



Vision: *“A community where everyone belongs and participates”*

Mission: *“Together with our community, KW Habilitation inspires abilities to enrich the lives of children, youth, adults and families.”*

Our Farm Mission: *Connecting People to the land, food, and each other through sustainable agriculture.*



1. Raspberries picked at DFR
2. Garlic Harvest in 2021.
3. Loofah sponge grown at Our Farm.
4. Garden at ADS.
5. Our Farm sign at DFR.

Our Farm – 2021 Annual Report

Our Farm has completed another successful season. We can hardly believe that we have been farming organically grown veggies for eight seasons and this is our biggest season as you will learn throughout this report.

Weather is always the biggest factor for a successful season. This year had a lot of rain and heat. Our first bed of lettuce, radishes and green onions was planted in May, and we pulled our last root crops out the first week of November.

The second year of the pandemic continued, but with the mitigation measures we put in place the prior season Our Farm continued to host Canada Summer Jobs, Volunteers, and the University of Waterloo Hockey Team for a large worker bee.

Our Farm continues to grow in many ways. We established more growing space, learned new ways of time management in the field and increased community connections. One area of change included food distribution. We initiated a Grab and Go cart at 115 University whereby large bins of fresh veggies were put out giving opportunity for all interested in fresh organically grown veggies to custom build their own veggie box during their Wednesday pick up.

Our Farm Trail continued to be a hit for the folks at KW Habilitation. It was well used for walking, observing, and appreciating nature during the pandemic. We would venture to say they are trails of wellness.

Our Farm always experiences hurdles throughout the year and this year was no different. Having a farmer change in late July was difficult, lack of refrigeration and storage was noted, and learning that it is difficult to continue to dig 1/3 acre by hand. However, with the generous donations including from the 100 Women Who Care we will be able to take these needs off our wish list.

Gardens: - 115 University Avenue – In 2021 ADS produced lots of food for Our Farm. Highlights included beautiful lettuce throughout the whole season, green onions, radishes, ground cherries, kale, garlic, flowers, and tomatoes. These crops did amazing. However, due to rain and wet mornings through September our tomatoes for the first time ever had blight which ended our season early. Next year along with plastic weed barrier we will mulch our tomatoes with straw to prevent another year of blight. Flowers were put out on Wednesdays Grab and Go and supplied to various groups throughout the year. Over the past year at ADS, we have been removing grass strips in the garden to reduce grass mowing and increased growing space. Parts of the garden have too much shade in certain spots, this again will need to be addressed.

DFR Site – Our production at DFR this year was strong. Stellar crops included our best onions grown at Our Farm ever. This could be to the new variety that was grown. Raspberries were prolific – 450 pints were harvested. Most of these went to Inclusive Living homes and the rest was used to prepare jams sold at the Our Farm Jam sale. Garlic was huge, Bok choy, beans, turnips, beets, carrots, cabbage etc. were just terrific. Our new crop of celery did not do well. Leeks had leek moth, but a lesson learned is that they will be a covered crop next year. Saskatoon berries were harvested only by our gypsy moth caterpillars. DFR continues to expand with more grass strips being removed. This will save time with less mowing and increase growing space too.

Participants: Due to Public Health and MCCSS Pandemic orders Inclusive Living participation at our Farm was limited. However, Jeff at DFR did water new seedlings at that site.

Our Farm hosted two groups from Youth Exploring Possibilities with birdhouse painting. We also hosted a group from REACH in October in making small arrangements with straw bales as well as chalkboard signs. It was a day enjoyed by all.

Rockway Connection Group: on hold due to pandemic

Community Market: Community Market on hold due to pandemic

Food Production at Our Farm - \$14,046.00

Inclusive Living Pickups – 286

Sil Pickups – 91

108 Sydney Apartment Pickups – 87

Giving Baskets Provided to Tenants at 108 Sydney – \$418.40

Our Farm Plant Sale - held the week of May 17th, 2021 – Total Sales - \$2,306.00

Jam and Salsa/Relish Sale – Started October 10th, 2021 and still ongoing – **Sales to date - \$5651.00**

Corporate Groups and Community Groups: Our Farm hosted the Men's Hockey team from the University of Waterloo on Tuesday September 14th, 2021. With all COVID measures in place 25 hockey players came and donated 75 hours of work at our DFR site. All newly tilled beds were cleaned of grass and prepared and lasagna layered by the team. A large pile of wood chips also moved closer to berry bushes for use next year.

Volunteers:

ADS Site – Paule, Kirin, Maythis and Robert

DFR Site – Alex, Melanie, Natasha and Gayle

Total Volunteer Hours at Our Farm this Season -168 hours

Canada Summer Jobs:

ADS Site – Malcolm and Shawn- Malcolm returned for his fourth year. Shawn was new to the program

DFR Site – Nita, Payton and Navonil (All were new to the program)

DFR Farmer – Sam – returned for her fourth year but ended her employment early due to a move at the end of July. New employee Raj was hired at the end of July and left mid-September.

Learning Opportunities for Our Farm Crew

This year Our Farm had several learning opportunities. The annual EAFO conference was attended by Jenny. Classes included Crop Rotation, No Till growing, and adding high value crops to your rotations, etc.

Canada Summer Job Gang/DFR Farmer had an in-field session with Bob Wilfong from Seeds of Diversity on Garlic Growing, Pests and good farming practices. They also attended one day at the Hacienda Garden to get a taste of another production garden.

Donations from Our Farm to the Community:

House of Friendship Men's Shelter - Surplus Fresh Veggies - **\$205.50**

House of Friendship Garden – Tomato Plants - **\$245.00**

Kitchener Downtown Community Health Centre – Tomato, Flower and Eggplants - **\$ 180.00**

Donations to Our Farm from the Community

Our Farm being unfunded relies on the generous donations from the community. We are in appreciation of all we received.

Community Users of DFR garden space:

Seeds of Diversity - (Bob Wilfong) is happy to continue to use space for growing heirloom garlic. Garlic was grown in 3 beds and the crop did very well this year.

Bee Keeping – Mark Frey continues to raise bees on the DFR site of Our Farm. This year proved to be a tough year from losing queens to death of a few hives. Production of honey was low, and the amount produced will be used to sustain bees through the winter. Crops were well pollinated despite the complications with the hives. Watching them work is so rewarding

Bird Habitat at DFR – Continues to do well. Many of the houses had tenants and built nests and it was fun to watch the new baby birds grow up. Our Farm was pleased with the increase in birds visiting.

Trail Building at DFR:

The trail was well used at DFR this year. It truly is a beautiful trail and so much can be seen by walking all the different trails.

This year Our Farm was pleased to receive another Region of Waterloo Environmental Grant of \$5,000.00

The money was spent on a Trimmer, Riding Mower and replacement trees. Mostly hardwood trees died due to heavy deer pressure. The Pine trees seemed to do well. The purchase of the trimmer in late summer made the hard work involved with maintenance easier. It is important to keep the trails free of fallen grass and thistles for trail users.

Directional and Educational Signage for the trails are in the process of being proofed, printed and ready for installation next year thanks to KW Oldtimers Hockey League who in part funded . These will include species of birds that Our Farm has built homes for, bee information, name of different trails and lengths of that specific trail, entrance, pollinator beds etc. It will be great to have these completed for trail walkers in the spring.

New Things & Connections were made at Our Farm this Year:

-We used compostable plastic for weed barrier in our cabbage, tomatoes, and pepper rows for weed barrier

-We grew lettuce seedlings in house for bigger beautiful lettuce all season long

- We designed a “Grab and Go” cart for pickups – everyone could design their own veggie box and take as much as they needed – huge hit with users of the cart and real time saver having to take veggies to another location. Market was Wednesdays at 115 from 9-2pm.

- We stopped packaging veggies and used the “bin” method for displaying veggies – huge time saver

Sales of excess produce to Bailey’s Foods, Penning’s Store in St. Agatha and Raspberries sold at Fertile Farm CSA pickup.

-Jam and Salsa not sold through the online sale was offered for sale at Baileys Foods

-Collaboration with Taco Farm to create a hot sauce using Our Farm’s Raspberries, Jalapenos, Garlic and Onions. The Charred Jalapeno Raspberry hot sauce is a limited edition sold at Taco Farm

Wrap Up:

Overall, Our Farm had a very successful year. Some rough patches but successful. The food grown was beautiful and plentiful. Our homes used more veggies than ever, and many good comments were heard.

Foxhunt says, “Our House absolutely loved the grab and go cart, we visited weekly and always grabbed a recipe or two which the men of the house took great pride in making from the veggies that were picked, and they are looking forward to gifting the zucchini relish that we made from Our Farm produce to family and friends this Christmas! ”

878 Frederick says “We loved having fresh locally grown food every week all summer long! It inspired us to try new recipes and eat healthier!”

"Fresh, flavorful and convenient!"

"I wish we could stock up on more!"

Thanks for the great season!"

The Our Farm items at University Ave were enjoyed by all at 108 Sydney. We came weekly, a different person supported came each week to help pick out items. The grab and go system worked very well. Fresh tomatoes and flowers were among their favourites. Weekly menus were planned around what was available. Squash soup, homemade spaghetti sauce, and salads, vegetable soup were among the favorites. Lots of zucchini bread was made! At the end of the summer, we made homemade jams to give as Christmas gifts. We made red pepper jelly, raspberry jam, carrot cake jam and zucchini relish. Everyone loved giving homemade gifts for Christmas. We made over 50 jars!

When Our Farm had extra, a donation was made to the 108 building tenants. They really appreciated have fresh produce. Thanks, Our Farm!

Some of the Feedback and lessons learned in 2021 will be used in developing the crop rotation and growing in 2022.

Planning has begun for the 2022 season. The purchase of new equipment will free up time for other duties, as the daily tasks will be quicker to complete. New signage will be going up on the trail and some new varieties of veggies will be explored. For now, the garden is at rest rejuvenating the soil for another growing season. Looking forward to more Good Things from Our Farm.

Respectfully submitted
Jenny Weickert
Our Farm Coordinator

