

# Huron County

## New Community Garden Provides Fresh Produce for Norwalk Residents Expanding Healthy Food Access One Garden at a Time

### Challenge

According to the 2019 County Health Rankings, the percentage of Huron County adults who were obese was greater than the state average. Furthermore, according to the 2017 Huron County Community Health Assessment, two-thirds of adults were either overweight or obese, only 2% of adults ate five or more servings of fruits and vegetables per day, and 79% dined in a restaurant or bought take-out in a typical week. The same assessment showed that most residents purchased their fruits and vegetables from a large or local grocery store. However, access to healthy food is scarce in many low-income communities located in food deserts like the western region of Norwalk.

### Approach

Limited access to healthy food and increased obesity rates illustrated the need for a community garden in Norwalk. The vision of Huron County Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) for the garden was to provide equitable access to fruits and vegetables for those with access and functional needs through garden-harvested food pantry donations and direct consumer picking. The garden was thoughtfully designed for inclusivity to ensure use by all. Huron County CHC purchased supplies, materials, and labor for the project. Runkle Landscaping donated labor, plants, and mulch, and Custom Metal Works created and donated a custom entrance sign. The garden will be maintained by the Town & Country Garden Club.

### Results

Construction began in June 2020, and the Nourishing Huron County Community Garden was fully functioning by mid-July. The garden offers a concrete foundation, two raised garden beds with aisle spacing that complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act, two raised wall planters, two raised herb planters, three benches, and a shading pergola. Planted in the garden were tomatoes, peppers, muskmelons, apple trees, and flowers. The initial harvest produced nearly seven pounds of tomatoes and three muskmelons, which were donated to the Norwalk Food Bank. Residents of a low-income housing complex behind the community garden were also observed picking in the garden. Huron County CHC is hopeful that in future years the Nourishing Huron County Community Garden will produce bountiful quantities of fruits and vegetables and impact the lives of many at-need residents.



### At A Glance

Thanks to collaboration between Huron County Creating Healthy Communities, Huron County Public Health, and local businesses and donors, residents in Norwalk now have increased access to fresh locally grown produce. An unused green space at the public health agency building bloomed into a beautiful, community garden that provides access for all, including people with disabilities. The future for the Nourishing Huron County Community Garden is bright, with plans of growing and harvesting fruits and vegetables for donation to food pantries in Norwalk, as well as establishing healthy living programming to educate, promote, and encourage healthy lifestyles.



### Contact

**Nicole Marks**  
Huron County Public Health

[nmarks@huroncohealth.com](mailto:nmarks@huroncohealth.com)

<http://www.huroncohealth.com>