

Garden project expands

The Green Thumb Project is relocating to reach more students

BY BROOKE DALY
For the Index

In hopes of spreading agricultural awareness to the Kirksville community, the Green Thumb Project is relocating and expanding its garden.

Currently, the garden is located at Ray Miller Elementary and provides outdoor education to the elementary students. As many as 30 Truman State volunteers per semester help with after school activities in the garden.

Project manager senior Brockell Briddle said the project is a non-profit supported by fundraising and grants. The garden's goal is to produce local vegetables and to educate the community about where food comes from, she said.

The project began as a student-led Environmental Studies course called Grassroots Environmentalism during 2009. It is now run by volunteers, but is in the process of developing a board of directors, she said. The garden is used as an outdoor classroom, Briddle said.

Each semester, the course has a new project to fit the community's assets or needs, professor Michael Kelrick said. The goal of the class is to learn what it means to be an activist within the community by planning, implementing and assessing the project of choice, he said.

Two years after the course took place, Briddle and project partner at the time, former Truman student Ashley May, took charge and transformed the project into more than a class, Kelrick said.

"We are looking forward to expanding our outreach to more than just the school garden program ... but also to provide more opportunities to the entire Kirksville community," Briddle said.

With the help of a recent \$10,000 grant, the garden is looking to expand and relocate south of Ray Miller to become closer to all of the Kirksville schools so each school can use the space. The scope of the project includes lesson plans for the schools to integrate the garden into the science curriculums, Briddle said.

Kelrick said the program has been active during fall throughout previous years, but it was suspended for this fall because the garden is moving.

He said currently, the project has workdays to move the site forward



Brooke Daly/For the Index

After receiving a \$10,000 grant, the Green Thumb Garden currently is expanding and relocating. The garden began as a student-led Environmental Studies course during 2009.

with the help of the Kirksville High School's carpentry class. The class built a fence and an outdoor classroom for the garden, he said.

"I think it makes huge sense anywhere, but, perhaps, particularly here for kids to have a clear sense of where their food comes from," Kelrick said. "I mean lots of adults don't know where their food comes from. They don't have a clear sense of what it takes to grow food, what their choices might be ... eating particular things and not others, and the implications that that might have for their own health."

Giving the community a place to go and see the process of how food and plants are grown would familiarize people about agriculture, senior Abigail Vaughan said.

"It would be beneficial because they get to see how their food is grown, and hopefully in the future they might be able to spread that word to their parents or to other people and maybe grow gardens of their own on a smaller scale," Vaughan said.

She said by expanding the garden, there would be more opportunity for the community to become involved and learn about agriculture on a small scale.

Vaughan also said that if people understand where their food comes from, they would understand the industry more. She said the garden might be used to increase interest in

agriculture.

Senior Francois Makarewicz volunteered for the project last semester and said he helped teach the elementary students with the provided lesson plans.

"I would like to see the high school become more involved with the younger kids who did the Green Thumb after school program," Makarewicz said. "Ideally, the kids who are in Tiger Club who move up the ranks of the Kirksville School System will give back by helping mentor the new, younger kids ... I would like to see more of a collaboration between the different grades."

The opportunities for volunteers range from grant writers to physical workers and lesson planners, Briddle said.

The numbers of people interested in the industry is declining, and hopefully this project will spark the interest of the students to study within the agricultural industry, Vaughan said.

The Green Thumb Project will be hosting its fall fundraiser, a silent auction and a gourmet, four-course dinner with live music at 6 p.m. Nov. 11 at Jackson Stables Winery. Tickets can be purchased for \$20 at the Costa Rican Café Company.

Interested students can get involved by emailing Briddle at gtdgarden.raymiller@gmail.com, and the project always can use volunteers, Makarewicz said.

Proximity sparks relationships

Residence hall romances come with benefits and risks

BY EMILY WICHMER
Staff Reporter

Living in close proximity can help develop friendship, but it can also spark romance.

Freshmen Mary Lehen and Forrest Wilsey know firsthand how living near each other can lead to a relationship. The couple lives on the same floor in Centennial Hall, met in the residence hall and currently are dating.

Wilsey and Lehen say the relationship is different because of the couples' proximity, but also because the relationship offers different pros and cons.

"If she needs me or I need her, we're no more than 30 feet away," Wilsey said. "If we want to hang out, we're really close, but we have the option of privacy if we are in our own rooms when we need to be alone."

Wilsey said the couple does set aside some time to see each other, but because they see each other every day, there's less pressure to make plans in advance.

Living closer also makes it easier to get to know each other, Wilsey said. He said it allows them to expand and refine their connection and gives them the option to be much more involved with the other person's life.

Lehen said she likes knowing Wilsey will be there for her whenever she needs him.

"I like being able to walk across the hall to see him, instead of across campus," Lehen said. "I also like the fact that we're both friends with all our roommates as well. It's an added bonus, because we have the option of having one-on-one time whenever we want, or we can go out with all our friends just as easily."

While their relationship has the benefit of the two living near each other, Wilsey said he wants others to know living nearby shouldn't be a reason to date someone.

"Mary and I are dating because we click," Wilsey said. "We get along easily and our connection goes deeper than 'just friends.' The fact that she lives on the same floor is merely coincidental — even if we were apart, I'd still feel the

same way about her."

Living on the same floor has its problems, Lehen said. The conflicts of normal relationships exist, but there's a possibility for tension.

If they get in a fight, it could be awkward because they live so close, Lehen said. It's a little harder to have privacy because they live across the hall and know exactly what the other person is doing most of the time, she said.

Wilsey said the only con is if things don't work out, it might be awkward living across the hall from Lehen.

"But when you're in a relationship with someone you care about, if things didn't work out, it'd still be worth it to be close," Wilsey said. "We don't care about each other because we're boyfriend and girlfriend. We're boyfriend and girlfriend because we care about each other."

Lehen said her relationship with Wilsey has been more positive than her previous relationships. She said communication with Wilsey is better and she said she thinks living close has helped strengthen that.

"In past relationships, I have been with people I only saw at school and on a few weekends," Lehen said. "In this relationship, our time together is more frequent than it has been in my prior relationships. I love the fact that we're friends in addition to being boyfriend and girlfriend."

Wilsey said the key to maintaining a "short-distance relationship" is to appreciate the little things.

"This relationship is new, it's different and it's fulfilling," he said. "We need to make sure we can enjoy the time spent together, and even though we're close, not to take that time for granted."

Joe Hamilton, University Counseling Services Assistant Director, said he encourages couples in a short-distance relationships to spread their time around.

"In that situation, it's easy for couples to get in a rut," Hamilton said. "I would encourage couples to spend time with others in addition to still doing their thing. I would say just to keep it fun."

Short-distance relationships have their pros and cons, just like any other relationship, Wilsey and Lehen said. But the couple said the relationship is worth it and the experience is great.

EUROPE

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VIOLETTE HALL 1400 @ 4:30 PM

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FOR MORE INFORMATION - Contact Dr. Jason Lin (jlin@truman.edu) or Dr. Keith Harrison (ktharr@truman.edu)

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