

**Tennessee Master Gardener Search For Excellence  
2013 Application**

**APPLICATION DEADLINE IS OCTOBER 31, 2013**

NAME OF PROJECT: Harvest of Hope Community Garden

NAME OF MG GROUP: NETMGA

COUNTY(IES): Sullivan

**MASTER GARDENER CONTACT:**

NAME Nancy Walker

EMAIL nancykwalker55@yahoo.com

**MASTER GARDENER COORDINATOR/EXTENSION STAFF:**

NAME Chris Ramsey

TITLE Sullivan County Extension Agent

EMAIL cwramsey@utk.edu

PHONE (423) 279-2723

**CATEGORY---MUST SELECT AND SUBMIT IN ONLY ONE CATEGORY**

- Youth
- Demonstration Garden
- Workshop or Presentation
- Community Service
- Innovative Project
- Research
- Special Needs Audience

COMMENCEMENT DATE OF PROJECT: March 2011

**LIST THE NAMES OF MASTER GARDENERS DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN THIS PROJECT.** Do not include their roles or any other individuals in this listing. *(Place the cursor in the box to type a name.)* You may attach an additional page if necessary.

**Project Leaders' Names:**

<b>Doug Hilton</b>
<b>Phil Ramey</b>
<b>Nancy Walker</b>

**Number of Master Gardeners participating:**                                      13                  

Place your cursor in the boxes and click twice.

**DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT** (include name, location, target audience, goals, and partnerships) 500 words or less.

Harvest of Hope Community Garden is located in the downtown section of Kingsport, Tennessee, at 130 W. Charlemont Street. The mission of the Harvest of Hope Garden is to create a sense of community for people of all life situations – regardless of race, sex, disability, religion, age, veteran status, political beliefs, sexual orientation, national origin and marital or family status; to teach and develop gardening skills; and to provide nutritious food to the community.

The idea for the garden began in 2008, when a Hunger Task Force was developed under United Way of Greater Kingsport to address an increased need for community food assistance programs within the City of Kingsport and for increasing the nutritious value of foods provided under these programs. The project was delayed due to an inability to find a location that was both convenient and practical. However, in 2011, an area church, First Presbyterian Church, leased land for the project and planning for building the raised beds for the garden began. AARP, United Way, and individuals contributed money to purchase the needed supplies, and Ben Hunter, a Master Gardener, planned the layout and assisted veterans staying at Salvation Army in building the raised beds. The City of Kingsport installed a spigot so that watering the gardens was convenient.

Initially, the target audience was primarily lower income individuals/families and organizations that adopted beds for soup kitchens and food pantries. In subsequent years, it was expanded to include any individual who was willing to donate at least part of their produce to these organizations. In this way, nutritious food was provided to local food banks while the gardeners learned important gardening skills.

The Harvest of Hope Community Garden was made possible by the partnership of United Way of Greater Kingsport, AARP, the City of Kingsport, the UTExtension Tennessee Master Gardeners and First Presbyterian Church.

**DESCRIBE THE PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT. 500 words or less.**

The first year was a scramble to build the beds, find gardeners and plant the gardens. A committee was created to oversee the day to day operations of the garden and to plan for future improvements. During this first year, we learned from our mistakes: although we initially planned to target the beds for lower-income families, we learned that we could make a greater impact by opening the gardens to any individual who was willing to contribute produce to local soup kitchens and food pantries. Therefore, we asked gardeners to contribute a portion of their produce to these agencies. We also learned we had to start earlier in the year to find gardeners and to develop increased interest in the garden.

During the second year of operation (2012), AARP and United Way contributed money to build a fence around the gardens. We also had a sign constructed for the garden that identified all the founding partners and their logos and placed it in front of the garden so that it was easily identified from the street. In order to increase interest in and support for the garden, we provided talks to local gardening clubs and other organizations who showed an interest in the project. As a result, most beds were adopted. A student was hired for mowing the grass around the garden and for watering the beds.

This year, the raised beds were reconstructed to make them taller and to add more beds, including two additional beds for handicapped individuals (for a total of four). The handicapped beds were taller to allow for gardening at wheelchair height, and a table raised bed was built to allow a wheelchair to go under the garden table. All beds were adopted and additional beds were built. A total of 46 raised beds of varying sizes currently make up Harvest of Hope. First Presbyterian Church leased an adjoining lot to Harvest of Hope, and 28 additional beds are planned for next year. Presentations to area organizations have increased in order to provide sustainability for the garden in future years. Future plans include creating a coalition of community gardens in the Kingsport area with Harvest of Hope as the umbrella.

**HOW HAS THE PROJECT BEEN FUNDED AND HOW HAVE THOSE FUNDS BEEN SPENT? 500 Words or less.**

During the start-up year, AARP (American Association for Retired Persons) donated \$5000, United Way of Greater Kingsport donated \$2500, and various individuals donated a total of \$3,677, for a grand total of \$11,177. This was used to purchase the lumber and screws for building the raised beds, the sand and chat (gravel) to cover the ground around the beds and compost for filling the beds. The second year, AARP and United Way each donated \$2500 and various individuals donated \$277. This was used to build a fence, purchase a sign and pay a student to water the gardens. First Presbyterian provided the lumber and manpower to build a shed for storing gardening tools, gloves, and a

wheelbarrow. An Eagle Scout built benches to be placed in the front two corners of the garden to provide a place for resting and seating for educational events. This year, AARP and United Way each donated \$2000, which will be used to complete the expansion (28 additional beds) of the garden, as well as expansion of the fencing surrounding the garden. A flower bed was built around the sign in front of the garden and two flower beds were added by the front gate and one in each front corner. A covered bulletin board was built and attached to the shed to provide information to the gardeners, and bird houses and a picnic table were donated to add aesthetic value. An area construction company gave a significant decrease in the cost of purchasing additional chat for covering the ground around the beds and another contractor donated lumber for building additional beds.

**DESCRIBE THE OUTCOMES OF THIS PROJECT. HOW HAS IT AUGMENTED LEARNING, INCREASED KNOWLEDGE OR CHANGED PRACTICES TO ENHANCE QUALITY OF LIFE? INCLUDE THE METHODS YOU USED TO MEASURE THE IMPACT OF THE PROJECT.** These impacts could be economical, educational, environmental, health or community based. 500 words or less.

Not only has the Harvest of Hope Community Garden increased the amount and nutritional value of food for local food pantries and banks, it has also provided increased knowledge about gardening to the community and enhanced the quality of life for local citizens. This year alone, HOH gardeners provided more than 475 pounds of fresh produce (including tomatoes, potatoes, sweet potatoes, spinach, lettuce, broccoli, green and red peppers, squash, and green beans) to the Kitchen of Hope (a local soup kitchen), the Salvation Army, the Interfaith Hospitality Network (a facility for homeless families) and many local food banks. (This was measured by the gardeners themselves, who completed a form estimating the amount of produce they had gathered and designating the charity where it was taken.) Nineteen of the 38 raised beds are maintained by low income residents of a local government housing development. Six informal classes have been offered at the garden, including classes about how to plan and plant spring and fall crops (18 attendants), how to build a cucumber tree (21 attendants), how to grow tomatoes (15 attendants), how to build a raised bed (28 attendants), how to take advantage of the nutritional value of various vegetables (20 attendants) and a class of 30 for the 2013 Master Gardener Training Program. The classes are invaluable to many first-time gardeners who attend. In addition, a certified Master Gardener was present in the garden at designated times to answer any questions a gardener may have, relying on the information contained in the Master Gardener Handbook. The success of this garden has created a growing interest in gardening throughout the community. Because of this, two Master Gardeners are showing other community groups how to build and maintain raised beds. But just as important is the sense of community that has developed among the gardeners. Local citizens of all ages, races, sexual orientation, beliefs, and disabilities gather together not just to garden, but also to interact with fellow-gardeners and to do something for others in the community. This year, a Girl Scout troop, a high school horticulture class, a local Social Security office and two local churches all had garden beds in the Harvest of Hope Community Garden. A SHOUT youth group, YMCA youth and a Job Corp group assisted with various tasks in the garden, including painting the sign, weeding the common ground, and pulling nails from lumbar that was contributed. The sense of community spirit is contagious.

## **SFE Harvest of Hope Community Garden Master Gardeners involved in the project**

Doug Hilton (included on application)  
Phil Ramey (included on application)  
Nancy Walker (included on application)  
Earl Hockin  
Ruth Ann Ranker  
Mayme Pecktol  
Johnny Suthers  
Megan Shaffer  
Melissa Tweed  
Sheila Hensley  
Ron Russum  
Lloyd Grimm  
Ray Chandler