

Local Gardening Initiative of Carbondale (LOGIC)

Project ID# 15SP103

Award Dates August 2015- August 2016

Total Funds Used: \$18,992.00

LOGIC began in 2009 with the mission of providing organically grown produce to students at a more economical price than what was in the stores and to become self-supporting. The reality was that without retained trained leadership this would not be possible. The high tunnel and the permaculture garden require specialized knowledge to run efficiently. Since the start of LOGIC the Student Sustainable Farm has come into being to provide local sustainably-grown food on a larger scale for the campus dining halls. To help support the Farm staff, which includes permanent leadership, a Farm market table and CSAs were established. The Farm sells their produce at market prices. Our LOGIC market table then when I arrived was selling Farm and LOGIC produce on campus at market prices, no longer fulfilling their original mission.

It became clear that we needed a new mission statement to reflect our current realities. We decided that the LOGIC RSO would provide a space and technical assistance for students to experience growing their own food using sustainable practices both in home-style gardens and field settings, be able to take home food that they grew, and hopefully become life-long gardeners with an appreciation of and respect for our natural environment. Our student volunteers love coming out to work in the gardens and cheerfully participate even when the work is hard, dirty, cold, or blazing hot.

I began with LOGIC July 1, 2015, about five weeks before my official GA position started by taking over for the previous GA who had graduated. I had the fortunate dilemma of having \$8000 to spend in this time frame from the 2014-2015 Award (thank you Green Fund for extending it by three more weeks!). I had been informed that the next year's budget for supplies was only \$200 and probably \$0 for the following year. Being brand new to LOGIC it was a scramble to determine what might possibly be needed now and for the next two years in such a short time and to get it ordered or purchased.

One of the first things I noticed was the inordinate amount of hours spent weeding our three spaces - front beds, high tunnel, and permaculture garden – relative to the amount of food produced in them. My goal then became to make the space as efficient as possible, especially since the GA position was to be phased out and eventually only RSO volunteers would be available to organize and perform the work. Crab grass, Johnson grass, and Bermuda grass were problematic in all three spaces. Straw mulch helped with the crab and Johnson grasses, but just encouraged the Bermuda grass. Cedar beds raised one foot off the ground and filled with new soil would be a big part of the solution.

With our 2014-2015 funds we were able to purchase enough cedar to build eight 4' x 16' beds for our front plot and two 4' x 48' beds for the high tunnel, along with the tools needed to build them. We also purchased garden fabric to lay in the aisles between the beds to contain the ground vegetation so that we did not need to spend time trimming between the beds. Once a month or so I trim around the perimeter. It takes one person less than thirty minutes a week to

weed the eight front beds when the plants are small, and much less now that the plants shade much of the soil.

With myself and our two summer workers we were able to prepare the ground, and to get the beds built, installed, and filled with soil in time for our Fall 2015 RSO Welcome Week Fun in the Field Day. We had twelve people that day, including several who had never planted anything before, mixing in soil amendments and planting cabbages, kale, spinach, and lettuce. We visit as we work about how things are done with consideration of the environment.

Due to an error in the grant application line item for Graduate Assistant pay for the year 2015-2016 there was about a thousand dollars extra allotted to LOGIC. The Green Fund was generous to allow us to spend these funds to purchase bamboo barrier as a solution to the problem of Bermuda grass growing under and into the high tunnel, and to pay for a summer 2016 worker. Our volunteers are mostly gone through the busiest garden season.

Throughout the fall and spring we had wonderful volunteer participation for our weekly volunteer hours from 2-4 p.m. on Fridays, even on cold winter days! We would have between five and eleven volunteers each week on Friday afternoons and a few would come other hours during the week.

We had a full slate of officers for the fall and the spring who were very dedicated to showing up each week, having a good time, and helping to promote LOGIC.

After the crops in the high tunnel finished for the 2015 season we cleaned it out. When the spring semester started we began sifting through the soil to get out Bermuda grass roots, stems, and stolons. We spent at least four weeks sifting through soil. Students learned some of the more tedious aspects of gardening without herbicides. In our RSO meetings we decided what to plant and when to plant as spring approached. After getting the first plantings in for spring we turned our attention back to the high tunnel to prepare to install bamboo barrier around the perimeter of the high tunnel to prevent Bermuda grass from creeping in again from the outside. This project was only partially finished by the time summer 2016 arrived. Our summer volunteers and workers helped finish up. We have one raised bed installed in the high tunnel ready to be filled by volunteers on our Fun in the Field Day FL2016.

LOGIC maintains a facebook page with regular updates posted as to what is happening in the garden and letting our followers know of any community event related to gardening and sustainability. In the fall of 2015 we reserved a display case each week in the Student Center. During the 2015-2016 school year LOGIC participated in tabling at several sustainability and nutritional events on campus. We volunteered as servers and kitchen preppers at the Food Works annual dinner. We also took a field trip to the Sufi group's Dayempur Farm.

In the fall we had a market table in front of Faner. In the spring we decided to forego having a market table. The vast majority of the produce we sold during the fall semester was for the Student Farm and this required 4-5 hours of volunteer time sitting at a table in the middle of the day, along with set up and take down time. It wound up being the same few people due to class and schedule conflicts and LOGIC reaped very little for the time input. The students decided instead to donate our produce that was not eaten by the students to food pantries and to focus volunteer time at the garden.

We were able to take many pounds of greens, carrots, and onions, and a few pounds of beets, cabbage, broccoli, and peas to the Murphysboro Youth Center this spring and summer. Sharing the bounty of one's garden is one of the more rewarding aspects of sustainable living.

Our production from the front beds has ranged from poor to great so far this year, with many lessons learned. We have kept regular garden records so that those who follow us in the coming years can benefit. I have also spent many hours compiling manuals and record-keeping notebooks for in-coming officers so that the transitions each year will take much less energy and less time away from what we really enjoy doing – being in the garden!

Our posters this coming year will acknowledge the support of the Green Fund for LOGIC and we verbally share this information in RSO meetings. We will make an effort in future events on campus and with the public to ensure that the Green Fund has been acknowledged to raise awareness of its existence and the potential for others to participate. We are forever grateful for the opportunity LOGIC has had to benefit from the Green Fund!

I am not sure of anything I would have done differently other than small things that occurred from taking in a large amount of information in a short amount of time. By having two years to transition the LOGIC RSO from a GA to a non-GA led organization I feel I am on track to complete before I leave. The front beds will be the sole responsibility of the RSO and the high tunnel and permaculture garden will be under the direction of the Student Sustainable Farm director. The permaculture garden we hope to transform to a sitting garden with beds for perennials such as rhubarb and artichoke. The LOGIC volunteers will continue to assist with the Student Sustainable Farm and the Farm will continue to provide technical assistance to LOGIC for their growing spaces.

Pictures on following pages.



Installing our raised cedar beds in the front plot



Planting cabbage at FL2015 Fun in the Field Day



FL2015 Fun in the Field Day group photo



Harvesting our cabbage



LOGIC Display case in Student Center



Helping in the field



SP2016 LOGIC Officers



Sifting out Bermuda grass



Seeding trays to take to green house



Digging out for the bamboo barrier



Installing barrier



Digging crew cleaning up



Field trip to Dayempur Farm



A few good beets, poor germination



Great carrot crops



Preparing space for new bed



Green beans, okra, strawberries, and more



Close to finishing first high tunnel raised bed



SIU Student Gardens



2016 LOGIC Officers



Come join us!

Learn, dig, plant, make new friends!

3373 West Pleasant Hill Road



LOGIC SIU Student Garden



SIU Student Gardens

What we do:

*Work in the fields of
Sustainable Farm*

Make gardens



Plant



Pull Weeds



Harvest



*And EAT what we
harvest!*



3373 W. Pleasant Hill Road

 LOGIC SIU Student Garden