National Wildlife Federation®
CAMPUS ecology®

University of Missouri Kansas City Volker Campus
Kansas City, Missouri
Farming/Garden

SCHOOL
University of Missouri – Kansas City, Volker Campus, Public, 4-year, 15,492 students, Kansas City, MO.

ABSTRACT
The UMKC Garden Collective obtained a Campus Ecology Fellowship primarily to bring the University of Missouri – Kansas City its first greenhouse. The $1300 purchase was made possible by the $1000 NWF grant and by a $300 partnership with our university's Geosciences department. The greenhouse is complete and helping the Collective grow more produce to meet our goal of "take what you need and give the rest away." This greenhouse will save the Garden Collective approximately $100 per year because it allows us to start seeds much more effectively on our own.

GOALS AND OUTCOMES
Goals
The Garden Collective hoped to purchase and construct the University of Missouri – Kansas City's first greenhouse. The Collective also hoped that the greenhouse would lead to partnerships with university departments, community groups, and more involvement with Kansas City Public Schools. The Collective set a target of increased production for lower cost as a result of the greenhouse. Over the next 2-3 years, the Collective has set a goal of making production more regular and increasing outreach and education by establishing one paid position.

Accomplishments and Outcomes
The Collective purchased and built a greenhouse in March 2012.

The purchase of the greenhouse required a $300 partnership with the Geosciences department. This has led to the permanent incorporation of the Garden Collective into various classes throughout the geosciences department. Because the final details of the greenhouse were completed in late March, the full financial impact of the greenhouse could not be measured; however, its partial impact reduced costs by $40.

Though not directly linked to increased community and elementary school involvement, the greenhouse significantly increased the visibility of the Collective. This has increased visibility is partially responsible for increasing workday attendance of members (people not collecting service hours), by 10%. Increased availability of labor significantly reduced the amount of necessary work for the garden leadership. Accordingly, the Collective President worked with an Urban Planning and Design student outside of the Collective to create a program called "adopt-a-garden." The program led to the successful adoption of Attucks Elementary School's student garden by Redeemer Fellowship Church. The program has solved the problem of the students' garden dying over the summer. Because Attucks is located in an

economically deprived food desert, this will increase some of its 100 students' intake of fresh produce by virtually 100%.

Although the Collective solved Attucks Elementary's problems of greatly reduced summer labor, the Collective still has its own problems. The University of Missouri – Kansas City is a commuter campus and summer labor is lacking. The university presents itself as sustainable institution and is very fast to flaunt its sustainable achievements, including the accomplishments of the Garden Collective. The reality, however, is that appearance always comes first at the University of Missouri- Kansas City. Because our garden is entirely organic and run entirely on volunteer labor, we have difficulties meeting the university's standards for appearance. Many other student gardens in the U.S. have one paid position throughout the summer or growing, depending on need. The Collective's founding members (and some of its leadership) will be graduating in one year. It is imperative that a fund be established to hire one student per summer to keep the garden looking acceptable. This fund will be established safely within the Geosciences Department and will require at least some academic research in urban agriculture. We hope that the National Wildlife Federation will award us a $5000 seed grant so that we can secure the Collective's long-term sustainability.

The Collective Matured because of the NWF Grant. The 10% increase in labor called for increased organization; accordingly, the Collective built a website that is edited easily by any member to when workdays are taking place and what work needs to be done. This helped keep our members organized and working, thereby freeing up the Collective leadership to increase their community involvement.

The website can be viewed here: http://studo.umkc.edu/gardencollective/garden/Garden/Home.html

Challenges and Responses

University administration has occasionally been an obstacle during the project. Just to win approval to build the greenhouse took well over a semester. Approvals went to university administration and neighborhood associations (who were very excited about the project). To be fair, interactions with administration have been mixed; however, their first priority for the Garden Collective has always been and will always be presentation. Many other student-led gardens use one paid worker to maintain the garden in times of low labor (i.e. summer break). As mentioned above, we hope to establish a fund within the Geosciences department that will pay students to maintain the garden while also fostering academic research in urban agriculture.

Campus Climate Action: Your School's Carbon Footprint

Our project addressed global climate change by reducing the number of trips to purchase plants. The greenhouse also serves as a community catalyst for students, faculty and the community to see how a greenhouse creates a more efficient method in caring for a garden.

ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORT

Leaders and Supporters

The Department of Geosciences was gracious to help us come up with the necessary funds to acquire the greenhouse. The UMKC Sustainability Team was there for mutual support and getting the word out on campus that we do have a greenhouse.

Funding and Resources

The project cost $1300. We were able to secure the outside funding from the University of Missouri – Kansas City Geosciences Department. Securing the necessary space and approvals from university administrations and neighborhood associations took well over a semester. Once we had approval for our greenhouse, we engaged the Geosciences department. They were happy to give us the money in return for some use of the greenhouse in classes.

Education and Community Outreach

Our largest roles have been attracting new members and working with Attucks elementary. Through a weeklong Earth Week campaign, we were able to attract several new members and double our mailing list. Many of our new members had no experience and have since become avid gardeners and urban farmers. Our involvement with Attucks elementary changed dramatically with the introduction of the "adopt-a-garden" program. A horticulturist leads the team of volunteers that adopted the garden while the rest of the team has never gardened of urban farmed. The adopt-a-garden partnership is their introduction to agriculture. Yes, all groups that we engaged about adopting Attucks' schoolyard garden were very interested and receptive of the idea. Lastly, the greenhouse has brought entire lectures to the Garden Collective regularly. This has been instrumental in exposing students to Urban Agriculture.

National Wildlife Federation's Campus Ecology Program

The most important asset I found, as a NWF Campus Ecology Fellow, from this program was meeting and talking to other fellows. The social capital has been the most rewarding part of this experience.

The following Fellowship resources were useful: leadership development conference calls, NWF name recognition, participation in NWF Annual Meeting.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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MORE ABOUT YOUR SCHOOL

Campus Sustainability History

The University of Missouri – Kansas City has several green features on its campus. These features, most of which have been built or installed over the past five years, include LEED certified residence hall and student union, campus rain gardens, a green roof on top of the university library, a bicycle-borrow program, and a nationally awarded recycling program. The Garden Collective is the campus's only successful environmentally-minded student organization. The university has a sustainability coordinator, Kaye Johnston. The sustainability webpage can be found here: http://info.umkc.edu/sustainability/.