

GREENVILLE WEST SIDE

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



February 19, 2014

City of Greenville, South Carolina



Chapter 6: Growing a Healthy Community

NAME: John

AGE: 27

MY FAVORITES PLACES.

Baseball Stadiums / Downtown

PLACES I DON'T LIKE

Surrounding Neighborhoods

MY NEIGHBORHOOD IN 1 WORD:

Entertaining

MY DREAM FOR MY NEIGHBORHOOD

less trouble



6.1: Overview	84
6.2: Purchasing Healthy Food	85
6.2.1: Attract a new neighborhood grocery store	85
6.2.2: Expand mobile farmer's markets	87
6.3: Growing Healthy Food	88
6.3.1: Develop an urban farm and education center	88
6.3.2: Support sales and swaps of locally-grown food	91
6.3.3: Develop an interfaith coalition around healthy cooking	92

Growing a Healthy Community 6

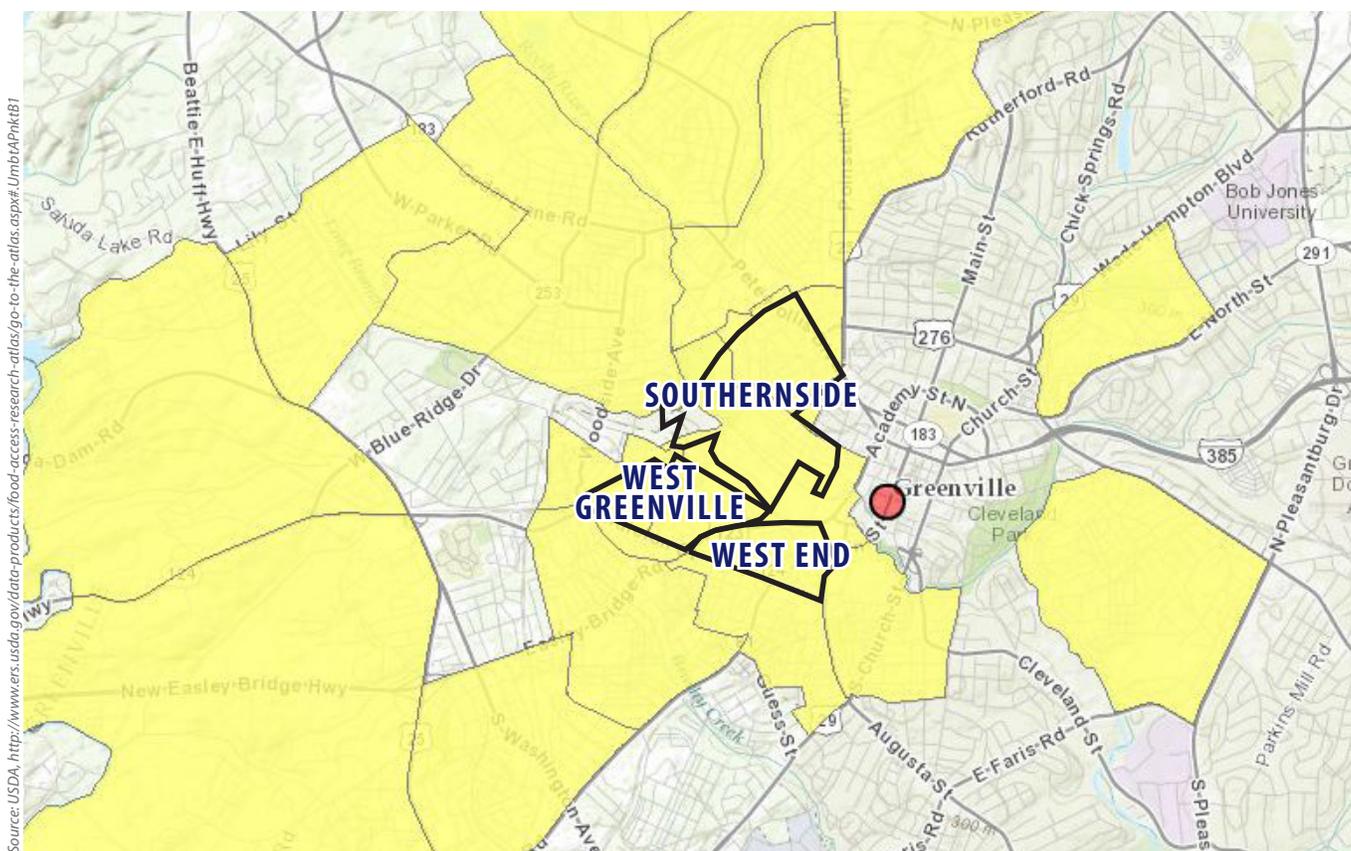
6.1: Overview

The West Side lacks access to healthy food—it has been designated a food desert according to USDA criteria. Yet, several organizations have initiated programs to try to meet this need. This chapter proposes strategies that build off these efforts to increase access to fresh, healthy ingredients, to improve residents’ cooking skills, and to use food as a force to unite and empower the community. These recommendations also emphasize the need to teach nutritional eating habits to children as a way to instill healthy food values in the West Side.

The first set of strategies (§6.2) focus on attracting healthy food retailers to the West Side area through both conventional channels and mobile markets. This includes a step-by-step process for recruiting a grocery store, and a discussion of options for different grocer models. The plan also suggests building on the success of local mobile farmer’s markets to provide fresh produce to residents.

The second set of strategies (§6.3) focuses on developing food growing and preparation skills. A key component is the development of an urban agriculture and education center (§6.3.1) to provide a mechanism for existing organizations already working to spread healthy food growing skills to collaborate for greater impact.

The third set of strategies (§6.3.2-§6.3.3) recommend programs to distribute fresh-grown ingredients and improve resident cooking skills, recognizing that even with access to healthy ingredients, people may need help in learning how to prepare healthy meals. Recommendations include ways to bring neighbors together around food, such as through healthy church suppers, backyard garden swaps, and cooking classes.



Food Deserts: This map uses the USDA’s Food Access Research Atlas to show low-income census tracts where a significant number of residents also have low vehicle access and/or are located at least 20 miles from a supermarket.

6.2: Purchasing Healthy Food

The strategies in this section strive to bring healthy food retailers closer to West Side residents.

6.2.1: Attract a new neighborhood grocery store

Responsible Agent(s): [City of Greenville \(Economic/Community Development\)](#), [Private Developers](#), [Community Organizations](#)

Action Type: [Programs & Policy](#)

Funding Level: \$\$-\$\$\$

Time Frame: [Year 6-10](#)

There is one grocery store within the West Side project area: the Kash & Karry on Pendleton Street near the West Greenville neighborhood. Discussions with local residents indicate that this store provides a limited inventory, and few healthy food options.

At the time of the planning process, two full service supermarkets were located just outside of the project area in downtown: Publix on McBee Avenue; and BI-LO off of North Main Street. Shortly after the public design workshop, the BI-LO store was closed. While the Publix remains open, the store is not easily accessible from many parts of the West Side without the use of a personal vehicle.

The Swamp Rabbit Café, located just north of the project area along Pete Hollis Boulevard and the Swamp Rabbit Trail, offers a small selection of organic and local produce. However, the cost of food and physical accessibility to the café is challenging for many West Side residents as well.

The West Side is typical of many underserved areas in that the demographics do not make the area attractive to full-service grocery retailers. Additionally, initial analysis of the existing West Side retail demand suggests the market is insufficient to support more grocery space in the area (§2.1.3). Any efforts to attract a higher-quality grocer will require a creative approach.

Non-Profit Supermarket Case Study: Fare & Square

Chester, Pennsylvania

In the fall of 2013, Philabundance, the largest food bank in the Philadelphia area, opened a full scale nonprofit supermarket to provide affordable healthy food to a neighborhood located within an urban food desert. Fare & Square is located in a 16,000 square-foot building that was purchased and renovated by Philabundance. The store is open seven days a week, 8 am – 8pm, focuses on nutritious produce, meats, dairy, seafood, and frozen foods at low prices, and accepts food stamps. Additionally, shoppers are encouraged to sign up for a free Carrot Club membership to earn rewards such as store credit, program incentives and special values. Carrot Club members who earn at or below 200% of the poverty line may receive a 7% credit towards future purchases.

The new store also serves as a new gateway to the community as well as created 40-50 new jobs. Funding for the project was provided by a variety of sources, including private foundation grants, community organizations, and state and local government agencies.

Source: <http://www.philabundance.org/programs-2/chesterfoodaccess/>



There are three different retail models that may be a good fit for the West Side:

1. Recruiting a for-profit grocery store;
2. Supporting the creation of a nonprofit grocery store; and
3. Developing a local food co-op.

In order to recruit a for-profit national or regional retailer, it will be critical to present a package that demonstrates the West Side's ability to profitably support a new grocer, and to identify a lead organization or community leaders to approach prospects. For the nonprofit models, community-based organizations such as foundations, local food banks, and churches will play key roles.

Regardless of which retail model is chosen, the first step in the process is to gain more information about the current supply and potential demand within the area. The following steps should be included in such analysis.

- Conduct a Supply Conditions Analysis to determine the quality of retail facilities providing grocery products within the West Side.
- Survey local residents and employees to determine shopping habits, familiarity

and use of other grocery stores, factors in choosing a grocery store, modes of travel, demand for conveniences and services, and willingness to shop at a new grocery store. This survey should target residents, as well as people who commute to work in the West Side. This could be done in coordination with major employers in the area, such as the Bon Secours St. Francis Health System, the Greenville County School District, and existing industries.

- Perform a segmented market analysis of "food eaten at home," based upon data collected from the US Census Bureau's Consumer Expenditure Survey. This will define and quantify the actual spending for groceries based on the specific composition of the existing, or projected, population as it relates to a variety of factors. These factors include income, age of head of household, household size and composition, housing tenure, number of earners, and race.

Once the information is collected, the lead organization for the community may develop a recruitment package to present to grocery companies and/or local organizations for consideration. Additionally, the community should approach existing retailers, such as Spinx and Kash & Karry, to encourage and



address partnership opportunities to support the inclusion of healthy food provisions in their inventories.

6.2.2: Expand mobile farmer's markets

Responsible Agent(s): Mill Village Farms, Loaves & Fishes, Other Healthy Food Organizations, Local Farmers, Neighborhood Associations

Action Type: Programs & Policy

Funding Level: \$

Time Frame: Year 1-5

The recent success of the Good to Go mobile market in West Greenville and other neighborhoods illustrates the market demand for healthy groceries. The current program utilizes the bounty of Mill Village Farms' urban agriculture and the distribution vehicles of Loaves & Fishes (a local mobile food rescue organization) to bring fresh produce to residents. The recommendation is to expand, as well as replicate, this program throughout the West Side neighborhoods. In order to reach the maximum number of residents, the market could set up along high-traffic routes (including high foot- and bicycle-traffic areas such as the Swamp Rabbit Trail), and in conjunction with gatherings and educational workshops as proposed in the remaining items of this chapter.



Source: <http://www.goforhealthandeducation.org/>

Mobile Markets Case Studies

Good to Go

Greenville

Good to Go is a mobile produce market operated by Mill Village Farms and Loaves & Fishes. It began operation in the summer of 2013. Using a converted refrigerated truck, the Mill Village Farm's Youth Partners provide seasonal service to the "food-desert" communities of Greater Sullivan and West Greenville. Good to Go Mobile Market partners with local area churches, community centers, and businesses to provide healthy food for purchase by community residents.

Source: Mill Village Farms, <http://www.millvillagefarms.org/good-to-go/>



Source: www.facebook.com/GoodToGoGreenville/photos...stream

Hub City Farmers Market

Spartanburg, South Carolina

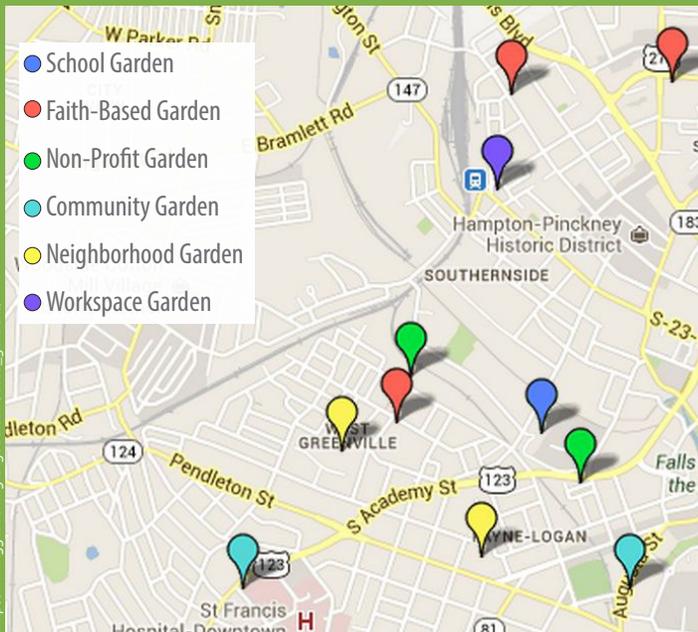
The Hub City Farmers Market operates a seasonal Saturday and Wednesday market in two locations in downtown Spartanburg. The Hub City Mobile Market was started in 2010. Using a retrofitted step-van, the organization delivers local produce for purchase to area neighborhoods, as well as commercial and industrial employment centers. The Mobile Market expands Hub City Farmers Market into food deserts across Spartanburg County. The market is supplied by local produce from farmers within 24 hours of sending the market on the road.

Source: Hub City Farmers Market <http://www.hubcityfm.org/markets/mobile-market/>

Gardening for Good

Gardening for Good is a network of local community gardens that utilizes the energy of the community garden movement to coordinate neighborhood redevelopment efforts, improve the health of residents and neighborhoods, and transform Greenville through gardening. Gardening for Good is coordinating gardening partnerships throughout Greenville County to create a healthier, more sustainable and socially just local food system.

The image below shows Gardening for Good’s map of existing gardens in the West Side.



Source: Gardening for Good, a program of Greenville Forward
<http://www.ggardeningforgood.com/home/>



Source: <http://furmangreenscene.wordpress.com/>

6.3: Growing Healthy Food

Expanding residents’ ability to grow their own food within the neighborhood will provide a low-cost method for accessing healthy ingredients. The strategies below focus on first growing healthy ingredients (§6.3.1), then distributing those ingredients and learning how to use them to prepare nutritious meals that bring neighbors together (§6.3.2-6.3.3).

6.3.1: Develop an urban farm and education center

Responsible Agent(s): City of Greenville (Parks and Recreation), Greenville Forward/Gardening for Good, Greenville County School District, Neighborhood Associations, Residents

Action Type: Programs & Policy

Funding Level: \$ for Program; \$-\$\$ for Infrastructure

Time Frame: Year 6-10

Building on the work of Gardening for Good—a community garden program for all of Greenville County run by Greenville Forward—this plan proposes using existing facilities to centralize food growing and education in the West Side. With this program already in place, and several local community gardens already established, the community could focus on activating resident participation.

Developing a centralized location for an urban farm with teaching facilities would help to jump-start Gardening for Good’s efforts in the West Side. Growing Power, a program started in Milwaukee, provides a useful model for this type of program (see details following §6.3.1). Project Host (profiled at the end of this chapter) also presents successful components that could be replicated. Other possible partners include the Greenville Organic Foods Organization (GOFO), Mill Village Farms, and the St. Francis Agricultural Exchange.

Several institutions are located throughout the West Side that could serve as potential host sites and partnership opportunities for the urban farm and education center. The creation of urban farms and the utilization of existing facilities for teaching nutrition and food preparation would not require a significant investment. The urban farm component of the

proposed new center would serve mostly as a teaching garden, intended to inspire residents to take their new education home and grow food on their own blocks and within their yards. A few possible locations are discussed below.

West Greenville Community Center

The West Greenville Community Center and surrounding property are well-located to serve neighborhood residents and to provide a much-needed healthy food alternative in West Greenville. The small community garden already at the community center could be scaled to a full urban farm, using the east side of the site that faces Manning Street. The teaching center would increase the utilization of the City's community center building.

St. Francis Hospital Downtown

Located at the southern edge of the West Side area, this significant institution has already developed the St. Francis Agricultural Exchange, which includes a community garden. Expanding this garden to an urban farm and using facility space for workshops would build on the hospital's mission and serve as an additional potential resource for the West Side.

Legacy Charter School

As part of the development strategy for Newtown in §10.8, the plan imagines a revitalized residential neighborhood anchored by Mountain View Baptist Church and Legacy Charter School. One way to help integrate the school into the neighborhood would be to develop larger-scale urban farms that are used by students, their families, and surrounding residents. The educational components could grow out of the schools' existing curriculum, and add more after-school programming for neighborhood children. The elementary school already has a small community garden that could help to seed the urban farm. This new farm would probably be located in the floodplain, and soil conditions and water management would both need to be studied further to determine the best site.



St. Francis Community Garden



A.J. Whittenberg Elementary School Garden



West Greenville Community Center: A few possible urban farm locations are shown.

A.J. Whittenberg Elementary School

Like Legacy Charter School, A.J. Whittenberg Elementary already has a small community garden that is used as a classroom learning tool. This is another centrally-located facility, that could be used to host the urban farm educational center, and workshops could be held in either the school or at The Salvation Army Ray & Joan Kroc Corps Community Center (Kroc Center).

Potential City Park

The City Park Plan illustrates a combination of demonstration and community gardens as part of the development of the potential park. The plan recommends a location along South Hudson Street, between Wellborn Street and the Reedy River. This space could be expanded as a larger urban farming space, serving as a central and highly visible location in the West Side.

Churches

Many churches in the area have yard areas or over-sized parking lots that could be converted to urban farms, and most also have associated kitchens that could be used for workshops. In conjunction with the recommended interfaith coalition for healthy cooking (§6.3.3), any church or group of churches interested in becoming more involved in the provision of healthy food could host the urban farm and education center.

Case Study: Growing Power

Growing Power is a national nonprofit started in 1993 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin by former NBA player Will Allen. Growing Power transforms communities through the development of Community Food Systems, providing high-quality, safe, healthy, affordable food for residents of diverse backgrounds, as well as training, active demonstration, outreach, and technical assistance through Community Food Centers.

- Growing Power demonstrates easy to replicate growing methods through on-site workshops and hands-on demonstrations. They operate farms in Wisconsin and Illinois with satellite-training sites in Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky, Massachusetts, and Mississippi.
- Growing Power provides education and technical assistance through youth programs, volunteers, and an active role in agriculture policy initiatives.
- Growing Power produces and distributes food from their urban and rural farm sites, as well as through a collaboration with the Rainbow Farmers Cooperative. A year-round program called Farm-To-City Market Basket Program works like a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) distribution program and a mobile grocery store, sourcing food from small-scale wholesalers directly to consumers. Food is also sold directly to restaurants in Chicago and Milwaukee.



Source (all on this page): flickr.com/photos/Growing Power

Source: Growing Power, www.growingpower.org/about_us.htm

6.3.2: Support sales and swaps of locally-grown food

Responsible Agent(s): City of Greenville, Greenville County, Healthy Food Organizations

Action Type: Programs & Policy

Funding Level: \$

Time Frame: Year 1-5; On-going

As residents and community groups plant more gardens in backyards and public spaces, both formal and informal distribution channels should be organized. Informally, churches, blocks, and the recommended urban farm/education centers (§6.3.1) may organize food swaps where extra yields of homegrown produce can be traded for variety.

In terms of formal distribution, the City of Greenville currently permits the sale of agricultural products as a temporary use (Section 19-4.5.3 of the Municipal Code), that requires a use permit which is valid for 90 days at a time. The City should consider whether the permitting of local produce is necessary for the safety and wellbeing of the city, or if these sales can be exempt from permitting altogether. Alternatively, the City could determine a threshold, based on the size of sale or number of vendors, that requires a permit and allow smaller sales to occur without one. Extending permit lengths, so that they last for the entire year or growing season, also would help relieve obstacles to providing healthy food.

Project Host

Project Host, located on South Academy Street, is one of the soup kitchens in the West Side. Its clients include a variety of individuals, including the homeless, working poor, and individuals living on fixed incomes. Project Host serves an estimated 200 people a day, six days a week, with a focus on healthy foods.

- **Soup Kitchen:** The Soup Kitchen offers a balanced, nutritious meal each day in a safe, clean and supportive environment to all who are hungry.
- **Feeding Hungry Children Project:** The Feeding Hungry Children Project provides healthy, well-balanced meals to children of low income families enrolled in after school enrichment programs. The project strives to “level the nutritional playing field” so that these children can reach their full potential mentally, physically and socially.
- **CC Pearce Culinary School:** The CC Pearce Culinary School teaches culinary and life skills to chronically unemployed and underemployed people in order to gain and sustain employment and to become positive roles model for their children, grandchildren and peers in the community. The image below shows graduates of the 34th class from this 12-week program.



- **Garden:** Project Host is the first soup kitchen in the country to have a garden on site. It has grown tons of produce for the hungry, and the culinary students have fresh produce to use to hone their skills.

Source: Project Host <http://www.projecthost.org/>



Source: <https://www.facebook.com/projecthost.org/>

Project Host cooking class

6.3.3: Develop an interfaith coalition around healthy cooking

Responsible Agent(s): Faith-based Organizations

Action Type: Programs & Policy

Funding Level: \$

Time Frame: Year 1-5; On-going

While more than 20 churches and other faith-based organizations provide a variety of social and welfare programs within the West Side, there appears to be little collaboration between them. During the planning process, representatives from these organizations indicated an interest in creating an interfaith coalition to focus these efforts, and an interest in focusing on specific needs of residents more effectively. A common interest among these organizations appears to be access to food.

Creating an interfaith coalition based around healthy food would provide a way to initiate coordination around a shared goal, while keeping the scope narrow enough that the collaboration could make significant progress in a short period of time. Such a coalition could include a wide spectrum of initiatives, including: Supporting community gardens; serving healthy meals; educating residents on budgeting, planning, shopping and preparing healthy food options; providing transportation to grocery stores; creating job opportunities in the healthy food industry; and supporting a nonprofit food pantry and/or cooperative.

Healthy cooking could be incorporated into soup kitchen operations, as well as existing Wednesday and Sunday night dinners. The availability of regular, healthy, low-cost meals would complement the services provided by local organizations like Project Host, which provides a successful model for incorporating several healthy food initiatives under one organizational body.

Cooking demonstrations and handing out recipe cards at these suppers would add a new dimension to a community tradition. Additionally, formal workshops or informal meet-ups for senior church members to teach cooking skills to younger generations would engage seniors as community mentors.

Key Local Resources

Gardening for Good

(See §6.3 for more information)

Greenville Organic Foods Organization (GOFO)

Mission: GOFO's mission is to educate the community on the benefits of consuming organic foods, supporting local food system, and to raise awareness on sustainable agriculture and environmental conservation.

Programs: Grow Healthy Kids; Urban Farm Tour; North Main Organic Garden; Cooking Classes; Farm Work Day

Source: <http://www.gofhealthandeducation.org/about-gof.html>

Legacy Charter School

Legacy Charter School has demonstrated a commitment to incorporating a healthy lifestyle into students' lives through making nutrition and fitness a part of students' school day. In the spring of 2013, Legacy Charter School won a HealthierUS School Challenge gold award from the USDA. According to the press release, "To be eligible for an award, Legacy Charter School had to pass a number of criteria, including offering reimbursable meals that meet USDA guidelines, meeting nutrition standards for meals, offering nutrition education, providing a baseline number of minutes for physical education and opportunities for physical education." (Legacy Charter Schools, <http://legacycharterschool.com/news.php>)

Mill Village Farms

Operating from the Greater Sullivan neighborhood (south of the West Side), Mill Village Farms builds small, sustainable, organically-managed farms that promote holistic development in local communities. The organization has two main goals:

- **Growing Food:** Mill Village Farms is transforming vacant properties into bountiful gardens to grow locally-sourced produce for communities that often have limited access to fresh and local foods.
- **Growing Jobs:** While growing fresh produce, Mill Village Farms also grows employment opportunities for neighborhood youth. The goal is to train youth to have experience in agriculture, entrepreneurship, and basic job skills.

Source: Mill Village Farms <http://www.millvillagefarms.org/>

Project Host

(See page 93 for more information)

<http://www.projecthost.org/>

St. Francis Agricultural Exchange

Bon Secour St. Francis Health System, the hospital network that includes St. Francis Hospital Downtown just south of Pendleton and South Academy Street in the West Side, started the St. Francis Agricultural Exchange, which includes the following programs.

- **Community Garden Program:** Managing the St. Francis Community Garden and support the Odessa Street Garden
- **Agricultural Education Program:** Classes on garden design, organic gardening techniques, backyard homesteading, season extension, herb and fruit propagation, seed saving and seed starting.
- **Sustainable Living Program:** Classes on healthy food preparation; food preservation (drying, canning and freezing); "green" home cleaning and personal care products; and sustainable practices.

Source: St. Francis Agricultural Exchange <http://lg35communitygarden.blogspot.com/2012/01/bon-secours-st-francis-agriculture.html>