

Community Assistantship Program

**Big Stone Lake Food Shelf C-G-B Elementary Fruit
Tree Project**

Prepared in partnership with
Big Stone Lake Food Shelf

Prepared by
Megan Mathey
Research Assistant

University of Minnesota
December, 2009

CAP Report 148

December 2009

CAP is a cross-college, cross-campus University of Minnesota initiative coordinated by the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs.

This is a publication of the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA), an all-University applied research and technology center at the University of Minnesota that connects faculty and students with community organizations and public institutions working on significant public policy issues in Minnesota. The content of this report is the responsibility of the author and is not necessarily endorsed by CAP, CURA or the University of Minnesota.

© 2009 by The Regents of the University of Minnesota. This publication may be reproduced in its entirety (except photographs or other materials reprinted here with permission from other sources) in print or electronic form, for noncommercial educational and nonprofit use only, provided that two copies of the resulting publication are sent to the CURA editor at the address below and that the following acknowledgment is included: "Reprinted with permission of the University of Minnesota's Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA)." For information regarding commercial reprints or reproduction of portions of this publication, contact the CURA editor at the address below.

This publication may be available in alternate formats upon request.

Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA)
University of Minnesota
330 HHH Center
301--19th Avenue South
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455
Phone: (612) 625-1551
Fax: (612) 626-0273
E-mail: cura@umn.edu
Web site: <http://www.cura.umn.edu>

The University of Minnesota is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to its programs, facilities, and employment without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status, or sexual orientation.

Big Stone Lake Food Shelf C-G-B Elementary Fruit Tree Project overview
Megan Mathey

In an effort for community sustainability in a time when economic struggles are rising and the cost of food and fuel are increasing, a project under the name C-G-B Elementary Fruit Tree Project began at the start of the year 2009. Clinton, Graceville and Beardsley, three communities making up Big Stone County, MN was the area of focus for this pilot this project along with the two Hutterite communities (Big Stone Colony with 19 students and Lismore Colony with 22 students). Big Stone Elementary School has about 190 students in k-6th. Out of this 190, 177 students participated. These children were each provided with a fruit tree, allowing each family to grow, harvest, and eat fresh sustainable food.

The idea for the C-G-B project arose from Kathy Draeger after an effort the Big Stone County Food Shelf put forward to promote nutrition in fall 2008. They provided every student with a \$30 voucher for healthy summer food. That project got Kathryn (director of C-G-B project and who's daughter was in 2nd grade at C-G-B at the time) thinking that a more sustainable idea would be providing each student with a fruit tree which cost roughly the same or in this case, less (about \$18.00 per tree) with the idea that healthy fruit for the child's family as well as the community would be gained throughout the life of the tree.

With the help of many volunteer individuals, this project went forth. Each tree was delivered to the children's homes and planted for them. From early accounts this project has and will benefit the community of Big Stone County greatly, as well as serve as an example to other communities and food shelves to pursue in the future.

As an environmental horticulture student at the University of Minnesota, my goal for this project was expressing the importance of horticulture. After spending a day at C-G-B

Elementary school talking with the children about the importance of trees, horticulture and sustainability, as well as talking to the students when the volunteers and I were out planting the students trees, I feel like this goal was accomplished. Other tasks of mine included; ordering fruit trees, putting a delivery plan in order for planting the trees, making fliers and survey (as well as compiling its results) for the families tree of choice, meeting with the students, and providing a brief planting lesson to the volunteers before our planting excursion.

The experience I gained working on this project was great. It is very rare someone gets to go through the entire process of choosing a tree, planting it at the house of an extremely excited child, having a conversation with them about how important this tree to the environment and what it means for the community. This project and other projects like these are not possible without the help of many wonderful people. Thanks to the following:

Contributors

Kathryn Draeger – Project coordinator and proposal presenter and organizer
Kyle Dreke – C-G-B Elementary 3rd grade teacher and organizer
Megan Mathey – UMN Horticulture Undergrad and student organizer
Lou's Greenhouse – Ordering trees for the project through Baileys Nursery
Big Stone County Food Shelf – Support in funding this project
CURA – Center for Urban Regional Affairs – Funding my position
Volunteers from Big Stone County to plant the trees at each child's house