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Windfields hope to start more home gardens

By Ana Pautassi

If you're driving north of Durham College, you may come upon a field guarded by scarecrows. Don't be alarmed, even though it is a month before Halloween, the scarecrows are only there to keep animals off the new community gardens.

The Windfields Community and Teaching Garden is going to be showing citizens how to grow their own gardens and become more independent. The 10 acres of land were donated by Windfields Farm, birthplace to the famous racehorse Northern Dancer, and are now a home to 27 community plots and 32 teaching plots measuring 5 feet by 30 feet.

Joan Kerr, president of the Foundation for Building Sustainable Communities, hopes this new program will help citizens become self-sufficient. "It's just amazing," said Kerr. The teaching gardens will be commencing their classes in December and will begin teaching how to get seeds ready for the planting season and how to make creams with organic lavender. They will also have dinners for up to eight people where they cook food using herbs grown in the garden.

One of the many things citizens learn from the community garden is how to camouflage vegetables with flowers of the same colour. This gives different levels of the same colour, said Kerr.

Everything on the plot is organic, so they are also taught which flowers repel specific pests and which attract specific pests that will help the vegetable near the flower.

"(The main purpose is to) get people to grow food in their own garden," said Kerr.

This year's harvest from the teaching plots was donated to the Simcoe Hall Settlement House, which will now be able to serve organic food other than non-perishable food.

They are currently working on a community partnership to plant lots for food banks.

Along with the donated plots there was also an abandoned farmhouse on the property that they were able to renovate using recycled paint and donated furniture.

The renovation cost less than \$200 and showed citizens that renovations do not have to be expensive, said Kerr.

"It just needed some tender, loving care," said Kerr when she explained the renovation.

The garden was started in May and is located on Simcoe Street.

There will be a new community garden built in the spring of 2011 located at Legends Centre on Harmony Road. It will contain 80 plots that measure 4 feet



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IT'S THE GREAT PUMPKIN: Joan Kerr, seen here with a pumpkin, is the president of the Foundation for Building Sustainable Communities. She plans to invite local children to the Teaching Garden to carve pumpkins.

by 10 feet.

The Foundation for Building Sustainable Communities has also begun a new project called Reelfood that shows screenings of food documentaries. The films motivate people to grow organic food, make people aware of food-related issues, to buy local food, and how to cook nutritionally.