

St. Joseph's Community Garden

Cathy Lombard, Chippewa Valley Master Gardener Volunteer



The HSHS St. Joseph's Hospital Community Garden project offers garden plots to those in need, as well as to organizations who wish to produce a harvest for donation to local food pantries.

The project was initiated in 2013 in response to a health survey completed by the hospital which showed that 14% of people responding to the survey and living in Chippewa County did not always have enough food to feed themselves or their families.

The garden has 24 plots that each measure 12' x 24'. After the second year, a deer fence was added because most of the produce was being donated to local deer. The garden has an in-ground sprinkling system so the plots are watered twice a week in the early morning. This year a faucet and a mesh rinsing table were added so produce can be washed before being donated. Two years ago, a local Boy Scout, working on becoming an Eagle Scout, raised money to build a garden shed where the garden tools, wheel barrow, bags and scale for weighing donations are all stored. The garden also recently expanded to include new items outside of your typical garden vegetables such as bee hives for honey and apple trees.

Each individual who has a plot(s) is responsible for providing the seeds/plants for each plot and planting and maintaining the plot during the summer. Individuals may grow food for their own use but most of the plots are utilized by volunteers who donate 100% of the produce raised to area food pantries and food kitchens. Volunteers who donate their produce wash, weigh, bag and drop the produce off in the hospital lobby for a volunteer to take to area food shelves. This year produce was given to 10 food pantries and 2 food kitchens. The total amount of produce donated from the garden ranges between 2,000-3,000 pounds a year.



The garden is always in need of additional gardeners. If you are interested in participating in the community garden program, contact Roger Elliott, coordinator of HSHS St. Joseph's Hospital Community Garden at rwelae@charter.net for questions.

Annual fees are \$20/household or \$35/group or organization. The fee covers the cost of the services provided by the hospital. There is also a provision for individuals in need to have access to plots. Individuals also have access to a Master Gardener Volunteer for support and guidance, if needed.

The community garden is located behind St. Joseph's Hospital in Chippewa Falls.

St. Joseph's Hospital was awarded the Partners of WHA annual statewide Wisconsin Award for Volunteer Excellence (WAVE Award) in 2016 and the Hospital Award for Volunteer Excellence (HAVE Award) in the program category Community Outreach and/or Collaboration in 2018 for the community garden project.