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Sowing Gardens Forward in Kentucky

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St. Vincent Mission?s Sow It Forward project was to expand the community garden at the Big Sandy Community and Technical College in Prestonsburg, Kentucky. The goal of the project was to give Human Services students hands on experience in using existing resources to meet the needs of people in innovative ways. We were to add three beds to the existing garden which would be tended by the students who would implement a process to distribute the food grown in their portion of the garden.

While the project didn?t happen the way we had projected due in most part to the cool wet spring weather, the results were even better than expected. The student group met with the original garden team and designed a garden which added seven new beds planted with berries, herbs and flowers in addition to vegetables. The beds were planted using companion planting principles to attract ?good bugs? and reinforce the sustainable nature of the project. The smaller beds will also lend themselves to becoming winter gardens with the hope that Human Service students will use them to grow food to share on campus. We found that having students tend traditional season gardens is difficult due to the college schedule but that winter gardens should meet the need both for fresh produce in the winter and project requirements for classes.

The idea of the winter garden came from the book we requested from Storey Publishing as part of the grant, The Year-Round Vegetable Gardener by Niki Jabbour. And just to show how well Sowing It Forward works, the expanded college garden caught the eye of Mike Lewis and Mark Walden, co-directors of Growing Warriors when they were visiting Grow Appalachia sites. Growing Warriors is a new organization here in Kentucky that aids veterans in becoming farmers. They were so impressed with the college garden?s location and community involvement that they added nine more beds and will be giving local vets a small stipend to work with the college students, faculty and staff in producing more food for those in need here in Floyd County.

Thanks KGI and all your partners for this amazing opportunity to grow and to Sow It Forward.

Image (optional):

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