



# North Dakota Junior Master Gardener Program

ANNUAL SUMMARY 2020

NDSU

EXTENSION



# Introduction

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## Our Greatest Resource

*The children of North Dakota are more powerful than oil, more beautiful than our prairie and more precious than any other natural resource.<sup>1</sup>*

Our children in North Dakota are powerful, beautiful and precious, but they are also undernourished and inactive. Recent surveys of high school children in our state show:

- 99% do not eat the recommended amount of vegetables daily.<sup>2</sup>
- 31% are overweight or obese.
- 74% are not physically active on a daily basis.<sup>3</sup>

Poor diets and unhealthy lifestyles limit the potential of our kids. Let's lend them a hand—and a garden trowel.

## Our Response

Gardening programs can help. Children who grow their own food are more likely to eat vegetables and have healthy eating habits throughout their lives.<sup>4</sup> Gardening programs can sharpen skills in science, raise awareness of the environment, build self-esteem, and help youth learn to work together.<sup>4</sup>

The COVID-19 pandemic created challenges for the North Dakota Junior Master Gardener Program in 2020. Some local projects were canceled. Other projects substituted classroom trainings for virtual and home-based trainings. When needed, participation was limited to allow for social distancing. Our project leaders were dedicated and resilient.

In the end, our Junior Master Gardener Program educated over 3,370 children, one of its best years ever.



*The North Dakota Junior Master Gardener Program provides hands-on activities that lead to healthy kids and strong communities.*

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**North Dakota State University is dedicated to helping children enjoy healthy, active lives.**

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<sup>1</sup> Paraphrased with local emphasis from a quote by Danny Kaye, humanist and entertainer.

<sup>2</sup> Moore, L.V., F.E. Thompson and Z. Demissie. 2017. Percentage of youth meeting federal fruit and vegetable intake recommendations, Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System, United States and 33 states, 2013. *J. Acad. Nutr. Diet.* 117(4): 545–553.

<sup>3</sup> Centers for Disease Control. 2017. Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System results for 2017. North Dakota data. Accessed online.

<sup>4</sup> Univ. of Colorado at Denver and Health Sciences Center. 2009. Benefits of gardening for children.

# At-A-Glance

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The North Dakota Junior Master Gardener Program provides **hands-on activities** that lead to **healthy kids** and **strong communities**.



## North Dakota State University

NDSU awarded \$22,500 to 46 projects for gardening supplies. Funds were provided by the North Dakota State Legislature. NDSU provided educational support to all projects and led 28 of them. Thirty-three of the projects would not have been started without JMG funds.



## Partners

New partnerships were forged and existing partnerships were strengthened. Over 160 local businesses and organizations worked with NDSU Extension in these projects. Support came in the form of human resources, access to land and water, plants, tools, fertilizer, transportation, classroom space and food.



## Impacts on Youth

Approximately 3,370 children (2,510 young children and 860 teens) participated in JMG activities. Project leaders reported that youth developed skills in gardening and enjoyed the physical activity. They learned how to eat a healthy diet and gained experiences in helping others through public service.



## Food Security

JMG projects assisted in the production and donation of an estimated 17,000 pounds of fresh vegetables. The produce went to food banks, churches, family shelters, veterans, elderly, shut-ins, New Americans and other needy families. Students grew and donated produce for their school lunch programs.



## Beauty

JMG kids beautified schools, day care centers, senior care centers, churches, parks, fairgrounds and along city streets. They enhanced the landscapes of a military base, courthouse, museum and a community zoo. Flowers were grown and donated to hospitals and senior care centers.



## Special Projects

JMG kids constructed raised beds at senior care centers. Disabled children and youth-at-risk learned how to grow their own gardens. Youth conducted research to identify superior vegetable, herb and flower varieties. JMG gardening activities supported pollinator gardens, a summer reading program and a local art festival.

**For more information, go to [www.ag.ndsu.edu/jrmastergardener/](http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/jrmastergardener/)**

# Summary of Projects

PROJECT	COUNTY	HIGHLIGHTS
<b>Beautification Projects</b>		
Morton Co. Courthouse Beautific'n	Morton	Grew flowers in pots and garden beds at the Courthouse.
Oliver County JMG Program	Oliver	Beautified a main entrance to Center and its Civic Center.
<b>Community Gardens</b>		
Good Earth Gardening Club	Grand Forks	Kids at the Air Force Base grew vegetables and herbs.
Growing Together Comm. Garden	Cass	Learned about gardening and shared produce with needy.
Mountrail Co. Community Garden	Mountrail	Developed skills in gardening and donated produce.
On the Move to Gardening Fun	Stutsman	Learned about growing food and eating a nutritious diet.
Plant the Seed, Growth and Learning	Stutsman	Learned about gardening and ate healthy snacks.
Ramsey County JMG Classes	Ramsey	Grew and tasted vegetables; shared produce with schools.
Share Garden	Grand Forks	Developed gardening skills and learned conservation.
Towner Co. Community Garden	Towner	Learned about gardening; donated food; supported arts.
<b>Day Care Gardens</b>		
Fessenden Child Care Center	Wells	Learned how to garden and enjoyed healthy snacks.
Head Start Children's Gardens	Benson	Grew and shared organic vegetables.
Langdon Day Care Garden	Cavalier	Learned to grow food and the health benefits of veggies.
On the Move with Gardening Fun!	Cass	Grew, harvested and enjoyed vegetables and herbs.
Rolette Community Care Center	Rolette	Learned how plants grow and sampled lots of vegetables.
Size-Wise Gardening	Burleigh	Learned how to grow veggies and their value to health.
<b>Environmental Stewardship Projects</b>		
Chahinkapa Zoo Gardens	Richland	Grew vegetables for zoo animals; beautified zoo grounds.
Kids, Compost, Crops, Consum'n	Morton	Learned about the food cycle and the importance of soil.
MetiGROWshe Garden	Bottineau	Learned sustainable gardening practices; shared produce.
Pollinator Garden	Cass	Learned food systems and ways to shape social change.
Pollinator Project	Walsh	Started a beekeeping operation at school.



PROJECT	COUNTY	HIGHLIGHTS
<b>Food Security Projects</b>		
Gethsemane Garden	Cass	Developed gardening skills and donated harvest to pantry.
Hay Creek Hunger Free Garden	Burleigh	Grew over 2 tons of potatoes for pantries and shelters.
McKenzie County JMG Program	McKenzie	Grew, cooked vegetables; shared the harvest with a pantry.
Produce for Our Community	Dickey	Improved an orchard and donated produce to community.
Produce for Wahpeton Food Pantry	Richland	Used innovative techniques to grow vegetables for pantry.
<b>Home Projects</b>		
Garden Fun	Ransom	Grew vegetables from garden kits.
Growing Sunflowers and Smiles	State	Grew and evaluated dwarf and cut sunflowers.
Home Garden Variety Trials	State	Evaluated promising vegetable, herb and flower varieties.
Project Popeye	State	Grew and evaluated spinach and other fall vegetables.
Unique Strawberry Gardens	Stutsman	Designed containers and grew strawberries in them.
<b>School Gardens</b>		
Central Middle School Gardens	Ramsey	Grew vegetables for the school's lunch program.
Clara Barton Hawthorne School	Cass	Constructed raised beds; grew vegetables and flowers.
Emerado School Garden Boxes	Grand Forks	Built raised beds to support educational programs.
Hankinson Elementary Garden	Richland	Learned to grow vegetables; shared harvest with students.
Kids and Plants	Burke	Learned to identify seeds of field crops and vegetables.
Nuts About Nature Sensory Garden	Dickey	Built garden where people experience and learn of nature.
Project Gro-R-Own	Cass	Grew vegetables for needy families and their school.
Sunny Sensory Garden	Pembina	Learned about plants and discovered new, healthy foods.
Valley City Jefferson School	Barnes	Learned about horticulture, harvesting and eating healthy.
<b>Special Needs Projects</b>		
Can't Contain Myself	Stutsman	Disabled youth grew plants in container gardens.
Critter Fitter Grow & Share	Griggs	Produced fruits, veggies and flowers to share with elderly.
Garden to Table Community Serv.	Ward	Youth-at-risk learned how to grow vegetables.
Gardening with Seniors	Ransom	Built a raised garden structure for a local nursing home.
Growing & Giving Smiles	Burleigh	Grew flowers in a community garden.
Therapeutic Gardening	Burleigh	Developed skills in gardening; enjoyed therapeutic benefits.



# Feedback From Project Leaders

Several project leaders shared personal comments in reports. In most cases, these were expressions of gratitude. Here is a sampling of comments:

“Thank you for the opportunity to get funding to do these gardening projects and make a lifetime impression on youth. These skills can be used long into adulthood.”

*Lynnette Vachal, NDSU Ext. – Mountrail Co.*

“I am very grateful for these funds as it provided an amazing learning opportunity for the child care center/ preschool.”

*Katie Johnke, Bismarck-Burleigh Public Health*

“Our success happens because we are able to receive funds from your organization. The Hankinson community benefits in so many ways. The greatest benefit is when I work with the students in the summer weeding the garden. They are socializing, laughing and working hard. It is rewarding when adults come and volunteer their time to make this meaningful and fun for the students. Thank you a million times for allowing us to be part of your Junior Master Gardener Program.”

*Anne Biewer, Hankinson Elementary School*

“Thank you so much to the ND Junior Master Gardener Program for providing us the resources to teach students about horticulture and healthy lifestyles. This was another great year for Jefferson Elementary students in connecting with our community partners and serving our elderly community.”

*Josh Johnson, Jefferson Elementary School.*



*Our team of JMG project leaders are helping youth to enjoy healthy, active lives.*

“The garden was a huge bonus for us this year with COVID ... This year the garden meant so much more. Our garden time was so appreciated; it also provided therapeutic benefits for my staff and the children. The garden was so needed during all of the challenges and stresses of summer and the uncertainty of COVID. Thank you for the difference you made for our community, our program, and our children! I am grateful for all you have done to make this happen.”

*Tammy Mewes, Jamestown Park & Recreation*

“Our old garden boxes completely fell apart. Without these funds we would not have been able to continue our gardens in the spring. Thank you so much!”

*Jill Burgard, Clara Barton Hawthorne School*

“The gardening funds have allowed us to donate home-grown food to local food pantries.”

*Julie Garden-Robinson, Gethsemane Episc. Cath.*



“This project would not be possible without JMG funds. We appreciate the continued support of this program even through these uncertain times. It made a tremendous impact on many. Thank you.”

*Cindy Olson, NDSU Extension – Ramsey Co.*

“We are so very grateful for the grant money that we have received. It gives us the tools we need to involve more children in volunteer opportunities. Youth are very proud of working with their hands in the outdoors and watching things grow and making the zoo more beautiful for all of our 75,000 visitors each year.”

*Joan Zettel, Chabinkapa Zoo*

“We want to thank NDSU for making this project successful in our community. We have had the community boxes for many years and the locals and visitors continue to comment on how appreciative they are to have projects like this and see the youth learning about service while keeping the community spirits strong.”

*Rick Schmidt, NDSU Extension – Oliver Co.*

“Our group is so grateful for the opportunities made available with this grant. We plan to build on what we learned in coming years and are warmed with the relationships built this year. Thank you from all of us!”

*Carolyn Abraham, Critter Fitter 4-H Club*

“It has been a delight being engaged with NDSU’s Jr. Master Gardener program over the years. Though the funding is small, its being consistently available has provided our program with an element of stability.”

*Sandy Thompson, Plains Art Museum*

“Thank you for the grant as it allows us a positive activity with our youth they can utilize in their daily lives.”

*Erika Brorby, North Central Juvenile Drug Court*

“Thank you for the funding for this gardening curriculum for young children. We truly believe that we are helping children love gardening that will carry through for a lifetime!”

*Debra Habedank, NDSU Ctr. for Child Devel.*

“The funds for this project are invaluable to the success of the project. ... The students and parents are excited each spring to do this project. ... Thank you.”

*Brian Zimprich, NDSU Ext. – Ransom Co.*

“These opportunities are awesome, and I hope we can find additional ways to add to our outdoor learning labs for our students.”

*Daniel Spellerberg, SE Reg. Career and Tech. Ctr.*

Our program is run 100% on grant funds and donations, so this funding is crucial for us! ... Thank you so much! ... The kids were more excited than ever to be at camp and active in the garden after the spring lockdown.”

*Laura Halvorson, Metigoshe Ministries*

“I just want to express how grateful we are to have received these funds from the Junior Master Gardener Program. Our goal coming into this year was to make our Therapeutic Gardening Program more meaningful for the children we serve. Despite some challenging times and setbacks, with the support we received we have done just that and more. We learned so much along the way and have some great ideas for next year to continue to improve our program. Thank you!”

*Talbott Pollert, Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch*

## Contact

For more info on the North Dakota Junior Master Gardener Program, go to [www.ag.ndsu.edu/jrmastergardener/](http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/jrmastergardener/)



## Credits

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## Acknowledgements

The Leadership Team expresses their gratitude to the North Dakota State Legislature for its support of the North Dakota Junior Master Gardener Program. Photos were provided by project leaders. Icons and icon elements are from [www.flaticon.com](http://www.flaticon.com).

## More Information

Please contact a member of the Leadership Team or go to our website: <http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/jrmastergardener/>. An Annual Report is available that includes photos and details of all projects.

January 2021

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