmania rents a house in Smithton, that has a large backyard and until recently had been left empty. Through the Sow and Reap project, five garden beds and two raised beds have been put in to create a working garden where the local community can learn new skills in growing their own food.

The Sow and Reap team has been teaching gardening skills to community members, and conducting cooking classes in the house using produce from the garden. Home-made tomato sauce, herb-infused oils and lavender tea have all been popular; the cooking classes have given locals a chance to use produce from the garden, and share a meal together.

Benefits and achievements

A mild Tasmanian winter has meant that the Sow and Reap garden is already producing lots of delicious vegetables and herbs. Locals have been able to harvest spinach, beetroot, broccoli, cauliflower, potatoes and carrots. The team and community members have also planted fruit trees and a berry patch which will provide fruit in summer and autumn.

Rural Health Tasmania has found that the Sow and Reap project has been a great way to engage with members of the local community.

The community garden and cooking classes each week have provided a fun and practical way for people to learn new skills, bringing locals together for social interaction and a shared purpose.

“The Sow and Reap project is all about meeting people where they’re at, and giving them a hand up.”

Di Murphy, Rural Health Tasmania

Challenges

While the weekly cooking sessions have been very popular, the Sow and Reap crew have found that these can also sometimes be a challenge, as they depend on seasonal produce from the garden.

Through summer and autumn there will be lots of fantastic vegetables and fruit to cook with, but winter and spring are more of a challenge so the groups have had to get creative with winter vegetables.

Promotion

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The community garden and cooking classes each week have provided a fun and practical way for people to learn new skills, and have brought locals together.

The Sow and Reap team is excited that the project is leading on to other activities in the Smithton home, such as art and craft and morning teas. A path has been laid between the garden beds to make access easier, and there are plans to build a pizza oven and seating.

A group of 15 locals involved in the Sow and Reap garden have enrolled in and graduated from a Certificate I in Horticulture, which is a fantastic achievement.

Funding

The Sow and Reap project is supported by funding from the Food For All Tasmanians fund.

Other organisations collaborating with the Sow and Reap community garden experience include the local Aboriginal Centre, and the Wyndarra community centre.

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Information was compiled by **Population Health (DHHS)** in partnership with this initiative and the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

