

Mill Street Rainbow Garden

The Mill Street garden area was originally a field of weeds and rocks, and the first year consisted of creating the garden from the ground up. A VISTA volunteer and Shasta County Public Health staff planned the layout, recruited community volunteers, and solicited donations from community businesses. They received more than \$10,000.00 in goods and services. The Redding Home Depot adopted the garden and has provided ongoing support by bringing goods, volunteers, and workshops to the garden 2-3 times each year. Teens from the Anderson Teen Center volunteered to clear the land and participate in various ongoing garden activities. Members of the Anderson Garden Club and the Shasta College Master Gardening Program offered their expertise and help. Community members built signs for each planting bed. Raised beds were built and sidewalks for the handicapped were poured. Fences went up, water gardens were donated, birdbaths and bird houses arrived, a bamboo teepee teased vines up its' poles, seeds and seedlings were planted, and the garden began to flourish.



The Mill Street Rainbow Garden became a teaching tool for the on-site daycare. They started with 4 small beds, and now they tend 2 additional larger beds where they grow tomatoes, strawberries, jalapeno peppers, zucchini, carrots, and much more. The children plant and eat the veggies they grow, making salsa, singing songs about gardening, learning about beneficial bugs, and they are amazed at how one seed can grow into a ten foot tall sunflower. The teachers have created a beautiful garden book for each year. The garden has been a wonderful addition to their curriculum, and it provides healthy snacks for children that may not have healthy foods available to them at home. There is a Spring Planting Workshop and a Harvest Event that brings the community and parents of the day care children together for fun. Nutrition education is provided along with activities focused on healthy eating and physical activity at both events.

Before the garden, many of the apartment residents would not venture out. As time went by, residents adopted garden beds and began enjoying the benefits of growing their own fruits and vegetables. This activity helped them to socialize and learn from each other as well as providing them with healthy foods and physical activity.

Some of the many partners who contributed to this project included: Shasta County Public Health, the Anderson Partnership for Healthy Children, Shasta County Office of Education – Early Learning Centers, Resources for Rural Community Development, Anderson Garden Club, Shasta College Master Gardening Program, *Network for a Healthy California*, University of California Extension, Anderson Middle School Service Learning Class, Anderson Teen Center, Teens at Heart, Shasta First Five, Redding Rancheria, Good News Rescue Mission, over two dozen businesses and many individual community members.

