



Place-Based Education for Rural Communities: ***Applying Lessons from the Youth Agriculture Project***



The TUTORIAL CENTER^{INC.}
The Square-Hole People™

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YAP!

YAP offers participants a structured opportunity for hands-on work in educational gardens and with local farms and farmers' markets.

Participants build transferable skills: growing and cooking healthy food, managing tasks as a team, marketing and customer service.

Participants develop academic skills and knowledge in a gardening/food/community context.

Session Topics



- **Harvest:** Outcomes
- **Germination:** Why was the Youth Agriculture Project created?
- **Growth:** Voices
- **Design:** Program Plan
- **Cross-Pollination:** Community Relationships
- **Fertilizers and Weed Killers:** Lessons Learned
- **Perennials:** Future Growth
- Q and A

Student Outcomes: 2006-2011

5-year cohort follow-ups

73 participants ages 16-24

* 46 Out-of-School Youth (dropouts) * 27 At-Risk In-School Youth

86% completed



89% of completers engaged in an educational path post-program

44% became a HS Graduate


10% earned a GED

35% still active pursuing diploma

57% of completers got a job post-program


WHY?





In the chat room,
write your thoughts about...

WHY is there a need for Place-Based programs
or experiences within adult education?



Project Factors

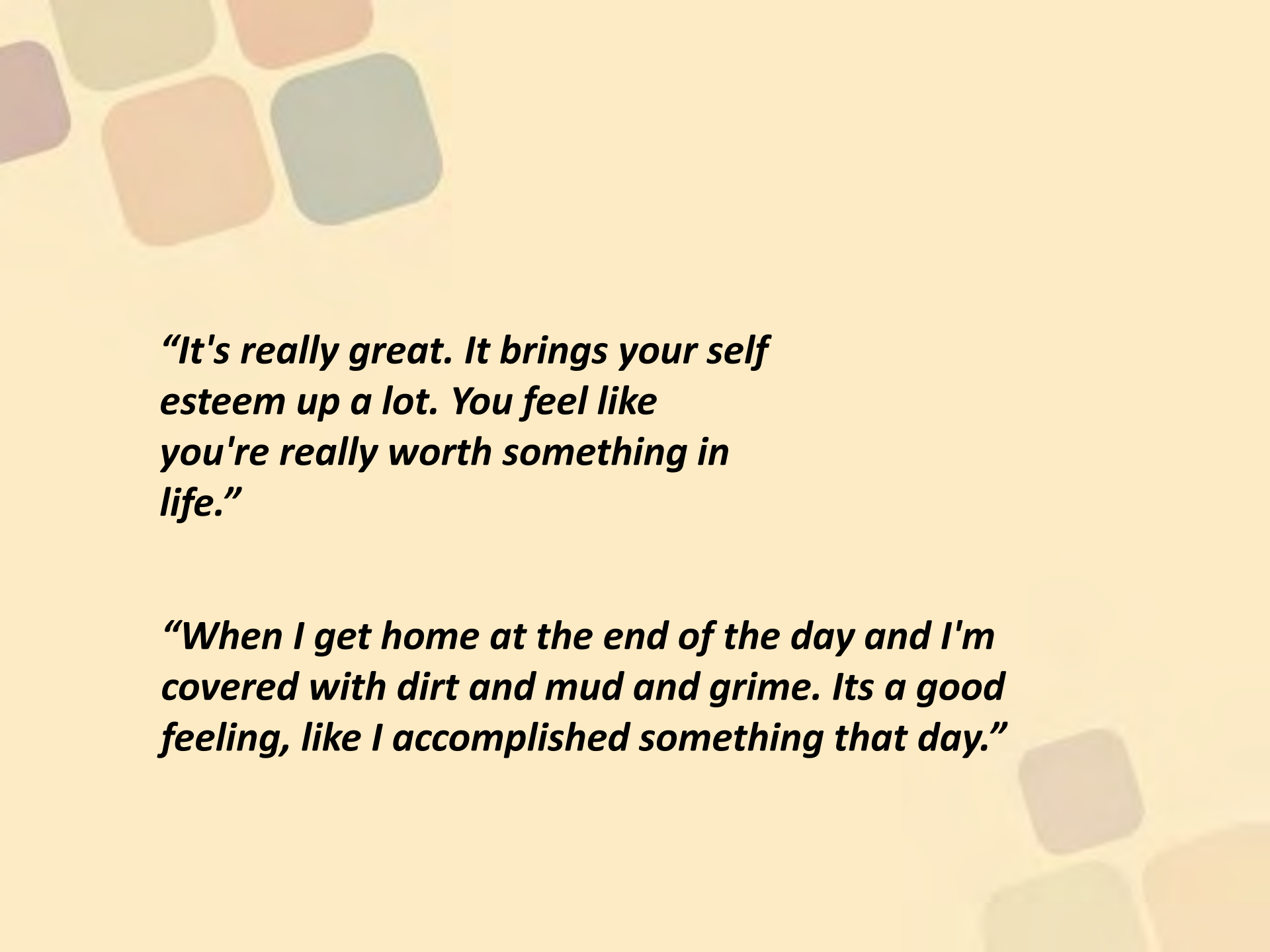
- ✓ “Place-based” & “real”
- ✓ Young adult; Co-ed
- ✓ Allow for multiple ability levels, learning styles
- ✓ Accommodate life circumstances
- ✓ Embed skills and knowledge within experiences
- ✓ Accommodate life circumstances
- ✓ Motivate individuals for further education
- ✓ Prepare individuals for work
- ✓ Link individuals to their community






“Most of us never worked in a garden or even thought about working in a garden until we got here.”

“Gardening is hands on and it's taking care of things. Eventually you start seeing things becoming a habit. There's tools there, so we need to pick up the garden. Well, you have to pick up your room or clean the kitchen. It's still all skills.”




“It's really great. It brings your self esteem up a lot. You feel like you're really worth something in life.”

“When I get home at the end of the day and I'm covered with dirt and mud and grime. Its a good feeling, like I accomplished something that day.”





“Everyone has their own challenges and their own strengths and coming together and working as a team I think has helped create this beautiful garden that we have.”



“I learned what kind of soil there is - three different kinds - clay, silt and sand. Silt's the best to grow things.”


“We read a book called Seedfolks. It's a pretty good book. It's about what we do here, gardening and stuff. It's different people's views on the garden.”




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“In the future I actually see myself going to college.”

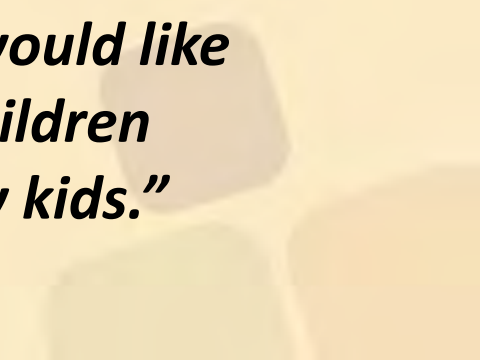
“I hope to go on to start my own small garden using what I've learned.”


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“I got out of school early so I didn't have a group of people to go to. But now it's like you have this group of people.”

“I've learned a lot of gardening skills that I would like to take into the future because I have two children and I can grow healthy and fresh food for my kids.”






“I had a goal set. I wanted to make myself better. I wanted to be a better worker and just using the skills I've learned here—they've been really helpful.”

“We're learning to be more eco-friendly and we're really learning responsibilities and how to work in a real job.”

“I prep lunches and stuff - cut potatoes and carrots. That was a lot of fun . Learn how to almost be like a chef.”



YAP Summer Program Design



- 160+ hrs [mostly in July & August]
- Place-based in community setting(s)
- Function as a “Work Crew”

- Fluid blend of activities for building:
 - “soft skills”
 - transferrable work skills
 - literacy and academic skills
- Individual, small group, and whole group activities



Targeted Participants

- ✓ Ages 16-24
- ✓ Low-income
- ✓ Dropout: Out-of-School Youth
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Low literacy

Homeless or runaway

Foster child

Parent or pregnant

Offender

Child of offender

“Other” barrier to success

Crew Worker Job Description

Crew Workers learn to work together as a team in the Bennington area on several community gardens, at the farmers' market, and on service projects within the community. Workers learn various skills including:

Growing vegetables, herbs, and flowers

Working with tools

Reading, math, science, and more

Money management, inventory & customer service skills

Job skills, personal skills, communication, public speaking, working in a team

SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES

Complete work projects as explained by the crew leaders

Run a farmers' market stand at the Tuesday Bennington Farmers' Market

Mentor to young children in gardening programs

Work as a team with your crew, being respectful of your leader

Be able to work independently

Participate in team meetings and workshops

Participate in feedback sessions with your crew and crew leaders

Complete service projects in the community

Crew Worker Job Description

(Continued)

SCHEDULE

Job runs from July 1-August 21, 2013

20 Hours/week: Monday & Wednesday from 9-3, Tuesday from 10-6

EXPECTATIONS

Regular attendance is required

Participate FULLY in workshops and activities

Be honest and respectful of your crew leaders and team members

Follow the safety rules and guidelines

Be respectful to the public at the gardens and farmers' market

Behave appropriately, especially when working with younger people

This is a non-smoking environment

APPLICATIONS: Available from The Tutorial Center, 208 Pleasant St., Bennington, VT

Typical Weekly Activities

- Main Garden work: *planting, weeding, picking rocks, tilling, etc.*
- Group workshop: *health topic, science topic, resume writing, reading group, cooking, drumming, etc.*
- Certificate Training: *ServSafe* (food service), or *Red Cross* (first-aid), or *OSHA* (work safety)
- Harvest what's ready
- Donate and deliver produce: *Meals on Wheels, homeless shelters, hospital*
- Prepare food/flowers, inventory, and conduct Farmers' Market booth sales
- Community project: restore public garden, assist farmer, mentor children, etc.
- **REVIEW OF WEEK'S PERFORMANCE:**
Group and Individual



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“Several” have entered college!


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Community Connections

Place-Based Education by design connects
students to their community.

In the chat room, share your thoughts about...

In what ways might YAP be connected to the
community? What partnerships might
develop?

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YAP Community Impacts

- Healthy organic food donated to seniors, homeless, needy
— *1,000-2,000 lbs/year!*
- Community Gardens facilitated
- Healthy organic food provided to hospital, schools, restaurants
- Service projects restore town & historic landscapes
- Other school teachers linked to garden sites for applied learning opportunities for their students
- College partnerships and internships
- *Creation of “YAP Food Network”*



Lessons Learned

- Participants need to APPLY
- Individuals will rise to where you set the bar
 - created a “Peer Leader” position
- Staff need to be well-skilled in “off-site behavior management”
 - crisis management
 - conflict management
- Be Prepared
 - weather happens
 - gardens take A LOT of work
 - *Youth* take A LOT of work!



Lessons Learned

- PLAN supports for successful transitions.
Coordinate formally with
 - School/adult ed counselors
 - Dept. of Labor specialists
 - Social Agency case workers



- Maximize Teachable Opportunities: many months of educational activities can surround a 2-month summer program

The Community LOVES This: Use That!


System Outcomes: 2006-2014

- ✓ Expansion to 4 sites
- ✓ Creation of local community food network
- ✓ 2 College partnerships
- ✓ 11 jobs created

Since 2006, we've been a growing educational food network ripe with:

- Opportunities for youth
- Community Impact
- Jobs






Expanding the Opportunities

YAP was designed for young adults in a rural community, with garden land easily available.

In the chat room, share your thoughts about...
In your “place” (urban, suburban, rural) what are some other ideas for Place-Based Education projects suitable for adult ed students?



“Always do your best.
What you plant now,
you will harvest later.”

– Og Mandino



For more information on
The Tutorial Center's *Youth Agriculture Project*,
visit www.tutoringvermont.org/our-services/YAPinfo