



Garden Case Study

Mooseheart Child City & School Inc.

Grades involved: PreK - 12

Enrollment: 205

F&R: N/A

Year started: 2014

Garden type(s): Fruits, vegetables, and herbs

Garden use: food service, education, volunteering, other programs

Critical players: Fox valley food for health, University of Illinois Extension, Rustic Road Farms, Geneva High school, and Boy Scouts

Education connections: tHarvest of the Month, Taste Adventures, Harvest Party, Nutrition

Community connections: Volunteers, produce is used on campus

Funding sources: Mooseheart seed money, and donations

Outside support: Illinois Farm to School Network, Rustic Farm, Fox Valley Food for Health, University of Illinois Extension: Master Gardeners

IL Harvest of the Month Level reached in August 2019: SEED LEVEL SITE

Mooseheart is a residential childcare facility that is a home for children and teens that are in need of assistance. In 2014 Moosheart decided to revitalize their land and to start a community garden on campus, through funding from seed money of \$300 and through community volunteers, the garden has grown from just a few rows to about the length of a football field. Mooseheart has used the garden to help start nutrition initiatives across campus as well as teaching the youth about the process of how they obtain their food.



The garden’s harvest consists of a multitude of fruit, vegetables, and herbs. All of the food is utilized across campus whether it is handed out to staff, campus homes, farmers markets, or used in Harvest of the Month activities. The garden’s harvest has propelled Moosheart to start Taste Adventures, a program that aims to have the youth make dishes from scratch with their latest harvest from the garden. Mooseheart is also a part of Illinois Farm to School Network’s Harvest of the Month, which aims to celebrate an in season and locally grown food item each month.

Mooseheart’s garden is entirely worked on by volunteers from the youth on campus and community organizations such as Fox valley food for health, University of Illinois Extension, Rustic Road Farms, and boy scouts. These organizations not only help on site at the garden but have also donated seeds and other tools that have helped the growth of the garden. “We really couldn’t do it without our volunteers.” Kathy O'Brien of Mooseheart says. The youth that volunteer at the garden vary depending on the season but, the local community picks up the slack when possible.



The garden’s volunteers which consist of youth on campus have really taken “ownership” of the garden says Kelly Bodine, registered dietitian. The kid’s ownership doesn’t stop after harvest though, they are in the kitchen creating dishes with the harvested food. The practice of harvesting the crops and creating dishes has a direct impact on how the children learn about nutrition. This holistic approach to creating food really shines at the Harvest party where different prepared dishes are lined up to try for people on campus as well as any excess food items from the harvest are up for the taking. The success of Mooseheart’s garden is tied directly to the care the volunteers have toward the garden and the community that has taken ownership of the process.

