

# Community Gardens Program set to bloom

By Mary Tiessen

Spring has sprung, the grass has "ris", but some wonder where the food to eat is. The Ontario Ministry of Health has funded the Canada Feed the Children/Feedback Canada Community Gardens Program to service two gardens in the Burlington and Georgetown areas. The land has been donated by Monarch Construction and Les Thatcher, respectively.

What is Feedback Canada? We focus on supplying fresh produce to emergency food outlets including missions, soup kitchens, shelters and foodbanks. This is done in a number of ways.

We access surplus or "seconds" food from grocery stores, farmer's markets, pick your own operations and the farm gate. Our staff, volunteers and food recipients then organize harvest and delivery crews to distribute the food to the various food outlets. Receipts are given and recorded according to the equal market value of the crops. In our first year of operation the experience has been a win-win situation: the food has not spoiled and it has fed those unable to provide it for themselves.

Another part of our program includes two community gardens where the public can grow their own plot of food and/or work on a large garden servicing the food outlets. We encourage those with their own plots to donate one tithe (one tenth) of their crop to the community outlets.

This is a tradition of the "Diggers" in 14th century England, when a portion was given to those less fortunate. Once harvested, the food is delivered directly to the food outlet. The land and water are provided and, if requested, we can provide seed, mulch and gardening/nutrition workshops. There is no charge as Canada Feed the Children and the Ontario Ministry

of Health have supported our efforts to provide quality food to those who have limited resources.

Anyone can participate! In our pilot year, we had people from all walks of life involved. Our success lies in the sharing of resources, particularly time and energy. It is not always easy to ask or reach out to people, but in these hard times, you

may need to contribute to your own food source to provide healthy food for you and your family.

Feedback Canada Community Gardens offer an opportunity to participate in growing food.

If you are interested, please call Mary Tiessen, Farm Manager, Feedback Canada, 416-873-9822, 416-873-4607.

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Mike Finn is owner of Acadian Pools, 134 Guelph St., Georgetown. For more information contact him at 873-3320.