

2013 Summer Youth Employment Program Overview

August 9, 2013 marked the 4th successful conclusion of the Summer Youth Employment Program, a 6-week program run by VINES in which 10 Binghamton youth are hired to continue ongoing development of the Urban Farm and community gardens.

Additionally, we employed two Market Garden Assistants, also youth, who work through the entire growing season and who function as leaders during the youth program.

Funding was provided by the City of Binghamton's Green Jobs Grant, which comes from Community Development Block Grant funds.



2013 Summer Youth Crew, Market Garden Assistants Amber & DeShawn, AmeriCorps Member Natalie.

All of our goals for this summer were accomplished thanks to the help of this year's crew. They utilized the expansions made on the Urban Farm by last year's program and increased additional growing space both outside and in the greenhouse. They assisted in the design and construction of a community greenspace on Susquehanna st, a new community orchard on Liberty st, and provided maintenance of several community garden sites. The youth also participated in all the stages of growing and harvesting food on the Urban Farm, learning valuable lessons about where food comes from.

Although urban agriculture was the focus of tasks performed during the youth employment, the incorporation of education and general job skills is integral to the success of the program. This is accomplished by partnering with several local organizations to provide workshops about job professionalism, interviews, and nutrition education, in addition to workshops about composting, rural farming, and livestock. As has been done in previous years, youth learn about how to safely prepare and cook fresh vegetables harvested from the Urban Farm.



Cooking Demonstration with Rich Herb, from Sodexo and Binghamton University

Overall, the participants this year were a highly motivated and hard-working group. We couldn't have accomplished all our goals without them, and are glad that they've reached some of their personal goals through their employment as well!



Summer youth crew members, Giavanna and Makayla, harvesting green beans.