

Skidmore Student Garden: Annual Report 2011

Achievements: This season we raised several hundred dollars through fundraisers and selling merchandise. We produced over 500 pounds of food which was sold to Skidmore Dining Hall. In addition we expanded the garden to an area that is 60 by 80 feet and redesigned the garden to be aligned with the principles of permaculture.

Events:

During 2011 we held two fundraising events, several garden work parties, and two educational workshops. Fundraising and work party events were open to the Skidmore community while the educational workshops were open to the greater Saratoga community. A lot of planning and patience goes into these events and collaboration is essential in order to promote and ensure attendance. Below are descriptions of each event outlining the purpose of the event and how it was coordinated.

In April, the Skidmore Student Garden and EAC held the 3rd Annual 'Beats for Beets' fundraiser. During this event, four Skidmore Student Bands perform and we collect donations at the door. Since the garden is not producing during this time, we collected donated food from local Saratoga restaurants. The Bread Basket, Uncommon Grounds, and Chipolte graciously donated pastries, coffee, and chips/guacamole for the event. These restaurants have been Skidmore Student Garden supporters since the garden was founded. In addition, to raise more funds during this event the club ordered Skidmore Student Garden stickers and blank organic cotton canvas bags. Members of the club silkscreened the bag with the same logo.

On October 2, 2011 the Skidmore Student Garden held the 4th annual Harvest Dinner. Since the first dinner, the more students attend each year. This year's count was over 200! The mission of the dinner is to educate the Skidmore community about the Skidmore Student Garden and local farms while celebrating the season's best produce and the fall harvest. The moment the event begins, the room is flooded with students forming a long line for food, which is served buffet style served by Garden volunteers. During the dinner Skidmore student bands perform and announcements are made by Garden leaders to provide education and information about the meal. Since the Skidmore Student Garden have held successful and fun events for 4 years, bands look forward to performing and these events have become an important part of Skidmore culture. Throughout the dinner, Garden members seek to educate the dinner's guest about what they are eating and to be thoughtful about their food choices. The dinner raised \$700 from student donations. This year's dinner, just like the first seeks to be as sustainable and local as possible. All food is donated from vendors and farmers from the Saratoga Farmers Market. Dining Services donated certain ingredients, like spices and cheese. This event would not be made possible without the amazing support, assistance, and cooking advice from Skidmore Dining Services. This is an event the both the Farmers Market and Dining Services both endorse and look forward to. We served 13 all vegetarian dishes and utilized every ingredient. No produce was wasted during the prep and cooking. The event was again held in Falstaffs and unlike past years the dinner was on a Sunday. This change proved to be a dramatic help. Instead of receiving all the food on Saturday from the Farmers Market and then cooking all the dishes in one afternoon,

we spent Saturday morning at the market and the entire afternoon and night prepping vegetables and cooking a few dishes. This extra time was valuable because more volunteers could help out in the kitchen now that there were two full days to cook. We were also able to be more creative with the dishes and served a more varied dinner.

All prep-work and cooking is done in the Skidmore Dining Hall test kitchen. We rent out the space for an entire weekend before the event. Since a level of trust and support has been fostered between leaders of the Skidmore Student Garden and Dining Services, we are allowed to use any ingredient and kitchen tool/utensil (within reason) to cook. We were able to bake and cook in the industrial ovens and use the immersion blender. Dining services then transported all food in a van to Falstaffs and provided the dinner with 150 plates and silverware sets. Since more people attend the dinner than we have dining ware, student volunteers hand wash the dishes when people have finished eating. We also set up compost bins for food waste, which was then taken to the Skidmore Composting bin in Scriber Village. This impressive event is important for several reasons:

- The dinner displays the important relationship between Skidmore and local farms and vendors through the incredible amount of generous donations

- Support from Dining Services signifies that the staff cares about local foods and this student-run initiative

- Money raised from the Harvest Dinner is directed toward managing and purchasing for the garden. While we set a suggested donation of \$5 for the dinner, which is far less than one would pay for a local meal at a restaurant, we found that many students donated above that price.

- Students worked tirelessly for an entire weekend without stopping or doing homework to provide an amazing event for the school that promotes the Skidmore Student Garden, local farms, and slow foods.

The Harvest Dinner's generous farms include:

- Skidmore Student Garden
- Kilpatrick Family Farms
- Denison Farms
- Stannard Farms
- Saratoga Apple
- Otrembiak Farm
- Pleasant Valley Farm
- Gomez Farms
- Sheldon Farms

We contact and visit the farm stands at the Farmers Market two or three weeks before the event and ask each vendor for donations. Most will say yes and reply to come at the end of the market and take what is left. Others will have a specific set of food. Since most of food is decided on the day of the market, all recipes are created that same day too. Some of the dishes include:

- Mashed Potatoes
- Creamed Spinach

- Butternut Squash/Carrot Soup
- Roasted Acorn Squash
- Eggplant/Tomato Roast
- Corn, Cucumber, Tomato Salad
- Salsa
- Apple Crisp

Tree Planting Workshop

Contact Information: List of contact information that are key to and helpful to the success of the garden.

Administration:

Riley Neugebauer: Campus Sustainability Coordinator. Bridge between students and administration. She has been key to the success of environmental/sustainability related initiatives on campus.

rneugeba@skidmore.edu

518-580-5865

North Hall 156

Brian Wimble: Grounds and Fleet Maintenance Supervisor. Contact person to borrow supplies (shovels, rakes, ect) from facilities and provide general maintenance/information of the plot.

bwimble@skidmore.edu

518-580-5871

North Hall

Dining Services:

Jim Rose: Executive Chef.

jrose@skidmore.edu

Mark Miller: Director of Dining Services

mmiller@skidmore.edu

Bill Canney: Director.

wcanney@skidmore.edu

Main contacts for Dining Services and reserving the test kitchen. Integral to planning garden harvests, menu for harvest dinner, and other EAC food initiatives. Very supportive of the Skidmore Garden and local food projects. Dedicated to providing the most healthful, local, and fresh foods to the dining hall.

518-580-5890

Murray Aikins Dining Hall

Faculty:

Karen Kellogg: Director of Environmental Studies Dept.

kkellogg@skidmore.edu

518-580-5198

Dana 186

Kim Marsella: Program Coordinator of Environmental Studies Dept.

kmarsell@skidmore.edu

518-580-5195

Harder 192

Monica Raveret-Richter: Associate Biology Professor.

mrichter@skidmore.edu

518-580-5083

Dana 370

Joshua Ness: Associate Biology and Environmental Studies Professor. Contact for Biology curriculum integration into Garden.

jness@skidmore.edu

518-580-5080

Dana 319

Event Planning:

Robin Adams: Director of Leadership Activities. Contact for reserving event spaces and ordering tables/chairs.

radams@skidmore.edu

518-589-5777

Case 226B

Media Services: Renting music and sound equipment for events

518-580-5940

Palamountain

Lively Lucy's: Rebecca Schwartz rschwar1@skidmore.edu. Contact for co-hosting music events. Lively Lucy's will provide sound set up and coordinate with bands.

Tang: Susi Kerr skerr@skidmore.edu. Contact for hosting outdoor events at the Tang using the roof or the wall.

Publicity:

-Scope Portfolio, Spring 2011 <http://cms.skidmore.edu/portfolios/portfolio.cfm?catID=911>

-Scope Online, July 2011

<http://cms.skidmore.edu/news/news.cfm?passID=2862>

-Skidnews, Oct 2011

<http://www.skidmorenews.com/features/harvest-dinner-features-the-best-of-locally-grown-food-1.2633058#.TxNiVHZ3brs>