



UL ENGAGE

Community Briefing

2018 No. 31

CWELL Allotment Project

Billy Dopchie
Nicole Lewis

Supervised by: Bernie Quillinan



UNIVERSITY of LIMERICK
OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH

UL Engage

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Promoting University Community Collaboration

THE BRIEF

Project Aim

The overall aim of this project is to encourage the people in the community of St. Mary's to be more health-conscious when it comes to their food and lifestyle choices.

Project Objectives

The objective of this project is to create a pamphlet for people on how to grow vegetables and herbs in their own gardens at home or at the allotments in hopes of encouraging an active lifestyle, while enjoying the benefits of healthy foods.

Project Rationale

The CWELL Allotment project takes place in St. Mary's community, which is one of the most disadvantaged communities in Ireland. Because of the poverty level in this area many people are uneducated when it comes to the benefits of healthy living and many families rely on unhealthy snacks. By creating community allotments, the people of St. Mary's are given the facilities and are allowed the chance to become involved in gardening. This will not only increase their physical wellbeing, but their mental wellbeing as well.

COMMUNITY

Overview of Community Organisation

The mission for St. Mary's Community Allotments is to allow the people in the community of St. Mary a place to grow their own fruits, vegetables, herbs, and flowers. Not only will this be a place to grow food, but a place where people can come to relax and engage in physical activity, resulting in a positive impact on their physical and mental wellbeing. The vision for the allotments is that they will become a source of pride within the community. Majella Cosgrove is currently looking after the allotments and is the source of contact for involvement. Eventually, Majella would like to see each house in the community with hanging baskets or planted flowerbeds, along with full involvement in the allotments, in hopes of rejuvenating the St. Mary's area.

Community Partners



Majella Cosgrove

At the age of 17 I left school and did not attend 3rd level education, getting a job at an office straight away. Through the CWELL (Community Wellness, Empowerment, Leadership and Life Skills) course, I was given the chance to return to education and put the knowledge and skills I learned from this back into the community. In this course, my project was the creation of the St. Mary's Community Allotments. Giving time to the community has meant much more to me than I imagined; it improved my positive outlook, physical and mental health, and has allowed me to become more aware of the needs in my community. My role now is to continue to engage with the community and the allotments of St. Mary's.

STUDENTS



Billy Dopchie – Université Catholique de Louvain

I have studied International Relations for four years at Université Catholique de Louvain. Although the agricultural activity itself is not very related to the content of my studies, I have been working for three years during the summers on an organic farm growing vegetables and sowing crops. In addition, I have bought organic vegetables as a student from the same truck farmer. As the creation of allotments and collaborative work are also very in vogue in my district, I am very involved and have always put a lot of energy in the preparation of the soil. As a big brother, I have always spurred my three little brothers to work the land because I believe that it is an important savoir-faire, which falls in disuse nowadays.



Nicole Lewis – The University of Tulsa

I am currently in my first year of study at the University of Tulsa in Oklahoma, USA with a major in nursing. I chose nursing for my career choice because people in the world will always need someone to help them become healthier and to take care of them when they are not at their best. Being a nurse gives you an opportunity to not only help people become healthier, but to also educate them about healthy choices; this gives me a sense of goodness in my life. My career choice relates well with my UL Engage project because it is all about encouraging people to live a healthier lifestyle and showing them how they can achieve that. At my house in the states, my mom and I take care of a vegetable garden in hopes of encouraging our own family members and neighbours to eat homegrown vegetables and fruits, instead of processed foods. You only get one body, so you have to take care of it.

OUTCOMES

With the St. Mary's Community Allotment project, our goal was to get the community interested in the allotment site and encourage them to start living a healthier lifestyle by planting fruits and vegetables. To achieve this goal we created a flyer advertising an opening event at the allotment site. The purpose of the event was to spark an interest in the allotments and gardening as a whole. We gave out free seeds and gardening tools, as well as a "how to" pamphlet for growing vegetables and herbs. The outcome of the event was positive. Many people within the community stopped by the allotment site to see what all the excitement was about. The children of the community were very excited about the event because they got to take home flowers and vegetables that they could try to grow themselves and many of the children showed a great interest in seeing the vegetables begin to grow at the allotment site. The participation of the adults and children resulted in a successful outcome for our event and was the beginning of achieving our main goal; to create a healthier lifestyle within the St. Mary's Community.

TESTIMONIAL

“I have learned from both, Nicole and Billy, effective teamwork and good communication skills. Working with them gave me the opportunity to engage with the wider community of UL, as well as with people across Europe and the United States. They both spent their valued time and knowledge with the community, including the children of the Time Out Club who said they were happy and excited that Billy and Nicole shared practical and educational knowledge. This experience has brought the aspects of team building, cooperation, and respect within St. Mary’s community. This will hopefully allow the allotment project to continue to grow and foster a greater understanding within the whole community.”

Majella Cosgrove, Community Partner



Billy Dopchie, Nicole Lewis, Majella Cosgrove

RECOMMENDATIONS

Ways to involve the community:

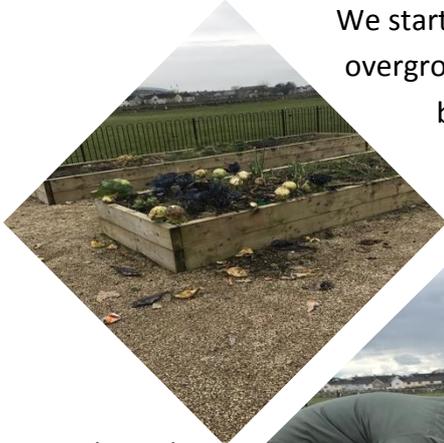
- Host a summer BBQ at the allotment site
- Have the children from the Time Out Club paint the outsides of the flower beds to create a more colorful atmosphere

For the future students:

- Plan an event that brings people to the allotment
- Create a social media page for the allotments
 - Provide contact information for people who want to get involved
 - Post about upcoming events
 - Use it as a place for people to ask questions regarding the allotments
- Focus on other aspects of the CWELL course (Community Wellbeing, Empowerment, Leadership and Life Skills)
 - Show the community other ways to succeed in living a healthier lifestyle and increasing their mental and physical wellbeing, besides planting your own fruits, vegetables, and herbs
 - Focus more on showing the children of the community ways to be healthy
 - Could host an event with the Time Out Club

GALLERY

We started with an overgrown flower bed



We weeded for a couple of hours



We planted vegetables ...



& flowers with Morgan & Majella!



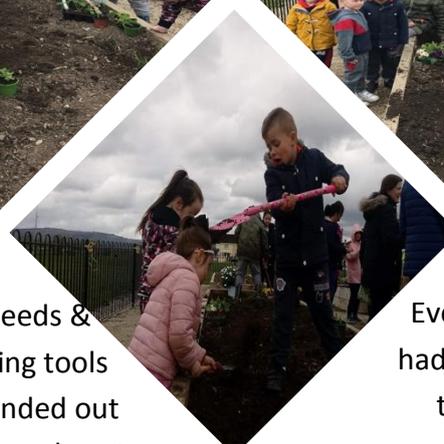
We held an event at the allotment site for the community.



The children of St. Mary's community got to enjoy the plants & dirt.



Free seeds & gardening tools were handed out to help people get started.



Everyone had a great time!



APPENDICES



Flyer for the Community Allotment Event

St. Mary's Community Allotments



A Guide for Growing & Caring
for Vegetables & Herbs

Easy Recipes Included!

About the Allotments

- How it got started:

- St. Mary's Community Allotments is a project started by CWELL (Community, Wellness, Empowerment, Leadership and Life Skills) students in 2015 with the aim to improve mental and physical health in the community.
- In respect, eight allotments have been provided by Limerick City and County Council in St. Mary's Park for the local community. The allotments allow people of the community the opportunity to harvest their own fruits and vegetables locally, fostering health and wellbeing among the members of St. Mary's Community.
- This project was undertaken as part of the work for UL Practicum Community Engaged Learning Module.
Student Name: Nicole Lewis
Academic Supervisor: Bernie Quillinan
Community Partner: Majella Cosgrove

- How to get involved:

If you would like to get involved with the allotments please contact **Majella Cosgrove** or **Limerick City CDP**

Email: majellacosgrove@outlook.com

Phone number: Limerick City Community Development Project 061 4110763

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Just so you know ...

Gardening is something for anyone who wants to give a go at growing their own food or for people who want a relaxing hobby. You get to decide how much time you



put into this activity and how serious you want to be about it. We believe that planting and harvesting your own fruits and vegetables can be a source of happiness and pride within the community, and encourages

healthy lifestyles and mental wellbeing. Join us in our efforts to encourage health-conscious living and start your garden today!

"The glory of gardening: hands in the dirt, head in the sun, heart with nature. To nurture a garden is to feed not just on the body, but the soul." -Alfred Austin

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The following pages give information on when and how to plant and care for vegetables and herbs in your garden.

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Getting Started

Preparing your Garden

No matter the size or type of garden you have, these things will always be important:

- Soil is free of weeds
- Rake and loosen soil
- Add compost or composted manure to your soil to enhance its nutrients
- Always water seeds after planting

Tools Needed

Some basic tools needed for gardening:

- A shovel or spade
- A small rake
- Watering can or jug



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When to Sow your Veggies

	LEAFY	CRUCIFEROUS	ROOT	ALLIUM
MARCH	Lettuce	Cauliflower Brussels Sprouts Broccoli	White Turnips Radish Potatoes	Onions Scallions Leeks
APRIL	Lettuce	Cabbage Cauliflower Brussels Sprouts Broccoli	White Turnips Swede Turnips Radish Carrots Potatoes Beetroot	Onions Scallions Leeks
MAY	Lettuce	Cabbage Cauliflower Brussels Sprouts Broccoli	White Turnips Swede Turnips Radish Carrots Beetroot	Scallions Leeks
JUNE	Lettuce	Broccoli	White Turnips Radish Beetroot	Scallions
JULY	Lettuce		White Turnips Radish Beetroot	Scallions
AUGUST			White Turnips Radish	

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Lettuce

HOW to plant:

Depth: ½ an inch

Spacing: Leaf lettuce → 6 inches between each plant

Head lettuce → 12 inches between each plant

Once seeds are sown, cover holes with dirt & water thoroughly

WHEN to harvest:

Leaf lettuce → when mature leaves form, pick the leaves from the plant

Head lettuce → when head of lettuce is firm, cut head from base

*if stalk begins to bolt from lettuce, harvest the remaining leaves or head

Cabbage, Cauliflower, Broccoli

HOW to plant:

Depth: ½ an inch

Spacing: 12-24 inches between each plant

Once seeds are sown, cover holes with dirt & water thoroughly

WHEN to harvest:

Cabbage → when head is firm, cut from base

Cauliflower → when head is firm & white, cut at base

Broccoli → when buds of the head are firm & tight, cut 6 inches from base

*If yellow flowers appear, harvest immediately

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Brussels Sprouts

HOW to plant:

Depth: ¾ an inch

Spacing: 28-34 inches apart

Once seeds are sown, cover holes with dirt & water thoroughly

WHEN to harvest:

When heads reach desired size, harvest from the bottom of the stalk up, twisting the bulbs from the plant

*removing yellowing leaves as the plant grows helps prevent disease

Ready to Harvest Plants



Leaf Lettuce



Head Lettuce



Cabbage



Cauliflower



Broccoli



Brussels Sprouts

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White & Swede Turnips

HOW to plant:

Spacing: Scatter seeds 4-6 inches apart

Depth: Do not cover the seeds with more than ½ an inch of soil

Water thoroughly after scattering seeds

WHEN to harvest:

Harvest crop after 6-10 weeks (dependent on your wants)

Loosen the soil around the vegetable, grab leaves & pull

Beetroot, Carrots, & Radish

HOW to plant:

Depth: ½- 1 inch

Spacing: 2 inches apart

Once they sprout, thin to about 3 inches apart

WHEN to harvest:

Beetroot → mature after 50 to 70 days

Carrots → 2-4 months or when diameter is ½ an inch

Radish → 3-4 weeks

Loosen the soil around the vegetable & pull from bottom of stem

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Potatoes

HOW to plant:

Depth: plant potato 4-6 inches deep

Spacing: about 10 inches apart

Plant the side with most eyes or sprouts facing upwards

When potatoes can be seen through the soil, cover them up until ready to harvest

WHEN to harvest:

Harvest 90-110 days after planted by digging up the plants

Ready to Harvest Plants



White Turnips



Swede Turnips



Beetroot



Carrots



Radish



Potatoes

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Onions

HOW to plant:

Depth: ¾ an inch

Spacing: 3-4 inches apart

WHEN to harvest:

Onions are ready to harvest a week after their tops have yellowed & fallen over

Leeks & Scallions

HOW to plant:

Depth: ¼-1/2 an inch

Spacing: 6 inches apart

WHEN to harvest:

Leeks → mid-autumn

Scallions → within 60 days of planting

Ready to Harvest Plants



Onions



Leeks



Scallions

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Herbs

Most herbs do best when planted in April

Basil

Basil needs a very sunny environment to grow so it is best to grow indoors or in a movable pot

Growing from seeds:

If growing from seeds, plant the seeds & lightly cover them with soil or compost. Once the plant gets a few leaves you can transplant the plants into a bigger pot.

Width: plant in holes at least ½ inch in diameter

Spacing: about 4 inches apart

Harvesting:

Harvest by picking the desired leaves from the plant

*Always pinch off flowers from the plant to allow the plant's energy to focus on the leaves

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Mint

Growing mint in containers rather than a garden with other plants is helpful because their root system spreads widely & mint will compete for resources

Growing from seeds:

Depth: 2 inches deep

Spacing: 6 inches apart

Harvesting:

Harvest by picking the desired leaves from the plant

Parsley

Growing from seeds:

Depth: ¼ an inch

Spacing: 6-8 inches apart

Harvesting:

Parsley is ready to be harvested when stems have about three leaves on them; cut the leaves from the outer portion of the plant

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Rosemary

Rosemary can spread to about 4 feet wide and reach about 4 feet tall so give this plant plenty of room

Rosemary is best grown from cuttings of the plant instead of seeds

Planting:

Depth: ½ an inch for seeds

Spacing: 3-4 feet apart

Harvesting:

Harvest whole stems of rosemary when needed

Sage

Sage takes a long time to grow so be patient!
Growing from a rooted plant is easier than seeds.

Planting:

Spacing: 24-30 inches apart (2 ft)

Harvesting:

Harvest whole stems or just desired leaves at any time

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Thyme

Growing time from seed will take about a year; if looking for faster option, grow from already rooted plant or cutting

Planting:

Depth: ½ an inch for seeds

Spacing: 9 inches apart

Harvesting:

Harvest whole stems or just desired leaves at any time

Ready to Harvest Herbs



Basil



Mint



Parsley



Rosemary



Sage



Thyme

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Recipes

Here are some easy recipes that use your homegrown vegetables & herbs –
Enjoy!

Roasted Root Veggies with Maple Glaze

Ingredients:

- 1 1/2 cups (1/2-inch) slices carrot
- 1 1/2 cups (1/2-inch) slices parsnips
- 1 1/2 cups (1/2-inch) cubed peeled turnip
- 4 teaspoons olive oil
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- Cooking spray
- 2 tablespoons maple syrup

Directions:

Step 1

Preheat oven to 450°

Step 2

Combine first 6 ingredients in a 13 x 9-inch baking dish coated with cooking spray, tossing well to coat. Bake at 450° for 10 minutes. Stir in syrup. Bake an additional 20 minutes or until tender and golden, stirring after 10 minutes.



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Beef Stew with Garlic Mashed Potatoes

Ingredients:

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 pound stew meat, cut into 1 inch cubes
- kosher salt & finely ground black pepper, to taste
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 onion diced
- 1 leek, thinly sliced
- 2 carrots, peeled & diced
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- 1 cup beef broth
- 1 cup dark stout beer (or beef broth)
- 2 tablespoons chopped parsley
- 1 teaspoon thyme leaves
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- ½ cup frozen peas



FOR THE GARLIC MASHED POTATOES

- 2 pounds russet potatoes, peeled and quartered
- 4 cloves garlic
- 1/2 cup half and half*
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Directions:

1. To make the garlic mashed potatoes, place potatoes and garlic in a large stockpot or Dutch oven and cover with cold water by 1 inch. Bring to a boil and cook until tender, about 15-20 minutes; drain well and return to the stockpot.

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LIMERICK LEADER

Island in bloom as barren Limerick field grows into allotment

by Nick Rabbitts 17 Apr 2018
Email: nick@limerickleader.ie

share 0 comments



At the opening of the King's Island community allotment were Clara Dempsey, Billy Doochie, Nicole Lewis and Majella Cosgrove | PICTURE: Dave Gaynor

IT was a red – or perhaps a green – letter day in the King's Island as a new community allotment opened in the area.

For the past two years, Majella Cosgrove, a student of the University of Limerick (UL) Community, Wellness, Empowerment, Leadership and Life Skills programme (or Cwell), has been striving to get a space where people can grow fruit and vegetables in the heart of St Mary's Park, off the ground.

And over the weekend, a space which was once a barren field beside the local community centre was introduced to the community as a bright new allotment space.

"I'm feeling great. This was a vision I had, now it's a community amenity," Majella smiled. "They needed this space. There was a lot of negativity around. Just look at the kids now: this is what it's about."

Mint, potatoes, beetroot and a variety of other flowers and food items are being planted in readiness for the summer season when the space will be in full bloom.

Kyrak Crawford, 7, St Mary's Park, said: "I love planting healthy food. I hope to come down here lots of times now to see how my plants are growing. Before this was here, it was just a field, it was very boring."

For Morgan Roche, also seven, the opportunity to dig holes in the soil was enough.

"This is great fun," he grinned.

Majella, alongside Christy Flanagan and Garry Hyland, were the original participants on the Cwell course in St Mary's Park.

Their project to develop a community space became the Limerick Leader's representative in the national Get Involved sustainability competition for 2015/2016.

UL research assistant Ciara Dempsey, who worked on the scheme, said: "It's a great day. Huge credit must go to Majella for getting it from a vision she had in her head onto paper as part of the assignments she has done. To see the community here today is amazing. Things like this don't come out of nowhere; they take a lot of hard work."

It's hoped the community allotment will be replicated in other regeneration areas.

An article published in the local newspaper regarding our St. Mary's Community Allotment event

ST. MARY'S COMMUNITY ALLOTMENTS

Student experience

"Working with locals to acquire knowledge by attending my in-class courses"
Community has brought me knowledge by attending my in-class courses"
 Billy Dopchie

START

"The glory of gardening: hands in the dirt, head in the sun, heart with nature. To nurture a garden is to feed not just on the body, but the soul."
 - Alfred Austin

Background
 St Mary's Community Allotment is a project started by CWELL (Community, Wellness, Empowerment, Leadership and Life Skills) in collaboration with the University of Limerick with the aim to improve mental and physical health in the community. Eight Allotment have been provided by Limerick City and County Council St. Mary's Park for the local community. The allotments allow locals the opportunity to harvest their own fruits and vegetables locally.

Challenges

- Little use of the allotments
- No sharing of expertise and knowledge
- Little community involvement

Event Organisation

- Organisation of a quiz and a raffle aiming at gathering locals in St Mary's Community Allotment
- Distribution of free garden Tools and other goodies to the population
- Distribution of garden planting calendars to locals
- Hand-out of free seeds
- Tasting of some exotic fruits and vegetables

Event activities

- Local radio and newspapers
- Community centres
- Local schools, churches and shops

How we got involved

- Prepared flower and vegetable beds
- Getting the community involved
- Sharing knowledge with the local community

Event

Join us in *at Green Little Plaza*
 St. Mary's Community Allotment
 Saturday
 14 April
 2pm - 4pm

OUTCOMES

- More residents involved in the allotments
- Increase of the community spirit
- High event attendance
- Development of work done
- Growing interest in the allotments
- Shared expertise

Island in bloom as barren Limerick field grows into allotment
 by Nick Rabbitts 17 Apr 2018
 It was a red - or perhaps a green - letter day in the island as a new community allotment opened in the University of Limerick (UL) Community, Wellness, Empowerment, Leadership and Life Skills programme (Cwell), has been striving to get a space where people grow fruit and vegetables in the heart of St Mary's Park, the ground.
 And over the weekend, a space which was once a barren field beside the local community centre was introduced to the community as a bright new allotment space.

END

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