

# BEDFORD & MITCHELL COMMUNITY GARDENS



## SUSTAINING HOOSIER COMMUNITIES

**2017-2018**

A partnership between SPH-F150: Intro  
to Lifespan Development & Bedford  
and Mitchell Community Gardens





# SUSTAINING HOOSIER COMMUNITIES

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## Acknowledgements

This project was completed as a collaboration between the students in SPH-F150: Introduction to Lifespan Development and the Bedford and Mitchell Community Garden Programs as part of the 2017-2018 Indiana University Sustaining Hoosier Communities (IUSHC) initiative. IUSHC is a program within the IU Center for Rural Engagement (CRE).

This report represents original student work and recommendations proposed by the students in SPH-F150: Introduction to Lifespan Development for the Bedford and Mitchell Community Garden Programs. The contents of this report represent the views of the students in SPH-F150: Introduction to Lifespan Development and do not reflect those of IUSHC, CRE, Indiana University, or the Cities of Bedford and Mitchell.

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## About Sustaining Hoosier Communities

Indiana University Sustaining Hoosier Communities is an initiative that partners with a local community within south central Indiana to explore, understand, and resolve challenges and projects identified by the community. Based on a tested model for university/community engagement that has been successfully implemented by over 25 universities and their community partners, Sustaining Hoosier Communities is a yearlong collaboration between Indiana University and a single community partner.

Indiana University’s faculty who opt in to Sustaining Hoosier Communities match their courses to the projects based on their areas of research, expertise, and teaching. Each course uses a cross-disciplinary approach to explore and solve sustainability issues identified by the community partner through project-based research. Faculty and community stakeholders agree before classes begin on a scope of work and deliverables for each class, and project liaisons are identified by the community and the university to coordinate this unified effort.

Sustaining Hoosier Communities is just one example of many types of community engagement Indiana University plans to pursue as part of the Center for Rural Engagement. By harnessing the research, expertise, energy, and service of Indiana University’s faculty, staff, and students, Indiana University and our local partners work collaboratively to improve the health, prosperity, and vitality of southcentral Indiana.

To learn more about IU Sustaining Hoosier Communities, visit [www.shc.indiana.edu](http://www.shc.indiana.edu).

To learn more about the IU Center for Rural Engagement, visit [www.rural.indiana.edu](http://www.rural.indiana.edu).

## Sustaining Hoosier Communities Project





# SUSTAINING HOOSIER COMMUNITIES

## About the Course

The primary objectives in SPH-F150: Introduction to Lifespan Development was for students to develop a fundamental knowledge of biological, cognitive, and socio-emotional aspects of the periods of development from conception through death. Students accomplished this by examining typical and atypical progress understanding established theories and research. This course required that students engage with the instructor, their peers, and community partners in Lawrence County communities, Bedford and Mitchell, to learn more about the community gardens in Bedford and Mitchell, create educational and outreach materials, and propose strategies to help increase community utilization of the gardens.

The scope of work with the Bedford Park and Recreation outlined the partnership between the Bedford Garden Park (BGP) and Mitchell Accessible Garden (MAG), resulting in final reports for each community garden program focused on three periods of development as specified by each program. This included stakeholder engagement in the classroom, taking 76 students on a site visit to the Bedford Garden Park, engaging with students in a panel discussion with BGP and MAG representatives, and providing feedback on student work.



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## About the Bedford & Mitchell Community Gardens

The Bedford Garden Park (BGP) identified a need for the creation of three projects: marketing, programming, and outcomes. For each of the projects, the stakeholders requested that materials represent three different developmental age groups: early childhood (3 – 5 year olds), middle childhood (6 – 10/11 year olds), and early adults (20s and 30s). Seventy-two students worked in 15 groups to accomplish the goals to produce a final report that included educational and community programming, marketing strategies, and “next steps” to move the programs forward.

The Mitchell Accessible Garden (MAG) identified three projects in hopes of increasing community use of the garden: marketing, programming, and fundraising. For each of these projects, the stakeholders requested that materials represent three specific periods of development across three age groups: early childhood (3 – 5 year olds), early adulthood (20s and 30s), and late adulthood (60s -70s to death). Forty-two students worked in nine groups to accomplish the goals to produce a final report that included programming, marketing, and fundraising strategies.

Throughout the semester, students in SPH-F150: Introduction to Lifespan Development worked closely with community representatives from each garden and analyzed demographic data from each community to produce the “Bedford Garden Park: Programs, Outcomes, and Marketing Report” and the “Mitchell Accessible Garden: Marketing, Programming, and Fundraising Report” that were both customized to the specific periods of development selected by the community partners.



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## The Project: Connecting Course & Community

Students in SPH-F150: Introduction to Lifespan Development applied course theory to address the challenges identified by the Bedford Garden Park (BGP) and the Mitchell Accessible Garden (MAG). In order to create programming and propose recommendations to enhance community participation of these gardens, students reviewed demographic data from each community, spoke with community leaders by traveling to the BGP, accounted for the needs of each stakeholder, and integrated primary and secondary research that connected the targeted developmental age groups to the biological, cognitive, and socioemotional processes discussed in class.

The community liaisons for both gardens hosted a site-visit and tour of BGP and a panel discussion with key community officials early in the semester, which was attended by 76 students. The community partners also joined the class in-person to provide more details about the community and to answer class questions. At the end of the semester, community partners joined the class via video conference for a summary of the final draft of each of the 24 student project groups. Through these discussions with the community partners and a series of five assignments, students in SPH-F150: Introduction to Lifespan Development produced the “Bedford Garden Park: Programs, Outcomes, and Marketing Report” and the “Mitchell Accessible Garden: Marketing, Programming, and Fundraising Report” that were both customized to the specific periods of development selected by BGP and MAG.



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## Student Outcomes

- Produced final reports focusing on the targeted areas and developmental age groups as identified by the Bedford Garden Park and Mitchell Accessible Garden
- Generated programming and marketing ideas for specific age groups for the Bedford Garden Park and Mitchell Accessible Garden
- Developed outreach and fundraising strategies to assist in future grant development to assure the sustainability of the Bedford Garden Park and Mitchell Accessible Garden
- Gained professional, hands-on experience working with clients in a rural community
- Assessed costs and benefits for programming, fundraising, and outreach strategies
- Participated in on-site visits to better understand the Bedford Garden Park and Mitchell Accessible Garden

## Community Partner Outcomes

- Student-generated solutions to sustainability and growth challenges to Bedford Garden Park and Mitchell Accessible Garden
- Programming and event ideas for Bedford Garden Park and Mitchell Accessible Garden for all ages
- Marketing and outreach strategies for Bedford Garden Park and Mitchell Accessible Garden
- Outcome assessment for Bedford Garden Park
- Fundraising strategies for Mitchell Accessible Garden





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