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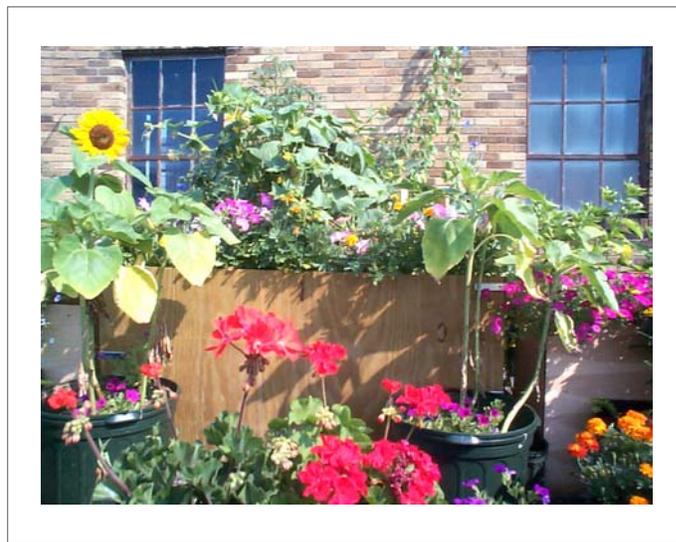
Special points of interest:

- Session Reviews
- Garden Pictures
- Upcoming News
- How To Get Your Copy of the *Informer*



ROOFTOP GARDEN IN BLOOM

The OIC Rooftop Garden is in bloom. This spring the staff and students began working on an idea that was first thought of by Jeff Woodyard, Executive Director. His idea was to turn the roof of the New Covenant Community Center, in which the OIC program is housed, into an expansive rooftop garden. Initially the garden would be used as a learning environment for children and parents in the family literacy program. Students would learn team-building, planning and nurturing activities that they could use in a home, workplace and community environment. Staff and students were asked to plant flowers and vegetables in various containers on the roof.



A small sampling of the flowers and vegetables on the roof of OIC.

For this initial year of the rooftop garden we have created a small-scale version of what we hope will eventually fill the entire roof. The roof covers an entire city block. After we see how much effort, how many resources and what

results we can expect from this trial version of the garden, we will know better what we are able to do next year. Our hope is that we can not only use this project as a learning experience for our students, but also offer people in the adjoining neighborhoods an opportu-

WE STILL NEED GARDENING SUPPLIES AND GARDENERS

nity to have their own rooftop flower or vegetable plots.

Robert Harden, parent educator, for the family literacy pro-

grams is studying to become a master gardener. We are using his expertise as well as the advice of others to guide us through this fun project. The Penn State Cooperative Exchange, Lowes, and especially the

staff at OIC have been very generous with their time, resources and advice. We have received many donations of plants, potting soil, containers, and gardening supplies. Below is a list of items that we still have a

FROM DISTRESSED TO DESIRABLE— THESE PLANTS HAVE BEEN RESSURECTED

need for:

- *Seeds*
- *Potting soil*
- *Water containers*
- *Pots*

- *Dairy Crates*
- *Wooden Skids*
- *Perennial Plants*

rharden@tricountyoc.org.



These beautiful flowers were *distressed* when they were first planted.

If you would like more information about the rooftop garden project, or if you are interested in visiting the garden or helping to maintain the garden, please email Robert Harden at

Look for an update on the OIC Annual Employment and Training Conference Soon.

“Next year we hope to produce enough vegetables to feed our families and enough flowers and plants to hold an annual fund raising event.”

STRATEGIC PLANNING HAS BEGUN

At the annual staff meeting attendees were asked to brainstorm and come up with suggestions on how we could improve the OIC program. The initial results from this activity are listed below. Remember, this is just a

random listed of thoughts that were generated at the meeting. These ideas, thoughts, and suggestions will be further refined and turned into action steps at a later date. For right now, we have placed the suggested into these categories that we felt represented the majority

of brainstorming ideas: *Facility, Staff Development, Technology, Personnel, Service Delivery, and Resources.*

The brainstorming process that took place at the annual meeting is

INPUT FOR THE STRATEGIC PLAN STILL NEEDED

merely the first step in creating what we hope will be a comprehensive **Strategic Plan** for OIC. The management team will review the brainstorming suggestions and present them to the Board of Directors for consideration and input into the final plan. Similar brain-



A self-contained garden in a wading pool.

storming sessions will be conducted with our customers and our collaborators. If you have any suggestions that you would like to add to the brainstorming list, feel free to email me at jwoodyard@tricountyoc.org.

Facility

- Permanent sites
- Adequate facilities
- Student lounge
- Physical environment
- Phone accessibility
- Heat/Air conditioning
- Cleanliness
- Adequate classroom space
- Sanitation – fresh supplies
- Positive learning environment – lights paint

- Door bell, intercom system
- Better phone system
- Pay phone for students
- Dedicated staff space
- Designated eating area
- Ward site – physical layout is crowded. No place for class for students who do not have privileges. Ward staff too busy to bring them to class in the designated classroom.

Staff Development

- Staff training and evaluations
- Better communications and teamwork
- Staff team building (communications)
- Mentors
- Professionalism – professional courtesy
- Willingness to pitch in



Can you spot the strawberries?

THE STRATEGIC PLAN WILL GUIDE SERVICE IMPROVEMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE UPDATE

- (copy/fax paper, answering phone, emptying trash)
- OIC staff keeping abreast of current education trends, research and legislation
- How does our program fit into the parameters set by PDE, i.e., hours,

- numbers
- Political action training
- Sensitivity and Diversity Training
- Socialize more with co-workers
- Staff committed to excellence

Technology

- Provide equal opportu-

“The brainstorming process that took place at the annual meeting...”

- nity to technology.
- Easier way to communicate between staff members and bus driver (cell phone or beeper)
- OIC staff understanding/know-how of current technology
- Funding of and integration of updated resources and technology in the classroom.
- Resources – computers

- Update technology
- Web based service provider - GED

Personnel

- Promptness of staff
- Dress code for staff
- Agency sexual harassment statement

P



Somebody even platted okra.

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S

ervice Delivery

• Maintain a workable number of clients

- Increase enrollment
- True collaboration with agencies
- Creative ways to motivate people to stick with program
- Retention
- Paperwork – record keeping
- Special resource committee or onsite counselor able to attend to certain needs of our students in-house
- Promptness of students
- Student empowerment
- Employability skills
- Dress code for students
- Recruitment/retention of students
- Meeting ever changing needs of students
- Understanding students' perspectives
- Getting students to retain knowledge
- Promoting self-sufficiency
- Curriculum development and assessment in the classroom. (Monitoring student progress in

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS BEGINS

the classroom – not just the TABE)

- Resources newspapers and text materials
- Clients – some parts of the curriculum can't be assessed for example, resumes, computers, money management, telephone skills
- Have to compete with other programs at the hospital.
- Focus on women's issues to empower women.
- Minority history
- Look at serving the ESL population, aging



There's plenty of room for your garden box, planter or self-contained pool. Call Bob Harden.

- population
- Provide student counseling
- Field trips to large urban communities to see education, arts and culture opportunities.

R

esources

- Easy access to and knowledge of supplies
- Petty Cash fund with accountability
- Appropriate children's books