Metro State-Inver Hills Community Garden Recognized in Book  
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A new book about therapeutic garden design features the Inver Hills Community College–Metropolitan State University interdisciplinary community garden and orchard as an example of how gardens can benefit the community. *Therapeutic Gardens: Design for Healing Spaces*, by landscape architect Daniel Winterbottom and occupational therapist Amy Wagenfeld, uses examples from around the world to demonstrate how gardens can support learning, movement, reconciliation and memorialization, as well as improve physical and psychological health.

“Therapeutic gardens welcome people of all ages and abilities, no matter where they are located, to participate and engage in an equitable way that is meaningful to them,” said co-author Amy Wagenfield, “The participatory nature of the community garden -- especially for those with special needs -- made it a good choice for the book.”

The garden is located on the Inver Hills Community College campus. It was founded in 2012 by August Hoffman, Metropolitan State psychology professor, and Barb Curchack, Inver Hills psychology professor. Since then, it has served as a place for students and other volunteers to connect with the community.

"Community gardening is rapidly becoming one of the most important resources within the Twin Cities to help provide low income families with access to healthier foods," said Hoffman. "Urban forestry projects, community gardens and green sustainable projects in general provide numerous psychological and social benefits and have been shown to provide important resources to community members."

According to Hoffman, the garden has provided several thousand pounds of fresh vegetables and apples to the Dayton's Bluff and South St. Paul community. It also has a positive impact on students who become involved.

"I think the Metrostate-Inverhills garden project is unique in that it is focused on connecting students across campuses," said Shawn Veldey, a Metropolitan State student who became involved with the garden when he took a class taught by Hoffman. "The garden is a way of bridging the higher ed experience and bringing a sense of connectedness to students."

Hoffman and his fellow volunteer garden enthusiasts haven't limited their growing skills to campus; the professor has organized trips to several gardens and orchards throughout the country, including Newtown, Conn. and Detroit, Mich. A trip this past winter even took a group to Guatemala. He is currently planning a similar project for June at the Red Lake Nation reservation in Red Lake.

*Therapeutic Gardens: Design for Healing Spaces*, published by Timber Press, is available online and in bookstores. If you’d like to get involved at the Inver Hills Community College-Metropolitan Sate interdisciplinary community garden and orchard, contact August Hoffman at 651-999-5814.

Photo courtesy of August Hoffman.

Caption: “The Inver Hills Community College–Metropolitan State University interdisciplinary community garden and orchard”