



Community Cultivation 2009 Annual Report

“Growing independence and Self Sufficiency”

Co Directors

Beth Davison

Dana Colgan

Volunteer Coordinator

Tom Scilacci

Grant Opportunities

Diane Maltby

We'd like to thank all of our Volunteers for donating over 280 hours of their time and efforts which helped us have another successful season!

Tom Scilacci

Greg Grasso

Rusty Davison

Don Schwartz

Brooke Lightner

Lu Etta Loeber

Lucas Sherman

Kathy McCowan

Wann McNiff

Val Chambers

Gayle Noonan

Summer Laws

Janice Lawrence

Linda and John Lewis

Susan Colgan

Chris Kuxhaus

School to work transitions....

Transitioning from school into the real world is a huge plunge for every student. Stepping away from an environment that has nourished, supported and encouraged every dream, into an atmosphere of individualism and fierce competition is shocking. Whether the course be college, vocational school, or work, undoubtedly the adjustment is significant. For individuals with disabilities the impact is tenfold, magnifying the need for sustained preparation.

Therefore transition planning and preparation for students with disabilities needs to begin as early as elementary school. Recommendations taken from the 1984 conference on the school-to-work transition of disabled students stated, “Transition services would begin at the elementary school level in the form of assessment and identification of students with handicapping conditions and career awareness activities.” As students move through the educational system continued vocational preparation needs to be implemented in order to ensure greater success in school to work transitions. According to an article published in the Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation, Susie Rutkowski, et al. report, “Community work

experience and coordinated transition services are recognized as key factors in successful school-to-work transitions for young people with disabilities. However, although federal law now mandates transition assistance, such services are not consistently available. Consequently, youth with disabilities often miss out on opportunities to develop the work habits, communication skills and attitudes that employers look for when making hiring decisions.” Creating opportunities for students to develop the “soft skills” inherent in the real world is an essential aspect of vocational preparation. A program that offers vocational development and work experiences to youth with disabilities is imperative to bridge this enormous plunge and facilitate seamless transitions.



Mission Statement

Our mission is to utilize a horticulture context, to increase individuals with disabilities and at risk youth self sufficiency and quality of life by offering job skills training and vocational development while enriching our community.

Objectives

- Establish a holistic, horticulture program that addresses vocational, social and life skills development for individuals with disabilities and/or at risk youth.
- Develop individualized programs based on specific needs and assessments.
- Produce and sell organic products to the community.
- Support seamless transitions from school to work.
- Generate awareness of the abilities and benefits that individuals with disabilities contribute to the community.
- Establish a greenhouse facility to support a year round program
- Establish a business outreach program to integrate real work experiences to participants who are ready to expand their work skills into the community setting.



Selling their produce at the Farmers Market



Keeping up on weeds in one of our plots!

Population Served

	2008	2009	Projected for 2010
Youth with Disabilities:	3	12	15-17
Adults with Disabilities:	4	5	7
At Risk Youth:	5	2	5 - 7
Youth Mentors:	0	3	3 - 5

Team Leaders

This season we incorporated Team Leader positions into our program dynamics. Every participant had an equal opportunity to apply for this position. The requirements to apply included completing a formal application, conducting an interview, and demonstrating leadership qualities. Of our twenty two participants four applied. Three candidates were returning participants from the year before, and we had one first time participant apply. All of the candidates followed through with the application process and established their skills and drive to fill the position. Therefore each applicant was awarded the position and we were able to utilize four team leaders this year. These leaders got training in teaching and demonstrating job

tasks, managing and organizing co-workers, and problem solving. Each team leader was responsible for making sure everyone gathered the correct tools and materials, designating specific tasks to each participant, offering help and guidance if necessary, making sure tasks were completed thoroughly and correctly, and problem solving any issues that may develop. Taking on a leadership role is challenging for most people, but for individuals who have multiple barriers coming into the position already, this task is a huge undertaking. All of our team leaders this year executed their responsibilities and leadership abilities with honors.

“I liked the leadership role. I learned how to give people directions without being bossy. At first I was nervous but I was more comfortable giving directions and being a leader in the end.”

2009 Outcomes

Community Cultivation's 2009 outcomes are very promising. Of the youth old enough for employment (16 yrs or older), 75% found or maintained employment after attending the program. Fifty eight percent of the adults participating found or maintained employment after the program. Eighty seven percent of youth with disabilities have requested to return for another season.

Through the horticulture program, participants learn vocational and social skills. This knowledge transfers over into competitive employment. Research completed in 2006 by the Office of Disability Employment demonstrated that "soft skills" are even more important than reading, writing and arithmetic. Progress monitoring, pre and post self assessment surveys, and pre and post assessments completed by staff, and post assessment interviews revealed participants had made measurable gains in vocational and social skills that are prudent and necessary for successful employment. Some specific "soft" vocational skills that were positively impacted include: task completion, time management, active listening, communicating with supervisors and peers, self care, and increased self esteem. Specific social cognition skills improved include: recognizing how behaviors affect emotional states of others, improved social greetings and farewells, perspective taking to initiate conversations and solve problems, identifying and communicating stressors, improved ability to self advocate, and decrease anxiety to new situations and events.

We'd like to recognize our Donors and Partnerships

Without the support, contributions, insight and guidance from our donors and partnerships we would not be able to make this program possible. We want to send out a special THANKS to all of those who believe in Community Cultivation and have allowed us to keep growing!

Thanks Again for all your support

Financial Donors

Yampa Valley Autism Program

Craig-Scheckman Family Foundation

Northwest Colorado BOCES

Horizons

TIC

Eric Nance & Epiphany Graphics

Yampa Valley Electric Association

Education Fund Board

Yampa River Botanic Park

Missy Farmer

Janice and Ted Lawrence

Partnerships and Collaborations

Yampa Valley Autism Program

Yampa River Botanic Park

Teen Council

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

NW CO Boces

Yampa Valley Alternative School

Horizons

Deep Roots

Rocky Mountain Youth Corps

Partners in Routt County



"I really enjoyed observing life cycles such as those that produce bean plants. I liked the leadership role, it added structure and gave others a chance to try out a different aspect of a real job."



Hard at work!!!



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VISIT US ON THE WEB
AFTER FEB 2010 AT
WWW.COMMUNITY-CULTIVATION.ORG

Fundraisers Merry Martini and Tomato Sale.....

Throughout the year Community Cultivation organized two fundraisers. We launched our first tomato plant sale in early May. With the donation of over 100 tomato plants by Janice Lawrence and friends. Participants set up a booth in front of Ace and sold out within two hours!

Second we hosted a Holiday fundraiser called the "Merry Martini Holiday Party." It was a huge success and we got the opportunity to cheer in the holiday season with all our friends and family. Thanks to Kelly and Jason Landers for donating their beautiful restaurant, the Creekside Café and Grill. Winona's, Chocolate Soup, Freshies, City Market, Safeway, and Diane Maltby all donated delicious desserts. Along with all of our volunteers that helped make it a memorable event.

Directors Bio's

Beth Davison

Beth holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree from Colorado State University, and a Masters Degree in Vocational Rehabilitation from the University of Wisconsin-Stout. Beth has worked with people with disabilities for over 9 years in a myriad of capacities including; working with the transition program at SSHS, consulting for Horizons, providing vocational rehabilitation services for the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and working with private clients throughout Routt County. Beth actively networks within the business community to build connections and awareness to the benefits that people with disabilities can offer. Along with her passion for working with people with disabilities, she has a long history of horticulture experience.



Dana Colgan



Beth Davison

Dana Colgan

Dana has been working in the field of support services, interventions, and advocacy for people with disabilities for 14 years as a general education teacher, a special education teacher, a behavioral specialist and autism consultant. Dana holds a Bachelor of Science in Psychology, a Colorado Professional Teaching License, and a Masters Degree in Special Education, and is certified in Yoga and Meditation Instruction. She is a member of the Autism Team for NW Colorado which identifies people on the autism spectrum. She works in Routt, Grand, and Moffat County supporting students, families and special education teams. She also offers private social cognition therapy programs.