

Dear LSMGA Members,

Thank you very much for your financial support of my work at the Catlin Green Garden in Superior. I am writing to update you about how the \$120 grant has helped support the work at the garden and to tell you about my hopes and plans for the future of the garden.

First, I used the \$120 grant to rent a sod cutter and, with the help of a community volunteer, cut away the top 3 inches from the four most weed-infested beds at the Catlin Green garden. I then spent two full days working to clear the cut off from the largest plot and one of the smaller plots. On 2 May 2015, the first volunteer day I organized at the Catlin Green Garden, Master Gardener Coordinator Jane Anklam helped me finish clearing the larger plot and also began clearing a smaller plot. I then returned the next day with a community volunteer to lay newspaper/cardboard mulch, sawdust, and aged horse manure over the largest plot and covered the whole plot with nailed down tarps. I felt optimistic that at the very least, this larger plot would be well-managed for weeds come planting time in 2016. I continued to work away at peeling away the cut layers from the three remaining beds and planting and tending the Master Gardener plot.

I held a second Volunteer Day at the garden on May 30, 2015 (photos attached). It was a successful gathering of current gardeners and volunteers from the community, the Master Gardener program, and the Superior Housing Authority. In addition to getting the chance to meet one another and enjoying a lovely selection of potluck snacks, we worked together to continue weeding efforts, making very good headway on one of the smaller plots. It was at this event that I learned from the Superior Housing Authority garden contact that two SHA residents were interested in gardening the large, weeded and covered plot. I then returned on Sunday, May 31 to remove the tarps and degraded paper materials from the large plot. The mulching efforts appeared to be working very nicely at controlling and killing back the quack grass and other weeds.

On June 30, I participated in a third volunteer event at the Catlin Green Garden. This one organized by the SHA contact brought roughly 20 youth leaders from the area to help weed the unused garden plots. I worked alongside the SHA contact and the youth volunteers to clear the 2 remaining unused smaller beds and began work clearing the final larger bed. It was at this time that I had the chance to talk with the SHA contact about how to more effectively manage the quack grass infestation at the Catlin Green Garden. We noticed that, unfortunately, in the time since May 31, no gardeners came to plant the bed that had been covered by tarps, and it has since

be reinfested with quack grass. The SHA contact agreed that she would like to protect the work of the volunteers that day and set a deadline of early July for resident gardeners to plant or forfeit their access to the garden beds for the year.

I returned to Catlin Green on July 7 to find that no planting had occurred in any of the recently cleared plots and reported these findings to the SHA contact. I recommended to her that we should cover the unused beds until spring 2016 to try to control the quack grass situation. I asked if SHA could pay for garden fabric to cover the beds and suggested that if not, we could probably pull together enough paper, cardboard and old tarps to cover the cleared beds. I offered my assistance with all of the above suggestions and am now just waiting to hear back from her.

While I have experienced a few disappointments in my experiences working with the SHA's Catlin Green Garden, I have also had many successes. For instance, I have enjoyed meeting and working with the four households who are very successfully gardening plots at the Catlin Green. I also better understand some of the challenges of building and maintaining community gardens, and have been able to share some ideas with the SHA contact for her agency's use when thinking about how to continue supporting the Catlin Green Garden. I have also learned a great deal about the wishes and challenges of people from low-income households wishing to participate in community gardens, both through my direct work at garden and from a survey of SHA residents that I completed in May 2015 (report attached). Finally, I have begun thinking and documenting different ideas for how to better manage the work load and expectations of community gardens, and how to meet the access challenges for all kinds of potential gardeners. I plan to share my findings and suggestions with LSMGA when my report is complete (estimated fall 2015).

In conclusion, my work at the Catlin Green Garden continues to bear fruit – some expected and some unexpected. Thank you for helping to support this journey.

Sincerely,

Trudy Fredericks, Douglas County Master Gardener