GUILFORD COUNTY, NC

Needs Addressed:
- Food Insecurity/Food Deserts in Low income areas
- Families not knowing where their next meal was coming from
- Nutritional aspects of those in need

Project/Process:
St. James Church Community Garden was developed as a faith based community garden, tended by church members and sporadic assistance from students at Grimsley and NC A&T State University, performing community service. We built beds – put in irrigation and a staircase to make gardens more accessible and easier to tend in our hot dry summers. A compost bin was also built to process waste, making garden more sustainable.

The St. James Community Garden and food giveaway has really made great strides this year. The giveaways began in April. Approximately 150 pounds of lettuce, spinach and Chinese cabbage were harvested and distributed to shut-ins. A meeting of the Community garden leaders of Guilford County resulted in several churches uniting and pulling all their fresh produce together for distribution. Giveaways were then done at a local title one school, where we worked to track individual families that come each week for vegetables. We tried to help them make positive changes in their eating habits. We supplied informational sheets on processing fresh produce and simple recipes on how to prepare the vegetables being given away. Not all the produce was given away at school so extra was taken to Urban Ministries or taken to the church and given away at Sunday service to seniors. We more than doubled what we grew and distributed in 2009. If you add in all the other churches contributions it was a fabulous year and those in need certainly benefited through nutritious locally grown foods.

Partnerships:
- Urban Ministry
- NC A&T
- Peck Elementary – Title One school
- NC Cooperative Extension
- Guilford Community Gardener Leadership Committee

Lessons Learned:
- Larger Garden Committee
- 4 people per bed – 4 x 40 to do work
- If partnering with schools – students undependable, unavailable in summer
- Those receiving food are very grateful; one lady said it was the only food she had to eat that week.

Senior in church sent in thank yous

Results:
- 1, 251.50 lbs. of produce donated, increased amount of produce, more than doubled, roughly 100 – 150 were served by working with title one schools to donate fresh produce
- Gleaned from A&T garden
- Congressman Howard Coble came to hear presentation on Garden

Next Steps:
- Collaborate with sister church, (First Presbyterian) they don’t have land and we have more we could expand into.
- Market to neighbors.
- Develop garden at Peck, the school where families are in need to move from giving people produce to teaching them how to grow their own.
- Combining summer Bible School programs to have youth that can assist in garden.