



Washoe County Leadership Academy 2023

Group 2 - Community Project: Rancho San Rafael Community Garden Demonstration Beds

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Volunteers of Washoe County

Background and Need

The Community Garden at Rancho San Rafael Regional Park is located within the Nevada Farms and Families area, next to the Wilbur D May Museum. The garden was started by the Park Rangers in 2021 to give members of the public a space to garden and grow their own produce. In 2022 Rangers partnered with UNR Master Gardeners to give workshops to community members, educating garden visitors on Nevada gardening practices. During harvest, all extra vegetables and herbs are donated to Reno Sparks Gospel Mission.

The garden has become very popular, resulting in a robust gardening and educational space, with many volunteers.

A need for demonstration beds was identified by the Park Rangers and Master Gardeners, that would allow for educational and learning spaces, without disrupting the structure and integrity of the larger working garden.

Project Overview

The Washoe County Leadership Academy chose to work with Rancho San Rafael Park for the following reasons:

- Bring visibility to the garden by promoting the space, educational opportunities, and benefits of gardening
- Support sustainable, healthy lifestyles by contributing to the construction of new demonstration beds
- Promote volunteerism in Washoe County

A "Volunteer Workday" was planned, and took place on April 8th, 2023. Forty (40) volunteers participated in building and installing all new garden boxes, creating signage, placing weed barriers, and preparing crop rows.

The \$5000 grant was used for supplies to build the demonstration beds and prepare the garden for use. With an additional donation from Western Nevada Supply, the garden expansion was fully completed. The following supplies were purchased for the expansion efforts:

- Irrigation supplies-all drip irrigation on timers
- Soil
- Weed barrier cloth between all crop rows
- Supplies to build 6 new demonstration garden boxes
- Vegetable and herb seeds
- Signage on all garden beds

Value of the Project

Gardening is more than growing tomatoes and pretty flowers – it's therapeutic, it's learning new skills, it's providing fresh alternatives, and it's fun! Rancho San Rafael Park and UNR's Extension Master Gardener program designs programming to teach research-based Nevada gardening practices through educational presentations, workshops and community events. The new demonstration beds will allow the park to provide and expand upon these educational opportunities. With the growing garden, the park will also have the ability to offer more volunteer opportunities.



Next Steps

A new annual event has been designated as "Annual Harvest Day" – a Fall event for volunteers who participated in planting and caring for the crops during the growing season to come together for harvesting the crops. Additionally, this event will provide healthy food choices to the Reno Sparks Gospel Mission and other community members.