

GROWING COMMUNITY & THE PARTNERHSIP GARDEN
@ The School of Environmental Studies
12155 Johnny Cake Ridge Road
Apple Valley, MN 55124

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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***The Partnership Community Garden at the School of
Environmental Studies in Apple Valley
Receives Statewide Health Improvement Grant***

Growing Community and the Partnership Garden received a \$2,000 grant from the Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP) for growing fresh healthy food this spring and summer. This grant was one of seven grants awarded to Dakota County community gardens through the Dakota County Public Health and non-profit partner Gardening Matters. The other 2011 Dakota County grant recipients include Chapel Hill Church Community Garden (Eagan), Garden to Table (Eagan and Lakeville Resource Centers), Pine Bend Elementary School Give-Away Garden (Inver Grove Heights), SOTV Community Garden (Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church, Apple Valley), Sts Martha and Mary Community Garden (Eagan) and Wolk Park Community Garden (Burnsville). The Partnership Garden plans to use its SHIP funds to purchase seeds and tools for its first gardening season this spring and summer.

The Partnership Garden is located off Johnny Cake Ridge Road in Apple Valley on the property of the School of Environmental Studies (SES). Created by an intergenerational collaboration of community volunteers and SES students, the Partnership Garden provide a new local opportunity for families and individuals without space or land for gardening to grow their own healthy food. The circular organic garden

has been designed to maximize growing space and to make it easy for gardeners to learn from and share with each other. Each gardener will have their own circular plot while also sharing taller field and vine crops around the garden perimeter. Although all plots have been reserved for this year, the Partnership Garden team also offers classes, volunteer opportunities and community activities focused on healthy gardening and healthy food throughout the year. The garden will also provide healthy food to lower income community families by donating 20% of the garden's produce to local food shelves and individual families in need.

The Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP), an integral part of Minnesota's nation-leading 2008 health reform law, strives to help Minnesotans lead longer, healthier lives by preventing the chronic disease risk factors of tobacco use and exposure, poor nutrition and physical inactivity. SHIP seeks to create sustainable, systematic changes in schools, worksites, communities and health care organizations that make it easier for Minnesotans to incorporate healthy behaviors into their daily lives. For more information on SHIP, visit www.health.state.mn.us/healthreform/ship. For more about the ongoing individual and community benefits of SHIP funding in Dakota County, visit <http://www.co.dakota.mn.us/Departments/PublicHealth/Projects/SHIP.htm>.

SHIP partnering organization Gardening Matters is a nonprofit dedicated to promoting and preserving community gardening across the Twin Cities by connecting gardeners to each other and to the communities in which they reside. They provide training and resources to support community gardeners in achieving community gardens that are successful and sustainable. For more information, including a Community Garden Directory across the Twin Cities, visit www.gardeningmatters.org.

ABOUT GROWING COMMUNITY AND THE PARTNERHSIP GARDEN:

Growing Community is a collaboration of citizens and students who are growing the Partnership Garden, a sustainable organic garden at the School of Environmental Studies in Apple Valley, while learning, sharing, and teaching about healthy foods and gardening in partnership with nature. For further information about Growing Community or the Partnership Garden, contact Pat Schoenecker, Managing Director, at 612.965.3372 or AVGarden@charter.net.

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