

**NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services
600 E. Boulevard Ave., Bismarck ND 58505-02501**

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Grant helps grow gardening program for people with disabilities

BISMARCK, N.D. – A community gardening program for adults with disabilities started by a master gardener is growing in Bismarck with support from the State Council on Developmental Disabilities.

Pat Weinberg started the **G**ardening **R**ecreational **O**pportunity **W**ith Friends (**GROW**) program, last year with five adults with special needs and four mentors. Her goal was to promote a healthier lifestyle for people with developmental disabilities by mentoring them as they raised and harvested their own fruits and vegetables.

Recently, the council awarded a small innovation grant to help Weinberg double the number of participants and mentor gardeners and also add a nutrition education and food preparation class. A retired family and consumer science teacher is leading the class.

“I have a son with developmental disabilities,” Weinberg said. “I know that gardening benefits him and can benefit others by providing access to healthy, affordable fresh foods, encouraging better food choices, and creating an opportunity to socialize and enjoy the outdoors, while getting some moderate exercise.”

May 4 Informational Meeting

Weinberg invites interested young adults with disabilities and their parents or guardians, as well as gardeners who want to be mentors to attend a “meet and greet” organizational meeting on Monday, May 4, 2015, from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m., at First Presbyterian Church, 214 E. Thayer Ave., south entrance, in Bismarck. Attendees can register for this year’s program, enjoy refreshments during a short informational meeting, and start their own plants.

From May through September, GROW participants will prepare, plant, weed, water, maintain, and harvest the garden. Participants are expected to garden once a week at the project’s community garden plot located at the Burleigh County Fairgrounds and to attend a monthly nutrition and food preparation class at the church.

For more information, contact Weinberg at samawe@bis.midco.net or 701-220-8859.

The State Council on Developmental Disabilities is a planning and advisory body. It provides grants and supports efforts to increase opportunities and community inclusion for people with developmental disabilities. The council also works to empower people with disabilities and their families to access needed services and supports.

Designer Genes, a 503C nonprofit, is the grant fiscal agent. Other supporters include First Presbyterian Church of Bismarck, Burleigh County Extension, and volunteer gardeners.

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