



# GREENSCAPADES SUMMER GARDEN PROGRAM

Year One Summary

## Summer Garden Program Grows Student Engagement and Community Partnerships

Greenscapades Summer Garden Program continues children's learning throughout the garden season.

### The Challenge

AITC's ground-breaking Greenscapades program faced a daunting challenge - how could a school yard garden program in five community schools engage student learning in the key gardening months of July and August?

### Partners and Opportunities

AITC approached community partners to ensure youth in these neighbourhoods could continue to be involved in the gardening and growing process.



*Sheeren gardening at St. Michael's with a student.*

## Greenscapades Schools

- Confederation Park Community School
- Mayfair Community School
- St. Maria Goretti Community School
- St. Michael Community School
- Westmount Community School

### **Agriculture in the Classroom (Sask) Inc.**

RR#4, Box 278, Site 412  
Saskatoon, SK  
S7K 3J7  
www.aitc.sk.ca

Local sponsors such as the Saskatoon Community Foundation's "Batting 1000" grant and the City of Saskatoon Environmental Branch joined the province's Community Initiatives Fund and Saskworks support for the project. Combined with vital in-kind support from cooperating schools to use their washrooms, drinking water, and with a friendly smile from maintenance personnel, the Summer Garden Program was officially underway.

### Leadership and Programming

Shereen Kukha-Bryson joined AITC and immediately began meeting with teachers and students to build momentum for the Greenscapades project with Jessie Best, Greenscapades Program Manager. Jessie and Shereen enticed young gardeners with the excitement of planting seeds of their choice and building their own garden

plots and raised beds. Work bees at each school brought together students, teachers, support staff, and community volunteers to make each school garden a unique representation of the school community as a whole.

With a smooth transition from school end to summer gardening, Shereen established her programming routine at each garden site weekly with themed weeks such as "Seed Frenzy", "Garden Folkfest" and "Plants that Make us Feel Better." Each week explored gardening elements such as insects, seeds, health & wellness, and First Nations & Metis perspectives.

Within each day Shereen would host a number of garden related activities including planting, weeding, and harvesting. Participants also sampled new fruits & vegetables, and enjoyed games & snacks to keep energized and active.

**“When I grow up, I want to be a farmer or a gardener!”**

Participant, age 7



*Two young boys exploring and learning in the Confederation Park school garden.*

**Participants and Demographics**

Approximately 150 youth participated in the Summer Garden Program, with children ranging from under 6 to young adults. The bulk of participants were ages 6-12 (130 children), and both genders were well represented (80+boys and ~70 girls).

An ethnically-diverse group of students participated. Many students identified themselves informally as First Nations or Metis. At one location, students from the Saskatoon Open Door Society joined us bringing a very multi-cultural feel

to our garden activities.

**Farmers’ Market Field Trip and Successes**

As the program’s culminating activity, Shereen led participants from all five school gardens to the Saskatoon Farmers’ Market to show them the bounty gardening can bring. Children shopped and purchased food to put into a shared final garden feast with locally produced prairie-cherry ice cream for dessert! By the end of the program, many participants were eager to grow their own food and gardens at home and elsewhere in the community.

**Stories to Share From the Gardens**

One 13 year-old boy demonstrated his expansive understanding of trees when he gently wrapped cloth around a broken apple tree sapling. He shared with the group the teachings he had learned from his community’s elders on how to care for the natural world.

A 7 year-old participant used his new gardening knowledge to independently transplant a Saskatoon berry seedling without any adult assistance. Skills gained in demonstrations and hands-on learning provided him with the confidence to plant and tend the seedling throughout the summer months.

At another school garden, an 8 year-old girl collected haskap berries, apples, cucumbers and lettuce to share with her family and friends. She proudly volunteered to provide tours of the garden to all newcomers.



**Special Thanks To Our Sponsors!**

**Community Initiatives Fund**

**Saskatoon Community Foundation Batting 1000 Grant**

**Saskworks**

**City of Saskatoon Environmental Grant**

