Reconnecting Communities By Growing Food

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Causes and Consequences of Suburban Sprawl

- **Causes**
  - Rapid growth after WWII to accommodate returning soldiers
  - Chasing the American Dream

- **Consequences**
  - Isolation from neighbors
  - Loss of sense of place
What Can Be Done?

- Alternatives to suburban life
- Break isolation of neighbors by creating opportunities to interact within the community
Emergency Communities

Picture by Julianne Scarola
Why Do We Need A Catastrophe To Bring People Together?
Create Opportunities To Interact

- Community gardens
- Urban gardens
- Backyard Sharing
Positive Effects Of Community Gardens

Personal
- Improved nutrition and physical activity
- Enhanced social and psychological well-being

Neighborhood
- Improved social networks
- Enhanced community capital
- Reduced crime rates
- Improved neighborhood aesthetics
- Residents empowered to become more active in other community life

Urban Gardens

Not every community has the land or organization for community gardens.
Project Objectives

I propose to combine all of the benefits of gardening by residents growing and sharing their vegetables with neighbors.

- Create social networks within comfort level
- Can work in any available space
Project Goals

- Restoring a sense of community through gardening
- Supplying neighborhood with fresh produce

Picture by Julianne Scarola
Methods and Objectives

Methods

- Online anonymous survey
- Interviews

Objectives

- Assess involvement and satisfaction of suburban communities including Dumont, Ringwood, River Edge, Waldwick, Oradell
Findings

32 participants
- 14 male
- 18 females

Males stated
- How their food is grown and where their food comes from
- It is important to eat organic and locally grown food

Females stated
- Sense of belonging and where their food comes from
- It is important to be involved in the community and have friendly relationships with neighbors
What Does Community Mean To You?

Males
n=14

Female
n=18

- Relationships of Place: 79%
- Not Much: 7%
- Streets Surrounding Your Home: 7%
- If I Lived In A Better Community It Would Mean A Lot More: 6%

- An Extended Family, A Team: 83%
- Too Busy To Participate In Community: 6%
- Problems: 5%
- Your Zip Code: 6%
What Would You Change In Your Community?

Males  
$n=14$

- Community Participation: 64%
- Environmental Concerns: 7%
- Everything: 22%
- Traffic Patterns: 7%

Females  
$n=18$

- Community Participation: 39%
- Environmental Concerns: 17%
- Everything: 17%
- Traffic: 22%
- More Police Enforcement/ Less Drug Use: 5%
- Nothing, I Like Mine: 5%
Network For Sharing Vegetables In Your Community

Yes 81%
No 19%
Waldwick High School

Picture by Julianne Scarola

Picture by Julianne Scarola
Participants

River Edge
Beverly, Julianne

Oradell
Frank, Margaret

Pictures By Julianne Scarola
Other Participants

- 5 homes in Ringwood
- 3 homes in Waldwick

Beverly’s garden, 2009
If You Are Interested
Contact Me For More Information

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