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# Exploring Community Gardening: Motivations And Impacts

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**EXPLORING COMMUNITY GARDENING: MOTIVATIONS AND IMPACTS**

by

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Submitted to the Graduate School

of Wayne State University,

Detroit, Michigan in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

**MASTER OF ARTS**

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MAJOR: SOCIOLOGY

Approved By:

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Advisor

Date

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The lack of access to food plagues many urban areas, particularly minority and impoverished communities (Alkon et al. 2013; Anguelovski 2013; Otero et al. 2015). Scholars point to a number of reasons for its prevalence such as institutionalized racism and inequalities in power and knowledge. Inadequate access to food in communities, commonly referred to as food deserts, has significant consequences for individuals living in those areas. In poor urban areas, health issues are directly related to low numbers of grocery stores and higher numbers of liquor stores and fast-food restaurants (Boone-Heinonen et al. 2011; Devine et al. 2006). The city of Detroit, Michigan provides a poignant example of an urban area lacking grocery stores. In 2002 it had 9 supermarkets while the surrounding tri-county metropolitan area had 151 supermarkets (Zenk et al. 2005). Efforts to rectify these discrepancies have been made through urban farming and community gardening. The larger movement of food justice, sustainable agriculture, and environmental justice has also made strides in changing food access. In fact, community gardening in Detroit and other poor, urban U.S. cities has gained momentum as a viable way to counteract food access disparities over the last few decades.

Research on food access and urban gardening, and the subsequent individual and community impacts has increased substantially in the past few years. Boone-Heinonen et al. (2011) show that men, particularly low income, have significantly more consumption of fast-food when readily available near their home compared to their middle-upper class counterparts and to women. Convenience outlets provide foods high in fat, sugar, and calories as the most accessible food options (Holt-Gimenez and Wang 2011; White 2011; Otero et al. 2015). These food sources can directly contribute to higher rates of diabetes and obesity in food insecure locations (Eriksen and Menke 2011; Alkon and Norgaard 2009). Compounding the impacts of

food deserts is the lack of safe parks or playgrounds for adults and children to utilize for exercise (Eriksen and Menke 2011; Schulz and Bex Lempert 2004).

Jamison's (1985) study illustrates how urban gardening has the potential to change these health effects by equipping communities with tools to gain control and self-sufficiency over their food sources thereby promoting healthful living attitudes and behaviors. These findings are echoed in Müller's (2007) study on the community gardening movement in Germany which finds participants displayed a strong desire to have sovereignty over their food source. In addition, the gardens in Germany focus on increasing multicultural awareness and education of diversity in their communities. Similarly, introducing farm stands of locally grown produce in low income areas of Austin, TX increased fruit and vegetable intake, providing a healthy and affordable alternative food source for local residents (Evans et al. 2012).

The purpose of this exploratory qualitative research is to examine the role of gardening in communities when low socioeconomic status (SES) and food insecurity are not present. Most research on urban and community gardening has focused on impoverished areas. In contrast, I am interested in understanding the motivations and outcomes for communities of higher social standing that become involved in this movement. Community gardening can benefit mental health by providing a relaxing, stress reducing activity and a way to connect with nature, often not easily found in cities (Anguelovski 2013; White 2011; Carney et al. 2012). Research also shows that community gardening increases self-respect, motivation, and relationships between neighbors and their care for the community (Anguelovski 2013; Jamison 1985). These, among others, are some of the themes I examine in this study. Using data from in-depth interviews with residents affiliated with a community garden in a privileged mid-western community, I explore the following two research questions:

- (1) What are the motivating factors for an affluent community to be involved in gardening?
- (2) What are the impacts or implications to the community and individuals resulting from this participation?

Using a sociological lens drawing from established food movement frameworks, this study examines these questions. The first question examines the emergence of the organization and garden as well as individual motivations for participating in the organization. The current food movement represents a number of factions with varied agendas such as the alternative food movement, food justice, food sovereignty, and anti-hunger. Arguably, all aspects are encompassed in the overarching goal of replacing the current industrial food system, referred to by Holt-Gimenez and Wang (2011) as the food enterprise, with localized, socially and environmentally responsible food practices. Food access and sourcing is important for society as all individuals deserve equal access to healthy, nutritious food options. The food movement can be far reaching in its ability to benefit society, activists, and policy makers through the ways it motivates individuals and organizations to get involved in the movement.

The second question seeks to understand how the benefits of gardening may be similar regardless of the setting and context but also explore how the dynamics and reasons for gardening may be different. Much of the current literature on community gardening and food sourcing is based on qualitative case studies (Alkon et al. 2009; Jamison 1985; Kato 2013; Well, Gradwell and Yoder 1999). These studies tend to focus on food access disparities in low income areas, which is invaluable. There is little research on community gardening in middle-upper class areas. This study contributes to the literature by offering a unique perspective on a community garden that is not exclusively used by lower income individuals. It examines the perceptions and realities of those who use the garden and how it benefits them individually as well as the

community. Understanding these perspectives may shed light on how collaborations can be built and enhanced within the food movement.

Given the distinct context of gardening in this study, I approach my analysis through the lens of privilege. As most literature on community gardens focuses on impoverished, urban communities, exploring the realities of privilege in this community is important to understand the similarities and differences it has to other gardens in the movement. In this study, the community exemplifies that areas of higher SES overwhelmingly have access to better quality food and are more immune to food price fluctuations (Otero et al. 2015). In a broader sense, this reflects unequal distribution of power regarding food acquisition such that low income individuals do not control the resources they need to access healthy foods, while those of higher income do. Access to food, and specifically what types of food, is a power controlled by the different levels of government, allowing for quality food options to be readily available in privileged communities, but not low income communities (Alkon et al. 2013; Holt-Gimenez and Wang 2011). The reality of these differences in individual and community power structures is important to consider for the scope of this research.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Community gardening has the potential to change communities and health, but also promote self-sufficiency and empowerment among its residents to create more cohesive communities. The West Oakland Food Collaborative (although no longer in operation) provides an excellent example for promoting health and self-sufficiency in their predominantly black community in California by running an urban garden that offered culturally appropriate foods, and providing cooking classes and seminars to increase food knowledge in their community (Alkon and Norgaard 2009). Equipping residents with increased abilities to prepare meals on their own reduced dependence on convenience foods, and created friendships in the community through the classes they provided. The spill-over effects from the garden enhanced neighbor relations and increased broader social networks within the community. Similarly, Jamison's (1985) study looking at approximately three dozen community gardens across the United States, finds how working in an urban garden, paid or volunteer positions, increased feelings of self-worth and respect among participants. Residents find purpose not only individually, but also collectively within their community through the productivity of gardening.

Similar findings are illustrated through a study by Carney et al. (2012) on a community garden program used by Hispanic farmworker families in Oregon. A comparison of pre-garden and post-garden questionnaires shows that fruit and vegetable intake increased more than fifty percent for adults and children who participated in one full garden season. Beyond increasing produce consumption, families report a greater sense of "togetherness" from working in the garden as a family, and personal satisfaction in gaining a skill and education in agriculture. The researchers discover satisfaction stems from families having a greater sense of security over their food sourcing. Consistent with other research on gardens used by minorities, it also provides a

way for families to feel connected to their heritage and to continue passing on agricultural traditions to their children (Müller 2007).

The benefits of gardening that permeate into the community are multifaceted and have even been shown to increase the political activeness of residents (Jamison 1985; White 2010). Increased political awareness has been a significant part of the community gardening movement. As participants become more interested in sovereignty over their food, it increases knowledge and understanding of the impact bureaucracies have on food access, tying into the overall economic state of their community. This has resulted in increased voting and activism in many communities participating in the gardening movement. Increased activism is especially important for lower income minority neighborhoods that often have limited job opportunities and concerns of crime and loitering (Schulz and Bex Lempert 2004).

Gardening has provided an opportunity for youth and adults alike to have a shared sense of ownership over their gardens. Ownership promotes care for the community and reduces crime (Jamison 1985). Because these factors and others contribute to the “beautification” of communities, property values have increased dramatically for homes located near gardens (Voicu and Been 2008). Voicu and Been (2008) find this is especially true for areas of lower SES that have community gardens, and can be an important aspect to the revitalization process of communities near a garden space.

Like urban gardens, scholars show similar benefits exist among participants of community supported agriculture (CSA). CSA’s provide a way for residents who are not able to participate in the garden, but want the opportunity to purchase sustainably raised, local food. These programs are a fast growing part of the food movement and provide economic benefits to communities as well as social networking opportunities (Brehm and Eisenhauer 2008). In their

study of CSA's in New Hampshire and Illinois, Brehm and Eisenhauer (2008) demonstrate that environmental values and a desire to support the local community are among the main motivations for program participation. Their study also finds accessibility and affordability to be among the main motivations for participating in the CSA for lower-educated participants, with an almost linear decrease in these motivating factors as education increased. Similarly, CSA programs in rural Iowa provide economic benefits to farmers, and offer a way for residents to support local farming and provide affordable food that had more variety than nearby grocery stores (Wells, Gradwell and Yoder 1999). Although CSA participants may not always work in a garden, the benefits they receive can often be similar to those who do.

## **FRAMEWORK PERSPECTIVES**

Scholarship on the urban and community gardening movement draw on various frameworks to analyze their emergence, motivations, benefits, and impacts for individuals and the larger communities. In the following section, I outline three lenses I relied on in this study: food justice, environmental justice, and place attachment, connecting how these frameworks relate to the unique context of this study.

### ***FOOD JUSTICE***

The food justice framework goes beyond simply filling a need for food, and emphasizes the need for it to be culturally appropriate. In addition, it focuses on contextualizing food issues to the minorities experiencing these disparities. Alkon and Norgaard (2009) highlight food justice inequalities among the African American community in Oakland California and the Karuk tribe of California. Food justice addresses the physical need of food, but also the realities of inequalities in power, institutionalized racism, and the distribution of food through a human

rights discourse (White 2010; Kato 2013). This is echoed by the findings of Schulz and Bex Lempert (2004) in their study of perceptions of health in Detroit Michigan; residents report feeling their lack of resources such as healthful food is explicitly due to their race in a predominantly black neighborhood.

Food justice incorporates a blend of other food movement discourse, often characterized as one of the more radical or progressive approaches of the food movement (Holt-Gimenez and Wang 2011). This is largely due to its political advocacy goals. Food sovereignty is a significant part of food justice. It is political because it fights for the right of people to have complete control over their food sourcing; allowing them to choose where it can be grown, how it can be grown, distributed, and consumed. Food justice stands in direct contrast to the bureaucratic structures that control and sustain food practices such as large farming, monocultures, GMO's and industrial food (Holt-Gimenez and Wang 2011). Food justice argues that until the structural facets of food bureaucracy are changed, food will remain unequally distributed and poor in quality for many communities. In this study, I ask questions that expose the contrast between food justice, and how a community garden impacts and operates in an affluent community. In particular, I consider how the food justice frame may be most relevant in certain racial and SES contexts regarding its function as a motivating factor for garden development as well as participation in the garden.

### ***ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE***

Other scholars focus on the significance of urban gardening by incorporating it into the larger environmental justice movement through community cleanup projects like trash removal, reclaiming community open spaces, and working toward soil remediation (Anguelovski 2013). In urban areas, environmental degradation and food access can often impact similar communities

of low-income residents. Therefore, combining these forms of activism may have the potential to strengthen the movements. The environmental justice aspect of the food movement can be particularly important for individuals with a history or culture of subsistence lifestyles.

Because of their heavy reliance on the environment, Native Americans have been disproportionately subjected to environmental injustices due to pollution of the natural resources they depend on (Donatuto, Satterfield and Gregory 2011). The Swinomish tribe of Washington State, traditionally a fishing tribe of the Puget Sound, on which they own tidelands (Donatuto, Satterfield and Gregory 2011) highlights how heavy pollution rates have significantly impacted the consumption of shellfish and other seafood's the tribe traditionally subsisted on. Consequently, the drastic decrease of seafood availability in conjunction with high poverty rates and lack of accessible grocery stores has meant that this food source is not easily replaceable for the Swinomish people. Their struggle calling for cleanup of the Sounds pollution is framed by environmental and food justice because sovereignty over their food source has essentially been removed by pollution and has gone unaddressed by government entities, despite their grievances.

This experience is consistent with other research. Alkon and Norgaard (2009) show how the predominantly black community in West Oakland California has drawn on the environmental justice framework to reestablish their historical farming practices and sovereignty over their own food source. Much of the environmental injustice movement takes place in low income areas where the majority of residents are minorities and immigrants (Alkon and Norgaard 2009; Anguelovski 2013; Donatuto, Satterfield and Gregory 2011). Further, this framework fits the agrarian roots of their cultural heritage. Anguelovski's (2013) study is another poignant example of how low income communities with high populations of immigrants in Spain, Cuba and Boston use the environmental justice framework to reclaim degraded spaces to provide food sources and

other useable spaces to the community. I draw on this framework because the community garden I examine is located in an area with limited open green spaces to accommodate community gardens. In particular, I ask questions to determine how environmental motivations influence the start-up of this garden and if it results in beneficial environmental outcomes.

### ***PLACE ATTACHMENT***

Other research examines urban gardening by focusing on how the emergence of community gardens reshapes communities and their residents. Anguelovski (2013) argues a main driving force for action is the level of place attachment residents have in their neighborhoods. Place attachment refers to the physical and social connections residents have to their neighborhoods (Anguelovski 2013). Place attachment holds roots in phenomenological scholarship emphasizing the intersections of physical space and lived experiences (Trentelman 2009 (2009) summation of place attachment scholarship highlights that it is growing as a multidisciplinary approach to understanding the complexities of the social construction of “place” and fits especially well viewed through an environmental lens.

Anguelovski’s (2013) study provides a good illustration of this in the case of Dudley, Boston, which in the mid 1980's had over 1,300 abandoned lots and a tangible fear of gentrification among the neighborhood residents. Memories and positive experiences residents had from previous times in their neighborhood drove them to clean up many of the abandoned lots. A number of these locations became gardens, serving as a significant food source as the community had also experienced losses of grocery stores. The success of these projects stemmed from residents genuinely caring about the neighborhood, wanting to remain there and provide a healthy community for future generations.

Taylor (1993) makes a similar point regarding how action among residents emerges. Her study of minority environmental organizations in London, England, highlights the importance of including the community in the choice and execution of projects for the organizations to be successful. Without a strong community backing, she finds many organizations struggle with effectiveness. Listening to the need for easily accessible, fresh produce in the neighborhoods they serve, the Overstone Project, a minority run organization effectively involved their community utilizing churches and other non-profits, in starting gardens. Using a grassroots approach instilled a sense of permanency of the organization in the community and provided residents a feeling of ownership over their projects. This also helped establish a network for the delivery of the produce to multiple markets in other areas of the city with high minority populations. In contrast, she cites the Black Environmental Network, which has not established grassroots connections and does not consider community needs when choosing environmental projects. Consequently, this organization has been less effective in their level of impact as they have limited backing within the community. In this study, I ask questions to evaluate how the community is impacted by the garden, encompassing both physical and social outcomes. Many residents in this study have been life-long members of the community, or have spent 20 or more years there, creating an environment worth examining through this framework.

### CHAPTER 3: METHODS

Scholars have used different methods to study the food movement. Quantitative research provides data that demonstrates the number of grocery stores in a community, types of food purchases, nutritional information, food intake, and economical information that goes beyond the experiences of people in the community (Evans et al. 2012; Wiig Dammann and Smith 2012; Zenk et al. 2005). Most research on urban gardening draws on qualitative case studies using interviews or focus groups to gather information (Anguelovski 2013; White 2010). Qualitative participatory research designs are also used, providing a unique perspective by researchers who conduct observations while also working in gardens and farmer's markets (Kato 2013; White 2011). Qualitative techniques are important to provide means to understand the lived experiences of individuals and communities struggling against food access. The qualitative approach allows researchers to construct realities and meaning from these experiences and perceptions. As there are many dynamics to the food movement, having a body of qualitative research is critical to understanding how communities posit their experiences and choose to take action against real and perceived injustices (Creswell 2014; Holstein and Gubrium 1995).

In this study, I use an exploratory qualitative approach to examine and understand the motivations and outcomes of a community garden in a middle-upper class area. Using in-depth, semi-structured interviews is advantageous in this context because studies of this nature are limited. There is quantitative documentation on food purchasing behaviors and consumption patterns of middle-upper class persons, but less qualitative data to provide context to their choices and behaviors. This approach enables me to shed light on the impact of a community garden used primarily by persons in a privileged context to provide ways that collaborations within factions of the food movement can be overcome.

## **RESEARCH CONTEXT**

The site for this research project was the No Boundaries Foundation community garden (a pseudonym). No Boundaries is a charitable organization that provides schooling, job training, and life skills to special needs residents of the Lakeville area. The garden serves as one of their training sites and is located on the edge of Lakeville in a neighboring city. It is located on 3 acres of land donated by the Pleasant Streams Rehabilitation Center and is maintained by No Boundaries students, volunteers, and limited seasonal staff. A pilot program for the community supported agriculture (CSA) first occurred in the 2013 growing season, with some of the produce from the No Boundaries garden supplemented by a vendor at a large farmers market in the nearby city. In 2014 the garden ran its first CSA program using only their own harvest, and also ran a small scale farmers market at the Oaks, a nearby senior living facility in Lakeville. The location of No Boundaries in Lakeville serves as a unique context for researching the food movement because it is a historically affluent community that does not suffer from food insecurity or lack of access to healthy foods. In particular, the context allows me to analyze how community gardening manifests in distinct and similar ways to other places where poverty and denied access to health resources are a significant part of the community setting.

Lakeville is situated on a relatively large body of water, bordering the eastern side of a large Midwestern city. The community maintains an early twentieth century feel and caters toward families. Lakeville has numerous municipal parks along with various private clubs, providing abundant outdoor activities to its residents. The community also contains a number of chain grocery stores as well as smaller specialty stores. It has a slightly older population compared to surrounding areas with an overrepresentation of the 35-54 age range. Residents of Lakeville have a median income of roughly \$100,000 with approximately 69% of residents

holding a bachelor's degree or higher (U.S Census Bureau 2010-2014). They are also a community of very low racial diversity comprised of 93.2% of residents being White only (U.S Census Bureau 2010-2014).

The SES context of Lakeville stands in stark contrast to many communities developing gardens that typically have higher rates of poverty, lower educational attainment, yet high levels of racial diversity. For example, as explored among White (2010, 2011) and other scholars (Zenk et al. 2005), Detroit Michigan has for many years been a food insecure community and the movement in this city of urban agriculture and community gardening serves as more than an ideological practice but as a necessary means of food acquisition. Areas of Detroit, as well as New Orleans and Boston, have all successfully implemented community gardens in neighborhood contexts dissimilar to Lakeville (Kato 2013; Anguelovski 2013). These communities were primarily African American with low SES. This broader context is important to keep in mind when considering the impact of the garden in this study compared to other gardens in the literature.

## **SAMPLE RECRUITMENT**

To recruit participants for this study, I used a few sampling techniques. I purposively selected five participants from relationships I had established during the summer of 2014 when I volunteered in the garden and participated in the CSA deliveries. I used snowball sampling from one contact's recommendation to recruit another respondent who had connections to the garden program in 2014. I recruited the remaining twelve respondents through phone calls I made using a list of volunteers provided to me by the No Boundaries Foundation. I conducted 18 in-depth semi-structured interviews amongst No Boundaries staff of the organization and the garden program, CSA participants, and other volunteers from the garden.

This sample provided a range of ages from college students to retirees, ages 25 to 87 however the sample was mostly of an older age group as half the participants were over age 50. Participants also had varying income levels from earning less than \$30,000 annually to over \$160,000 annually with a third of the sample declining to provide income information. There were four men and fourteen women who participated in the study. The race/ethnicity question on the sociodemographic survey was left blank so respondents could write in their responses. Aside from two participants who chose not to disclose that information, fourteen responded as either “White” or “Caucasian.” One participant responded as “White, Greek extraction” and one as “European American.” The below table provides an overview of basic sociodemographic information for the sample.

Table 1: Participants and Select Sociodemographic Information

<b>Name</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>Lakeville Resident</b>	<b>Number of Children</b>	<b>Highest Level of Education</b>	<b>Gross Income</b>
Andrew	54	Married	Yes	3	Bachelor’s Degree	>160
Ashley	50	Married	Yes	3	Associates Degree	<30
Bailey	70	Married	Yes	3	Master’s Degree	110-119
Christine	67	Divorced	Yes	2	Master’s Degree	60-69
Claire	-	Married	Yes	4	Master’s Degree	-
Cole	87	Widower	Yes	2	Master Degree	70-79
David	25	Single	No	0	Bachelor’s Degree	<30
Diane	64	Married	Yes	2	Master’s Degree	120-129
Elaine	62	Married	No	2	Professional Degree	100-109
Hillary	71	Widowed	Yes	3	Master’s Degree	-
Jane	25	Single	No	0	High School	<30
Mallory	-	-	Yes	-	-	-
Mark	53	Single	No	3	Some College	30-39
Olivia	67	Married	Yes	3	Doctorate Degree	-
Paula	53	Married	Yes	4	Master’s Degree	-
Ruth	-	Married	Yes	-	Master’s Degree	-
Sidney	36	Married	Yes	3	Master’s Degree	>160
Teresa	27	Married	Yes	0	Master’s Degree	90-99

Note: Blank spaces indicate a declined answer

Note: Gross income in thousands

Overall this sample is a close representation of the Lakeville community as it is predominantly Caucasian, older, highly educated, and of relatively high income levels. The sample for this study was unique compared to others in the literature in that a large number of participants were retired. Of the women, 6 of the 14 participants were retired while half of the men were retired. Of the total sample 11 participants were also either retired educators or currently working in some capacity with the school system. This is significant as the founder of the organization is a retired educator; the study sample is a reflection of the overall composition of the organization which draws heavily from the founder's personal and former professional networks from the Lakeville school system.

## **INTERVIEWS**

Interviews lasted between 45-90 minutes in length, and took place at a location of the participants choosing. I interviewed six participants in their home, three at local coffee shops in Lakeville, three at No Boundaries' office facility, three at the garden, two on the phone, and one at a public park in Lakeville. I began the interviews by reviewing the nature of my study and providing a brief outline of the interview guide questions. I provided participants the informed consent agreement to review, and answered any questions about it. I also provided participants with a copy of the informed consent agreement to keep which I signed. I used pseudonyms for the name of the city the research site was located in, the organization and participants, and local businesses to best protect identities.

I designed questions in an open ended way to allow for a fuller narrative from the participant and I used probing when necessary to explore themes of the research as well as to explore unexpected, relevant information provided by the participant. The interview guide focused on three major themes: (1) emergence of the organization and garden (2) motivations of

the volunteers, and (3) individual and organizational outcomes as related to food and health, and community development. At the close of each interview, I asked respondents to fill out a basic sociodemographic survey.

***ORGANIZATION AND GARDEN:*** The first interview guide theme centers on the history of the organization, its purpose and activities, and the garden program. I asked questions regarding how the organization was founded, what the purpose of it was, if and how the purpose has changed, as well as what participants saw as its future direction. These questions aimed to understand the emergence of the organization, paying close attention to how issues of food justice, environmental justice and place attachment might have influenced the development of the organization generally and the creation of the garden specifically. Understanding the organization's activities and goals allowed me to capture the larger motivating factors that frame the emergence and development of No Boundaries.

***MOTIVATIONS OF VOLUNTEERS:*** This section of the interview guide focused on gaining a better understanding of the volunteer's motivations to become involved in the garden. I asked about the garden's structure and activities, its purpose and goal, and the community supported agriculture (CSA) program. These questions sought to provide an evaluation of the organizations programs and a sense of the motivations for why participants chose to get involved with No Boundaries and specifically the garden. As previously shown, much of the literature supports involvement in community gardens stemming from a need for healthful food, or a desire to improve community conditions (Anguelovski 2013; Müller 2007; Voicu and Been 2008). Comparable to the questions on the larger organization, these questions sought to connect how individual motivations might be driven by food justice, environmental justice, and place attachment. Finally, I also asked the study participants to compare or contrast their experiences at

No Boundaries with other types of volunteer activities they have done. Those questions sought to understand participant's level of place attachment prior to the garden, as well as general philanthropic tendencies of the community. I inquired as to their impressions of "community" within the organization to further explore their overall motivation for involvement with the garden and how they were most impacted from their experience.

***INDIVIDUAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL OUTCOMES:*** The third theme of the interview guide explored organizational and individual outcomes as related to food and health, and community development. To examine food and health outcomes, I first asked the participants to describe what "being healthy" meant to them, and explored how food in particular fit into their idea of health. Because a number of food movement studies are typically in impoverished communities, exploring health perceptions in a middle-upper class context may reveal distinct experiences. These questions gave insights into perceptions of health in the community and the ways in which the garden has, or could potentially, impact health through means of offering nutritious food and physical exercise. They also explore potential barriers of the garden functioning as a health enhancing resource for the community.

To examine community development, I asked questions about the participant's vision of their community, the importance of being involved in the community and ways to be involved, and the gardens impact on the community and the broader impact of No Boundaries. I used these questions to gauge the level of importance the participant places on being active in the community, and how they saw the garden fitting into the overall scheme of their community. This viewpoint is consistent with the literature such that gardens in impoverished community's serve many social functions (Carney et al. 2012; White 2010), and these questions explore this in a middle-upper class context.

## **DATA ANALYSIS**

Data analysis for this study used both focused and open coding techniques to analyze the emergence and development of organization and the garden, and individual and organizational motivations and outcomes as related to food and health, and community development. Coding consisted of identifying key terms, ideas, and emerging themes from the transcripts. Although I examined the subsections of the interview, my goal was to use an analytical style that identified interconnectedness of themes to construct meaning from the perceptions and lived experiences of the respondents (Holstein and Gubrium 1995). In this way, I analyzed specific interview guide questions, but I also reviewed the transcripts to identify texts that addressed motivations and outcomes embedded elsewhere in the interviews.

I conducted, transcribed verbatim, and analyzed all interviews. I audio-recorded interviews using a hand-held recording device, and in some cases my personal cell phone. I also took notes as necessary during and after the interview about the participants behavior, facial expressions, and the setting in which the interview took place. Recording the interviews allowed me to rely less on extensive note taking and to focus on opportunities for probing questions and identifying emerging themes. I have organized the remainder of the thesis around these themes.

## CHAPTER 4: MOTIVATIONS

"...everybody becomes like a family you get to know each, you talk about different things to do and you, that's the plan for the day and sometimes you gotta change it around but it all works. It's like a big family..."

-Mark

This chapter provides a brief overview of the emergence of the organization and garden program, its goals and activities, and highlights some of the challenges for No Boundaries. I then examine participant motivations for involvement in the programs. The core motivating factors I explore are: volunteer opportunities, helping special needs persons, the chance to participate in gardening and/or receive local produce, and needs-based participation.

### THE EMERGENCE OF NO BOUNDARIES AND THE GARDEN

Interviews quickly brought to light that the Lakeville community is close knit, and that of the special needs community even more tightly knit. This theme of "closeness" ran throughout all aspects of the research and was spoken of in both positive and negative contexts, as exemplified by Mark's comment at the beginning of this chapter where he described how the organization felt like a family. The family-oriented feel of the organization was evident in that all but two volunteers, David and Sidney, mentioned the founder by name and knew the core reasons for her starting the foundation. Teresa, a 27 year old woman explained:

No Boundaries started like 6 years ago. [The founder] has a daughter with special needs...She and a few other parents were feeling like there was a lack of resources for people with disabilities in the community, especially the 18-26 and above 26 age group. So they started as a small retail shop here...and started just getting donations of clothes, and actually they first started at [the high school] doing prom dresses, then once they got big enough they moved to the corner there...But that's mostly how it got started, so it started, parents really, just very grassroots, just saw a need in the community for job opportunities for people with special needs and then the determination of the micro-enterprises were based on available resources and interest of the students.

It's likely that the grassroots beginning of the organization, as described by Teresa, contributes to the feeling of closeness as many of the families involved were ones that already knew each other from other activities in the community. A similar account is given by Ruth, a middle-aged woman, when asked about the story of the No Boundaries Foundation:

And uh, when she first started No Boundaries it began out of [the high school], she was granted a place there and they were selling donated prom dresses for students, and that's how they started. I think, my friend who started this, felt there was a need to train and have uh...schooling. Because uh...some of the young people who were being hired for jobs then they lost their jobs because they didn't have the proper skills. So her idea was to start a place where they would get this training.

Ruth's account touched on what became clear from the majority of volunteers – many were involved because of a personal connection at the organization. Whether knowing the founder, or through the invitation of a friend who was involved in the organization, only a few joined for reasons outside a personal connection. As mentioned in Ruth's account, the inception of No Boundaries took place in one of the local high schools. That many of its leaders and volunteers are also somehow connected with the Lakeville school system, and over half of those in this study were retired educators has had a lasting effect on the organization.

When I discussed the organization's goals and purpose, it was apparent that they were made quite clear to not only its staff, but volunteers and other participants. Most volunteers gave responses consistent with the organization's official statements. Although most acknowledged that job skill training was a significant component of No Boundaries' goals, the idea of self-worth and life experiences for the special needs adults was seen as an equally vital part of what happened at the organization. Hillary, a 71 year old woman, identified the goals for not only the special needs adults at the organization, but also the community:

Okay I think their goal is to get these, as many of these developmentally disabled young adults trained to be out in the community, so um they have a feeling of self-worth, a feeling of contributing to society and um and for the community I would say to realize

these are lovely individuals and are trying to make a contribution to the community in any way they can.

Most volunteers had some knowledge of the organization's other activities. From the beginning of No Boundaries, the Resale shop had been the cornerstone of their programming and remains the organization's largest source of revenue. Other programs have come and gone, or changed in execution and scope, such as laundry and online sales programs. This led to different accounts of what the organization does depending on the time and length of participation by each volunteer. As described by Mallory, a middle-aged woman:

Yeah so I know they've got the garden, they've got the laundry service, they sell things on eBay, they've got the resale shop, and I know they tried to get something going with [a seniors organization] but there was some political problems there.

Those without a personal connection leading to their involvement had less understanding of programming outside the garden. When asked about the organization's activities, Sidney, a 36 year old woman explained:

And I knew they had the garden, they were selling the items at farmers markets, they hadn't started the, what's it called? CSA, yeah they hadn't started that yet. So they were selling stuff at the farmers market, they had the store, and they were starting like an eBay type business, um...what else? I think that's all. I think that was all the little enterprises going on.

These accounts illustrated the grassroots emergence of No Boundaries focused on promoting independence in special needs adults and creating greater inclusion through their programs within the community.

The garden was another program that has evolved since No Boundaries began. Beginning in a home backyard for mostly educational purposes, it expanded to a three acre operation on land donated by Pleasant Streams Rehabilitation Center in the city bordering Lakeville. Unlike their understanding of the organization as a whole, knowledge of the garden programs was relatively inconsistent. Cole, an 87 year old man, described the program as:

That, that started this, um, it was just the outfit here...they uh, donated use of their land there and it was just dug up and uh, we planted stuff, and uh, different people ran it, last year there was a gardener with a degree and all that and this year [she]...is in charge. It's a big job, but they raise all kinds of vegetables and flowers and they do have some kind of a program where people can buy so much for a year. And they also have stuff where people if they need help they give them, uh, like every Saturday they'll pack up bags of pota – tomatoes, beets and whatever they got in the garden, and that's all free...So anyway last year, they put in these boxes, these wooden boxes, and I don't know why, but one of the guys in charge wanted to do that...

Cole's description highlighted that he was aware of the general history of the garden, however regarding its activities, he knew about the community supported agriculture (CSA) program in the sense that food was sold, however when asked specifically about the CSA later in our interview, he did not know the term but knew it as the "subscription program." I found this true of multiple volunteers, including CSA subscribers, who did not realize the program was called a CSA. He also mentioned bags of food given away for free on Saturdays; however when I asked other volunteers about this, no one else knew about that program.

The garden and the organization relied heavily on volunteers and both had a minimal number of paid staff. Until the 2015 garden season, which had a paid assistant at the garden, there had only been one paid formal position of garden Coordinator. Otherwise, the garden had been run largely by the Executive Director and volunteers. The garden has had a different coordinator each season, which given the accounts of volunteers, contributed to some inconsistencies in the programming as it has lacked continuity of leadership. Paula, a 53 year old woman, described these challenges when asked how feedback about the garden program was received by the foundation management:

Oh very receptive. Whether they've been able to implement all of it...and I don't hold them to that yet because it is such a new program and they've had a different person in charge each of the three years, so it's a little tough when you lose the continuity from one year to the next.

Inconsistencies or lack of clarity also arose when I asked about the goal or purpose of the garden program. Some volunteers saw the program as largely educational, some as a business venture, and many as a combination of the two. Elaine, a 62 year old woman, emphasized the educational benefits:

Again it's an offsite classroom without walls if you will, someplace to get experiences and it's kind of um, ah, one of those places you can kind of watch grow from beginning to end with the kids. They can actually see the results and you know, pat themselves on the back for a big part of that. So, the educational piece I think.

Although he acknowledged the garden's purpose as job training, David, a 25 year old man, echoed the greater benefit of the educational experience when he described the goals:

The intended purpose was like job skills, I guess. I dunno like being a garden grunt...outside of that garden I don't know how that skill was going to be translating, I didn't...like the reality was getting people outside...which I think was really good for them. You know being outside, being in touch with the land, like there is some therapy with that...Whereas like the garden, the garden was supposed to be an agricultural business with an educational purpose.

His account showed that although he understood in principle the purpose of the program, its practical application was not as clear. To highlight how much the garden changed, Mark, a 53 year old man, described his experience during a different summer at the garden:

Well this year we have a couple...college students... and it's something different that they came in so they're actually teaching the kids stuff while we're doing it. Stuff like what's good for the garden and what's bad for the garden. What animals are good for the garden and what aren't. So that was nice...

It was clear from these contrasting experiences the garden was a work in progress. Despite making contact with the community in some ways, the purpose of doing so was not always clear. Interviews showed that there was uncertainty on who the garden targeted, the special needs community, or if it had other goals.

The CSA program began in 2013 and it functions as the main source of revenue for the garden, providing a weekly delivery of produce and flowers to a limited number of participants

in the community. This was unlike other CSA programs that require participants to pick up their share from a designated site (Kato 2013; Wells, Gradwell and Yoder 1999). When asked about the CSA program, all participants were aware of it, whether or not they knew it as a “CSA.” The season for this garden ran from approximately May to September. Many CSA programs provide either a “bushel” or “half bushel” for subscribers. No Boundaries offered only one size option, a challenge that participants noted regarding the amount of produce they received. In its first year when the harvest struggled, No Boundaries partnered with a vendor at a large farmers market in the neighboring metropolitan city to supplement their produce. They have since only used their own produce in the CSA program.

The information gathered on the organization indicated that it was started as a way to address a need in the community. Key people in the community with the necessary resources were motivated by the need of the special needs community to create ways in attempting to help them acquire employment. From their efforts emerged a number of opportunities that have provided enriching experiences for the special needs community, including the garden program. The effectiveness of these programs requires further study, however it is evident that No Boundaries was important to those involved and continued in large part due to its volunteers. To further explore the role of volunteers, I now turn to an analysis of the individual motivations for becoming involved with the organization.

## **MOTIVATIONS**

In this study, the volunteers I interviewed became involved with No Boundaries, or the garden for a variety of reasons. In contrast to the central focus of the special needs community for No Boundaries and the garden, the volunteers’ motivations were a mix of altruistic and

individualistic goals. The below chart shows if volunteers were involved in other community organizations, and a brief description of why/how they became involved with No Boundaries.

Table 2: Involvement and Motivations for Participation in No Boundaries.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Active with Other Organizations</b>	<b>Motivation for Involvement in Organization/Garden</b>
Andrew	Yes	Was asked to help with gardening
Ashley	No	Was asked to run the garden for a season
Bailey	No	Was asked to volunteer, wanted the chance to garden
Christine	Yes	To get organic produce
Claire	Yes	To be active in a community garden
Cole	No	To help the special needs community
David	No	To practice sustainable gardening
Diane	No	To help the special needs community
Elaine	Yes	To help the special needs community
Hillary	Yes	To volunteer, be outside and enjoy gardening
Jane	No	To volunteer, had gardening experience
Mallory	Yes	To volunteer and chance to get local organic produce
Mark	No	To help the special needs community
Olivia	Yes	To help the special needs community
Paula	Yes	Was asked to be part of the CSA
Ruth	Yes	Was asked to be part of the CSA
Sidney	No	To volunteer, help special needs community/garden
Teresa	No	To help the special needs community and get local organic produce

As shown by the chart, half the participants in this study were involved in the community outside of their participation with No Boundaries. This, coupled with having a high percentage of retirees in the sample, exemplified a group highly invested in community volunteerism.

### ***VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES***

In this study, four participants, Hillary, Jane, Mallory, and Sidney, specifically mentioned getting involved simply because they were looking for an opportunity to volunteer. Of those motivated by volunteerism, all were women. Hillary, a 71 year old woman, exemplified this when she described "One of my friends was shopping in there and heard that they needed

volunteers. And that's...I didn't know anything about it, had never heard of it, and, and so...that's how it came about." Jane, a 25 year old woman provided a similar account:

So it's actually kind of funny, um, we had to do volunteer work for a class in the fall, and so I was being kind of lazy and I couldn't find a place so I called my friend whose brother is in the [No Boundaries] program.

These accounts showed that for some volunteers I interviewed, they were not motivated by the organization's central mission to help the special needs community. Instead, these volunteers simply participated because they had the time. This is in contrast to the research on community gardens that illustrates how participants become involved for reasons surrounding control over their food source and justice activism (Alkon and Norgaard 2009; White 2010).

However, once these volunteers became involved, the four women said they found meaning in the work they were doing and expressed being glad to have become part of the organization. Their work was not exclusive to the garden, and they all initially volunteered with other programs at No Boundaries prior to working in the garden. Hillary and Mallory were both retirees who have been involved with No Boundaries for some time, and also volunteer in other ways in the community. Jane, the younger woman who initially volunteered in the store for school credit, was asked to stay on as garden coordinator. Sidney was motivated by volunteerism while on maternity leave, however, she also explained that the amount of time she volunteered at the organization declined once she returned to her career. None of these women began their time volunteering in the garden. Instead, they learned about the program and then pursued helping in it, or they were asked; there was no real drive to be part of what was happening at the garden or the larger No Boundaries organization. Rather, for these women, their focus seemed to be more on just helping wherever the organization needed assistance.

### ***WORKING WITH THE SPECIAL NEEDS COMMUNITY***

The second motivating factor for the volunteers I interviewed was the opportunity to work with and help the special needs community. Five volunteers, Cole, Diane, Elain, Mark and Olivia, expressed a desire to work with special needs persons as the primary reason they became involved with No Boundaries. These volunteers were all over age 50. They also helped with many areas of the organization, except for Olivia who was exclusively a CSA recipient. Mark, a 53 year old man who volunteered because of his experience with special needs kids explained:

And so it was very scary but once I did it, it was very rewarding for me because um...I actually felt a purpose, I felt like I was helping somebody. I felt I was needed. And then not only that, it's they actually gave me...an insight on a different way of looking at things you know on life, and giving me a purpose to keep going on...So I started doing garden activities and helping with the classroom stuff, or like walking to the ice cream place and I got to know the different...I don't want to say characters, but different personalities of each one of these kids.

Mark went on to share in his interview about the good experiences he had working in the garden. However, the above statement made clear that the garden was not a main focus of why he continued to work with No Boundaries. Rather, his volunteerism persisted because of how he felt he contributed to the special needs students and also the personal benefits he received from working with them. Olivia, a 67 year old woman who was a retired educator, provided a similar account. She learned about the organization through word-of-mouth and saw it as an opportunity to support the special needs students she had known while teaching. Her participation in the CSA was framed as an extension of supporting the organization and its work with this community:

I heard about the organization just kinda through the grapevine. You know, other teachers in the department and other people, umm, in the community, and I said "huh I wonder if that's the same thing that my student's parent was working on?" And it was, so yeah, it was just word of mouth...We were in the resale shop, my granddaughter and I went and we love to go and look around there, and um they had a flier on the counter and it was, it's a garden subscription and the [special needs adults] plant and maintain a garden.

Although Olivia talked about a number of ways she enjoyed the CSA and how great the produce was, she saw the biggest benefit to be how it contributed to getting the special needs community exposure in their neighborhood. Similar to Mark, the food coming out of the garden was viewed more as a “fringe” benefit and not as the goal of the garden. The experience of Diane, a 64 year old woman, echoed the others. She too framed the garden in terms of its benefits to the special needs students:

You know, fresh air, sunshine, you know even if they sit on the blanket, chase butterflies, play ball or something when they're out there at the [garden] site, so it just gives a real quality. And then they're trying the green beans, trying the tomatoes, making scarecrows, doing that stuff.

Her thoughts further demonstrated that food was not be the sole purpose behind this garden, but the experiences it provided to the special needs students. This revealed an interesting tension – the garden was meant to be a fun, educational experience but because the CSA was the garden's main source of funding, the garden also had pressure to function as an agricultural venture. This again pointed to the necessity of solid goals, plans, and leadership needed to maintain the garden. Without that, it is possible that some volunteers may not have a strong sense of “buy in” to advance the garden program. This is particularly the case of volunteers motivated by the special needs community, not necessarily the garden's success.

### ***OPPORTUNITIES FOR GARDENING AND FRESH FOOD***

Other volunteers I interviewed framed their involvement in terms of seeking gardening opportunities, or wanting to connect with the garden as a way to get fresh, local produce. The four participants motivated by this were Christine, Claire, David and Teresa. Christine and Claire were over 50 and retired, while David and Teresa were under age 30. Claire's main reason to become involved was her desire to be part of a community garden:

And then a few years back, which I was very excited about, we were over there [No Boundaries] and she was talking about starting a community garden. And I wanted to be part of a community garden badly! Because I just think they're great. And uh, so I was very excited about that, and it was very interesting...I have gone there for their planting day, and I have gone there a couple times. So, I helped with some of the planting and as a volunteer with these kids, as I said you get to know these kids and they're just loveable.

Christine, a 67 year old woman who was a recipient of the CSA, talked about wanting to be involved because getting fresh produce was important to her, as she described:

When I was in there and I went through all this I found out about their garden and I said "sign me up." Because I was not only doing it for them I was doing it for me. So I could not only eat vegetables but also organically. And believe me, I ate a lot of vegetables that year...But I really, really like the idea of having the...um, the...the I don't know what you call 'em? Clients, or students, or whoever they are being part of the community and having a way to give back to it, I just thought that was the coolest idea in the world.

Unlike the volunteers motivated primarily by the special needs students, these accounts provided the opposite experience. These volunteers were simply driven by gardening and fresh produce. It was only after they were involved that they described how they came to have great appreciation for the special needs community. David, a 25 year old man, spoke similar to Claire and Christine, but he also uncovered tension between involvement for the opportunity to garden, and the struggle to effectively incorporate the special needs students:

But um, the thing is like I'm a gardener, I am not a special needs educator. And so like my whole thing was like I know how to grow plants and stuff and like I didn't know what I could have the students do, or the interns do, and a lot of it was actually done by me, the volunteers and my intern, my typical intern.

His account highlighted the interesting circumstances surrounding this garden in that there was a myriad of volunteers, not all of whom were trained to work with special needs persons, working in this garden. This may prove instrumental as to why there were inconsistencies with volunteers. For those motivated by the opportunity to garden, it was possible that they were unsure how advantageous their contributions were, particularly when the goal of the garden was unclear as well as to whom it was intended to benefit. However, based on the volunteers I interviewed, it

also suggested that the organization was able to capture the focus of those who originally came to No Boundaries for other motivating reasons.

### ***ORGANIZATIONAL NEEDS-BASED PARTICIPATION***

The above motivating factors were all self-driven by the volunteers themselves. However, some volunteers I interviewed had not joined because of their desire to be involved but rather were specifically asked by someone at the organization to help with a need they had at the time. This was the case for five participants: Andrew, Ashley, Bailey, Paula and Ruth. All were over 50 and retired, aside from Ashley who was still working. Andrew, a 54 year old man, explained:

So anyway, I started getting involved in [organic gardening]... so [she] kind of knew it so she asked me to get involved in the garden. So I was more or less involved from a uh...the gardening part of it... and they would organize days having those kids come by by bus and what the kids did in the garden, so I basically just tried to grow the stuff. It was kind of difficult though because it was a moving target. Initially that was the goal and then all of a sudden they um, informed me that they sold these shares or these market baskets, which was a great idea except that um, the garden wasn't set up to produce along those lines, you know?

Bailey, a 70 year old woman, had a similar experience:

So, I really didn't have time to volunteer, and to tell you the truth, you might find this interesting, it was never appealing to me to volunteer. I always wanted to get paid for my work...So I went to this meeting and they were listing all these thing you know the store, and I thought eh, I don't want to do retail and the cash register, and they said the garden and I went "oh! garden? Put me down there for the garden."

Andrew and Bailey both provided a number of ways they felt they benefited from the garden, however if they had not been asked to come help, it was unlikely they would have arrived to No Boundaries on their own accord. Importantly, they both already had an interest in gardening, representing a nice way to incorporate their hobby into volunteer work. Yet again, this illustrated how this garden did not emerge as part of food activism; it was merely an outlet to be involved in

the community. This was also the case for two volunteers who were recipients of the CSA.

Paula, a 53 year old woman, explained:

So, umm, we were one of their, not prototypes, but one of their first families to sort of try it their first year that they planted. And we were excited to be part of that because we, we enjoy food. Love to be able to buy things locally, organic grown, and to support, you know we probably...the cost was probably more than we would have paid at you know, a store, but it was an investment in that group of young people...and I was asked if we would be a pilot family and I said "oh absolutely."

Again, had Paula not been asked to join the CSA, it was possible she never would have. In addition, although she talked about the importance of local, organic produce, she saw that as almost a secondary benefit to how her contribution helped the special needs community at the garden. Her comments further supported how No Boundaries was able to shift volunteers' motivations over time – Paula, like many others, came to the organization for other reasons but ultimately focused on how their work mattered for the special needs community. Paula's experience also was consistent with what the other forms of motivations represented: participating in the garden was an option or luxury that they could choose to spend their time on.

This is unlike other community gardens found in the literature which are shown to be a vital asset in providing fresh produce to residents (Alkon and Norgaard 2009; Anguelovski 2013; Carney et al 2012; White 2010; White 2011). Furthermore, among all the motivation types, even those most interested in gardening seemed to have limited dedication to the garden. This could possibly be due to many of the volunteers already having gardens at their own home, or because their community already provided a number of outdoor activities they could get involved in. In other words, the garden does not represent revitalization (Anguelovski 2013) or self-determination (White 2010) as is found in other studies. I would argue that these accounts embody why it may lack a core group of volunteers dedicated to progressing the garden in the community. In addition, lack of centralized leadership to harness the different motivations may

also contribute to higher turn-over in volunteers. However, as some accounts have shown, the organization has proven able to somewhat shift volunteer motivations. Some motivations changed after involvement in the organization and shifted toward a focus on the special needs community. This aspect may prove vital to sustaining the organization and should be examined further to understand how far reaching this effect of the organization is on individuals.

## CHAPTER 5: OUTCOMES

“Now, [the special needs community] they’re involved with the garden, they’re working at the store, they’re putting on shows, so they really blossom out. So that was the whole purpose of it.”

-Cole

In this chapter I explore how the garden has impacted the community and the No Boundaries organization. I also examine the ways in which this garden may not fit into typical ideals of the alternative food movement, compared to other gardens discussed in the literature.

### IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITY

In this study, volunteers expressed a range of perceptions on how they saw the garden impacting and changing their community. Although many saw the food as a nice benefit of their participation with the garden, they did not see it as the most vital part of the program. It quickly became clear that the garden was not viewed as a viable food source to this community. Rather, the benefits for the special needs students were discussed along with other social benefits like bringing multiple generations together and having an outdoor educational space, and a place to enhance mental health. In terms of food, I would argue the largest benefit of the garden was that it started a conversation about eating local and sustainably raised foods. As described by Andrew, he saw the impact as getting people to diversify their diet:

You know, I think it does a good thing for everybody...But you need, you know, when you get a box of food you need to think outside your normal box to deal with it. You know, so if all of a sudden we give people eggplant and they don’t know what that is, they have a choice they can either pitch it, or go on the internet and look up a recipe. So hopefully the stuff is getting used.

David expressed a similar idea, and also talked about how the garden created opportunities to talk about the food movement:

I think it had some impact on the people that were involved, and people thought it was cool. And I think because we had the “feel good” story it was easier to get people to

engage and to cross that line, to cross [the street], and come over to the ghetto...But um, you know, I think it was good it got some people out of their routine, it got people thinking about urban agriculture, and I think it did engage a lot of people and I had a lot of conversations with people about [it].

The garden's contribution as a food source to the community was perceived overwhelmingly as insignificant. However, all participants acknowledged that they thought it could be a viable source if the program expanded. The idea of expanding the garden raised mixed reactions as some participants saw the program as focused on experiences for the special needs students, and therefore had no need to expand, or felt the garden's goal was already met. These differing opinions were often related to what motivation the participant had for their involvement. Those interested in gardening wanted it to expand and those who wanted to focus on the special needs were more cautious about expansion. Paula described:

Um...so yeah I think it has...it's pretty small right now. And that's [being a food source] not its purpose. It hasn't had that as a goal. Um, I think it would only be a secondary goal...they have to stay on their task which is to train special needs kids in real life, real world job skills, and um, and secondarily if it provides yummy healthy food in the area, fantastic.

Elaine, a 62 year old woman, provided a different perspective. She was interested in looking for ways for the program to expand as a business:

I think it's small just because of the subscriptions we have out there right now, it's small. But if we were to...I'm just thinking like on Saturdays down in the Park and Sundays up here in the Woods, they have full farmers markets. You know, we could expand to have a table at one of those markets if we had the people to do that.

These accounts further highlighted that the goals of the garden program were not clear to those involved; tensions emerged as to which direction the garden should take. A barrier to the garden's continued success may be that its purpose was never explicit and there was not a clear path for growth, or reason for its expansion. As expressed by Elaine and other volunteers, barriers to expanding the program were largely staffing and space. Deciding a path for

expansion, and whether that is possible, will be an important aspect of the organization in years to come for the garden program and understanding its capacity to be a part of the community.

In addition, outside of the few volunteers who reported consuming more produce because of the garden, I did not find information to support that the garden was contributing to the community's health in a meaningful way. Volunteers talked about the importance of sustainably raised foods, eating local, eating in season, knowing to shop the perimeter of a grocery store, and knowing how to read and interpret food labels. Understanding these ways of approaching food, and having the access to fulfill almost every aspect of the "checklist," underscored some of the characteristics that set the Lakeville community apart from others in the surrounding area. Williams and Sternthal's (2010) research on health disparities examines the realities of racial-ethnic and SES differences in health outcomes, showing that white men and women with higher SES continue to have better health outcomes than all other racial groups. Their study provided context for understanding health attitudes found in this study as those involved have at least some education over high school, are white, and have high income levels. Because of this, they already had access to health resources and did not depend on the garden to fill any of their needs.

Although some volunteers were not completely satisfied with the food choices in their community, all agreed that despite minor grievances, they could access almost anything. Bailey, a 70 year old woman, provided a succinct account of what many participants described when asked if there were food items they wanted, but could not get in their community:

Um, yeah, there's no problem here, plentiful, plentiful. This place on the corner, you know Kroger's is fine, there's this place called Fresh Farms Market, you know plenty of fresh things. It's not a problem.

The differences in access to health resources were clear in the Lakeville communities. Mentioned in particular was the walkability of the community. This was in contrast to a number

of communities surrounding Lakeville. Olivia described this as a very desirable trait when discussing how the community has impacted her health:

Oh yeah, it's a walkable community. So I can walk to 5 or 6 fitness...oh, more than that...more than that, 10! I can think of 10 fitness opportunities off hand. But I can also walk to library, the bank and the grocery stores, and the lake. Some of my hobbies, groups, meet close by, so, its, it's a walkable community so that has shaped me a great deal. Shaped my family...

Her account underscored that the garden did not appear to provide a meaningful outdoor space for the community because it already has numerous opportunities for exercise and outdoor activities for residents. This finding was in contrast to other community gardens in urban areas with high crime and minimal green spaces in which the garden provides a safe haven for the community to utilize for exercise and relaxation (Carney et al. 2011; Jamison 1985).

When I spoke with volunteers about activities outside of the No Boundaries Foundation, they painted a clear picture that Lakeville provided ample ways for residents to be active in the community. Ashley, a 50 year old woman, described ways to participate as the "ideal" situation:

Oh yeah there's fishing rodeos and the farmers markets in two of our cities. We have um...um...our shopping district hosts all kinds of summer fairs and music concerts on Thursday nights and we have the War Memorial who coordinates a lot of activities, we are a community bursting with activities, yeah it's, they almost provide too many things...[it] has their own municipal park and kids have swimming lessons and tennis lessons. Yeah, it's pretty idyllic.

Many volunteers echoed what Ashley described, and a strong sense of ownership over the community also emerged in a number of interviews. Pointing again to the "close-knit" factor of this community, when talking about the importance of involvement, many discussed a clear expectation that people should be involved in order to partake in the benefits of their community.

Ruth, a middle-aged woman, explained:

Unless, unless you uh, take part in what goes on in the community, you don't own it. You're just a visitor. So it is, the only way to make things right is to become involved, if

you want things to change, you have got to make the difference. Become involved in what is going on.

Half the participants in this study were involved in the community in other ways. Their work with No Boundaries seemed to be an extension of how they could “give back.” The finding that the volunteers had an increased exposure of the special needs community was significant. However, I would suggest that the garden itself has not impacted the community at least in terms of its food contribution or use as a green space outside of when it is utilized by No Boundaries.

### **IMPACT ON THE ORGANIZATION**

No Boundaries was founded to provide jobs and meaningful life experiences for those with special needs, and that has remained their focus since the organization was created around 2008. The most prominent feedback I received when talking about what the organization could do in the future was to continue increasing visibility for the special needs community. As described by Elaine:

It feels still very grassroots piece, and...you don't want to lose that, that's the foundation. And once you step over that kind of hurdle and you lose that grassroots feeling...You lose that sense of personal touch and I think the board tries really hard to maintain that. Yet they want to grow and be better and do more things but you can't do that unless you take risks and venture out a little more.

In terms of the garden, expansion was the most common response for what should be the future of the garden. Many talked about wanting more of the garden produce in the community, and the idea of it expanding to a full farm. Staffing and funding was acknowledged as the principal barriers to these goals. As expressed by Sidney, participants saw many avenues to increase both programming and visibility of the special needs community. She referenced the CSA program specifically:

Um...I think more marketing would probably be a good idea...And I'm sure...so people who, I feel like, and this is probably a generalization, but I feel like people who

do...like...who do, like a CSA want to feel good about it, so like I think if you could really sell the fact that people with disabilities contributed to it, I think people would feel really good about picking that one, you know?

In addition to the CSA program, Christine talked about the potential impact the garden could have by partnering with the programs for senior citizens to help replace some of the lower-quality meals being served to them. She was enthusiastic when she described:

That, that could just be amazing. And then if they were using their own produce to do that? That would be really amazing...So something along that line where you could benefit a part of the community that maybe isn't eating well. Um, and it made me think of the senior center because they are not.

Other participants also expressed a desire to see the harvest from the garden benefiting not just those paying for the CSA, but integrated in ways to profit underserved populations in the community. These ideas by residents further highlighted that outside of its benefits to the special needs adults, the garden may not be contribute in a significant way to the Lakeville community. Christine's account was similar to others in that they had a desire to see the garden function more along the lines of a form of charity to assist community members who are in need of healthy foods. Not all participants felt this way. Ashley, a 50 year old woman, described:

Well the bigger it got maybe that could be something we could do, donate...to someone who couldn't afford the type of food that we have in our community. Um...but again, is that our responsibility? I mean yes we could get bigger but that could possibly mean we could afford more, um...uh, more programs for our special needs kids. So, you know, I like to be socially responsible but ultimately our goal is to take care of these kids and these adults.

Her thoughts on expansion further underscored that even within the organization there was a dichotomy of who the garden intended to serve, and how it benefited the organization. As she pointed out, and was likely not alone in feeling, if revenue from the garden increased, she argued that it should be put back into helping the special needs community, not the broader community. As it stands, the organization benefited from the CSA program which many pointed out was

costly but not minded as it was seen as more of a donation to the organization. This finding was consistent with the research by Brehm and Einsenhauer (2008) – as education increases, motivating factors to participate in a CSA of accessibility, affordability and quality decrease. The CSA recipients in this study were highly educated with one holding a professional degree, three with a Master's degree, one with a doctoral degree, and one participant who did not disclose their education. When asked about the CSA program, Mark, a 53 year old man, described it as:

Um, well they...I have no idea what the cost is. I don't ask, I don't care...But this year, oh my god, we've been giving a couple bags. So we could have actually done a couple more people. Oh but we had a things with the cucumbers where they were doing really good then it was [R makes drooping motion of the plant] where it's, so you know...Yep one of the risk. So you know, you tear it out, oh well, it wasn't meant to be this year. But they [CSA customers] understand, it's like okay we tried, you know...and that's what a lot of it is, it's like a big donation to help the thing and then give the kids a job and feel proud of it.

Even CSA participants who were concerned with price still saw the program as much more than just produce. As described by Christine, a 67 year old woman “As I recall it was pretty pricey. But that didn't bother me either because it, I figured it was going for a good reason, for a good cause...” These accounts provided a stark example of a significant difference between this garden, and those found in the literature. It highlighted the privilege within this community because price largely did not matter for almost every member of the CSA, and they were not all necessarily in it for the food but as a way to support the organization. This was in contrast to many community garden programs that offer reduced pricing on their produce because the gardens are situated in lower income areas (Alkon and Norgaard 2009; Carney et al. 2012; Evans et al. 2012). Although receiving the produce from this garden was important to participants, it was not as vital as has been found in other communities with gardens where quantity and price largely are determinant of the CSA's (Kato 2013).

## **FITTING INTO THE ALTERNATIVE FOOD MOVEMENT**

Overall, this garden did not fit the typical mold of the alternative food movement. It did not fill food insecurities, but rather it served as a supplement to fresh foods already accessible in the community. The CSA program in particular was unlike other programs that require participants to pick up their share from a designated site (Kato 2011; Wells, Gradwell and Yoder 1999). Shares from this garden were delivered to recipients, but the reason for this was unclear as no volunteers mentioned a particular reason. It was likely that system was used to provide additional exposure of the special needs adults to the community. However, this would require further research. In addition, as previously explored, price was not a primary factor in whether someone chose to participate in the program.

Because the No Boundaries garden does not fight food insecurity, it cannot be framed in terms of activism regarding the food movement. Outside of those involved in No Boundaries, the garden also did not appear to be a gathering space for the community to network which has been typical of many gardens, arguably illustrating that this garden did not contribute to place attachment. This is unlike the farm studied by White (2010) in Detroit Michigan, where residents saw their garden as a place of empowerment, political engagement, and a space to invest in their community. This garden also did not seem to be advancing any environmental agenda as the lot it was in was already usable when the garden began, and there were no elements of the programming geared toward environmental activism. The No Boundaries garden may have had intentions to do some of these things and was working to benefit a marginalized population, however the distinction remained in that it was very much inclusive only to that population and had not yet found a significant way to engage the broader community.

Part of the lack of engagement may also have been due to Lakeville's access to numerous grocery stores, which again was unlike many places with community gardens which often emerge because of a lack of grocery stores. This may also have contributed to why the garden was seen more as an educational activity than a food source. Müller (2007) discusses this as well when highlighting how often an integral part of community gardens is their function to provide high quality food to those who would not otherwise be able to afford it, but also the importance of how these gardens are often connected with other organizations in the community. I did not find this to be the case with the garden in this study, potentially contributing to its exclusiveness to the special needs community. It had at times connected with other organizations or business mostly through the form of donations of soil, but there seemed to be no solid connections to other organization to help embed the garden as a part of the community.

## CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The goal of this study was to explore the role of a community garden in a mid to high socioeconomic status area. Specifically, I examined the motivations of why volunteers became involved with the garden and the impact the garden had to the community, the larger No Boundaries organization, and how it compared to the extant research on the alternative food movement. I also sought to understand how privilege shaped these views and perceptions. Although I make comparisons between this garden and others, it is important to acknowledge the realities of inequality when considering the function of this community garden. Unlike other urban areas that have developed community gardens, Lakeville did not suffer food insecurities or lack of healthy resources.

I suggest that this garden cannot be encapsulated by any one framework I presented earlier. It does not serve as a form of food justice, as this community is not food insecure, and residents are largely able to procure any type of food they desire. However, it does provide a means for an underserved population, the special needs community, to gain knowledge and empowerment regarding food sourcing. Despite providing a usable green space to the organization and improving soil quality for the lot the garden is situated on, it also does not make a strong case to fit in the environmental justice framework. Arguably the most applicable framework to this garden is place attachment. However, I would posit that this garden contributes to maintaining place attachment *rather than* building place attachment. The garden in this study was already active in the community and displayed pre-existing place attachment prior to the garden. The garden more accurately serves as an extension of current place attachment, providing an innovative way for residents to connect to each other and the community.

It is clear from the accounts provided that this garden is not seen as a vital food source to the community. However, it has been instrumental in starting a conversation about local food sourcing and has provided diversity to participant's diets. I anticipated that this might emerge from my data – it is clear that the garden was important to those involved and that they do see the potential for the garden to become a vital part of the community. Again, noting that Lakeville has a plethora of food options creates a unique situation for this garden to find a way to integrate itself into the community as most residents already have access to the foods they need and want. What will be important is how they frame their goals and objectives, and highlight the focus on their food being sustainably raised and the benefits of locally sourced food. These findings contribute to the literature by tapping into how the alternative food movement can be relevant in food secure communities. It also challenges the way the alternative food movement is understood as this organization is using the core concepts of alternative food, but using them more as a tool to solve a problem in their community, the marginalization of special needs persons, not food access. As the alternative food movement continues to expand, this will be important as it is possible many other communities are using gardens in the same way, to serve other social problems beyond food access.

As mentioned by a few volunteers, this garden also presents an opportunity for this community to confront inequalities to food in a neighboring city that has decreased access to healthful foods. This highlights the tension of the alternative food movement as it is often framed in its “whiteness” as argued by Holt-Gimenez and Wang (2011) in the relative ease of higher SES persons to shop at farmers markets and participate in CSA's despite higher costs of organic foods and “vote with their fork.” They argue that these actions overshadow the food inequalities of marginalized persons. As expressed by those in this study, many have a desire to see the food

from the No Boundaries garden given to those in need in the community such as senior citizens. If and how these actions take place, it will be worth exploring the scope of their impact and how this garden continues to be shaped as a food source.

The health benefits of this garden were also seen by volunteers as minimal. Providing food diversity and being organic were seen as the most meaningful aspects of the gardens contribution to health. However, despite these factors most volunteers acknowledged they likely could purchase organic foods in the variety they desired regardless of the garden. Some also mentioned they felt that they consumed more produce because of the garden, but it is beyond the scope of this research to determine if this had any significant impact on health.

Consistent with the literature, those who spent time working in the garden reported other health benefits such as increased physical exercise and the mental health benefits of being out in nature (Jamison 1985; White 2011). Viewing the garden as a space for stress-relief and an opportunity to network and share experiences with others in the community is consistent with other studies (Shulz and Bex Lempert 2004; White 2011). This study contributes to the literature by providing an example of how community gardens can provide some similar health benefits, specifically in terms of mental health, regardless of the community context in which the garden is situated. However, as previously explored, it is important to note that these benefits were mostly exclusive to the No Boundaries community as there was minimal engagement with the broader community.

In terms of community gardens benefiting marginalized populations, No Boundaries' garden has been instrumental in providing unique ways to integrate the special needs population into the larger Lakeville community. Understanding the implications of this should be studied further to fill this gap in the literature. I argue that this study provides a base for expanding

limitations of who community gardens benefits, and a unique viewpoint of the special needs community that should be explored further. My hope for this research is to contribute knowledge of the lived experiences from a middle-upper class area with a community garden, and that this study will raise further questions leading to continued research on gardens within this context, as well as how the alternative food movement will continue to be shaped and defined.

### **SOME LIMITATIONS**

This study has a number of limitations. Despite current understandings of community gardening, research is limited on many aspects of this movement. The realities of the polarization within the movement pose a significant threat to harming the work that has, and could be, done to minimize food access inequality and increase food sovereignty. It is critical for researchers to further examine class differences as the alternative food movement is typically associated with middle-upper class ideals, and food justice with that of the lower class. CSA's are often framed as a middle-class activity, and more research needs to be done on the inclusiveness and benefits of these programs. These differences are important to understand to build collaborations between factions of the movement to strengthen its chances of making real changes to our food system.

This study does not seek to make generalizations about community gardens as the context of this garden is unique and the number of participants is small. Rather, it provides an account not seen elsewhere in the literature and sought to highlight areas of further study as it is restricted in scope. In addition, the sample of volunteers in this study may not be representative of Lakeville as its likely those involved already have greater inclinations to be active in the community as many were involved in multiple organizations aimed at improving the community.

This garden is also quite new and did not appear to be well known in the community. It has a relatively small number of CSA participants therefore limiting how it may be understood as

a viable food source. In addition, as this garden is not the sole focus of the organization it is run by, this may potentially skew perceptions of respondent's motivation to participate in the garden as seeing it more as a means of supporting the organization it is run by rather than a larger benefit to themselves and the community.

Many volunteers I interviewed also had an extensive knowledge about the alternative food movement and had an interest in participating in, and understanding of community gardens. This may have resulted in skewed perceptions of the gardens importance. The level of knowledge about alternative and sustainable food practices should be taken into account in study design by future researchers. Lastly, it was beyond the scope of this project to include special needs participants. However, future studies could greatly benefit from their inclusion. As previously mentioned, this garden sets a unique example by its embeddedness into the inclusion of the special needs community and this should be closer examined as part of the food justice movement. This study challenges current understandings of the alternative food movement by presenting the case of a community garden not used for the sole purpose of promoting healthy food access, and it is my hope that future research will more closely examine this issue.

## APPENDIX A: CONSENT FORM

### [Behavioral] Research Informed Consent

Title of Study: [Growing Individuals and Communities through Community Gardens]

Principal Investigator (PI): Kathleen Gersky  
Wayne State University, Sociology M.A student  
231-384-0517

#### **Purpose**

You are being asked to be in a research study of the physical and social benefits of community gardening because you have been involved with the No Boundaries Foundation Edible Garden. This study is being conducted at Wayne State University, your home, or other public spaces in your community. The estimated number of study participants to be enrolled at Wayne State University and/or other interview sites is about 20. **Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.**

In this research study, the goal is to understand the role of gardening in communities. This project will explore these ideas through three main questions: (1) How does community gardening act as a food source, (2) What are the ways community gardening is connected to the health of a community (i.e. physical, economic, and mental), and (3) How can gardening contribute to community development?

#### **Study Procedures**

If you agree to take part in this research study, you will be asked to participate in an interview about your experience with a community garden. The interview should last between 1 to 1½ hours. Only one interview will be needed, however I may contact you afterward for clarification on any of the information you provided. Interviews will be audio recorded unless requested otherwise by the participant. During the interview, I will ask questions pertaining to your involvement in the community garden, where you get most of your food, your satisfaction with your food, and how you think the garden is impacting your community. Once the interview is complete, I will ask you to fill out a brief survey to gather some basic demographic information.

Interviews are completely voluntary, and you can choose whether to answer any and all of the questions. You may also stop the interview and terminate your participation at any time. Your participation in the study is confidential and anonymous and all participants will be given a pseudonym (fake name). The master list will be kept in a secure place that is separate from the transcribed interview documents which will be stored on a password-protected laptop. The consent forms are stored separately from the transcribed interviews and the master list.

#### **Benefits**

As a participant in this research study, there may be no direct benefit for you; however, information from this study may benefit other people now or in the future.

**Risks**

By taking part in this study, you may experience the following risks:

Participants may experience a loss of confidentiality. The researcher will take steps to reduce this possibility, and the risk is minimal. However, since the number of participants connected to No Boundaries is relatively small, your identity may become known.

There may also be risks involved from taking part in this study that are not known to researchers at this time.

**Study Costs**

Participation in this study will be of no cost to you.

**Compensation**

You will not be paid for taking part in this study.

**Confidentiality**

All information collected about you during the course of this study will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law. You will be identified in the research records by a code name or number. Information that identifies you personally will not be released without your written permission. However, the study sponsor, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Wayne State University, or federal agencies with appropriate regulatory oversight [e.g., Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP), Office of Civil Rights (OCR), etc.] may review your records.

When the results of this research are published or discussed in conferences, no information will be included that would reveal your identity.

If audiotape recordings of you will be used for research or educational purposes, your identity will be protected or disguised. At the close of the study, audio recording will be erased. Only the principal researcher will have access to the audio recording, and will record over them once the study is complete to protect anonymity.

**Voluntary Participation/Withdrawal**

Taking part in this study is voluntary. You have the right to choose not to take part in this study. If you decide to take part in the study you can later change your mind and withdraw from the study. You are free to only answer questions that you want to answer. You are free to withdraw from participation in this study at any time. Your decisions will not change any present or future relationship with Wayne State University or its affiliates, or other services you are entitled to receive.

The PI may stop your participation in this study without your consent. The PI will make the decision and let you know if it is not possible for you to continue. The decision that is made is to protect your health and safety, or because you did not follow the instructions to take part in the study

**Questions**

If you have any questions about this study now or in the future, you may contact Katie Gersky. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, the Chair of the Institutional Review Board can be contacted at (313) 577-1628. If you are unable to contact the research staff, or if you want to talk to someone other than the research staff, you may also call (313) 577-1628 to ask questions or voice concerns or complaints.

**Consent to Participate in a Research Study**

To voluntarily agree to take part in this study, you must sign on the line below. If you choose to take part in this study you may withdraw at any time. You are not giving up any of your legal rights by signing this form. Your signature below indicates that you have read, or had read to you, this entire consent form, including the risks and benefits, and have had all of your questions answered. You will be given a copy of this consent form.

_____	_____
Signature of participant	Date
_____	_____
Printed name of participant	Time
_____	_____
Signature of person obtaining consent	Date
_____	_____
Printed name of person obtaining consent	Time

## APPENDIX B: THE INTERVIEW GUIDE

### Interview guide

I am conducting this interview as part of my research project to complete a M.A in Sociology through Wayne State University. This project aims to explore the various ways that community gardens contribute to local residents as a food source, means of healthy living, and building a sense community among residents. Those topics will serve as a basis for the questions we will discuss today. I believe that your experience with the No Boundaries Edible Garden will offer a unique and valuable perspective to this project. This interview should last approximately 1 hour. I have provided two copies of a consent form, one for you to review and sign once you understand and agree to everything it states. I have signed both copies, one of which you can keep for your own records. Do you have any questions before we begin this interview?

### Participant Background

*Before we talk about the Edible Garden, I'd like to get to know a little about you and your community.*

1. Can you tell me about yourself and your neighborhood?
  - a. Can you describe the physical boundaries of your area, and what you would consider to be your 'neighborhood'?
  - b. How long have you lived in this area?
  
2. Can you describe your involvement with the No Boundaries Foundation?
  - a. How long have you been involved with organization?
  - b. In what capacity have you been involved? (volunteer, paid employee, attended events, made donations, etc.)
  
3. How about your involvement specifically with the Edible Garden?
  - a. CSA member?
  - b. Volunteer working in the garden?

### Food Sourcing

*Now I would like to ask you some questions about where you get your food, and how satisfied you are with what's available to you.*

4. Could you tell me about the main sources you use for food?
  - a. Can you describe why you choose to get food there?
  - b. Do you attend any farmers markets?
  - c. Has growing your own food ever been part of food consumption for your family? Could you tell me about those experiences?

5. Can you talk to me about who in the household makes most of the decisions about what types of food are in the home through doing the grocery shopping and cooking?
6. When you think about the produce available to you, how satisfied are you with these choices in your community?
  - a. Do you think there are enough options?
  - b. Is the produce fresh and in season?
7. In what ways do you think the No Boundaries garden can contribute as a food source to your community?
  - a. If you were part of the No Boundaries CSA, were you satisfied with the produce you received?
    - i. What are your thoughts on the pricing of the program? Would the price be a significant factor in whether you participate in it again?
    - ii. Can you tell me about if you have shared your CSA experience with anyone else outside the program? Maybe recommended it to anyone else you know?
  - b. If you volunteered in the garden would you be interested in using it as a food source? Joining the CSA or some other arrangement to purchase the food?

### **Community Health**

*In addition to food sources, I am also interested in the overall health of your community and would like to ask some questions about that.*

8. When you think of “being healthy” what does that mean to you?
9. Given your description of health, can you talk about how healthy you think your community is?
10. Could you describe some situations (not names of course) where community residents may have had less opportunities to focus on their health?
  - a. Can you describe what you think some of these barriers to equal opportunities of healthy living might be?
11. What is your opinion of how you think the garden can contribute to the health of your community?
  - a. As a food source?
  - b. As an outdoor space to learn new skills?
  - c. A means of physical exercise?

12. Can you describe what you think are facilitators or barriers to how the garden can function as a way to enhance health for individuals and your community?

### **Community Development**

*Having discussed how the garden can contribute as a food source and to the health of your community, I'd like to explore how you think it might impact other aspects of community development.*

13. How would you describe the “atmosphere” of your community?
14. What kinds of activities and events does your community offer to get residents involved such as festivals or other events or activities?
15. In what ways do you think it is important to be involved in the community?
16. How might the garden serve as a way to build a sense of community for local residents and why?
17. If there were more community gardens in your area do you think they would get support?
18. Could you describe any ways outside your participation with the edible garden that you intentionally get involved in the community such as donating time or money to a cause, attending local events, hosting a neighborhood event, etc.?

### **Closing Questions**

19. What was your main motivation for participating in the garden?
20. In what way(s) were you most impacted by your experience with the edible garden?
21. What do you think the edible garden has the most potential to contribute to the community?
- a. What do you think the garden has accomplished so far?
22. Do you have any further thoughts about the garden, food sources in your community, or anything else we may have discussed that you would like to share?

## APPENDIX C: SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY

### Sociodemographic Survey

The information you provide will be used for research purposes only. Your responses will remain confidential. You have the right to not answer any or all of the questions.

**Year of birth:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Sex/Gender:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Race/Ethnicity:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Marital Status:**

<input type="checkbox"/> Single	<input type="checkbox"/> Cohabiting	<input type="checkbox"/> Married	<input type="checkbox"/> Divorced	<input type="checkbox"/> Widowed	<input type="checkbox"/> Other specify: _____
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**If you have children, what are their ages?**

	Age
Child #1	
Child #2	
Child #3	
Child #4	
Child #5	

**Occupation:** \_\_\_\_\_

**What is your highest education completed?**

<input type="checkbox"/> Some High School	<input type="checkbox"/> High School	<input type="checkbox"/> GED or Equivalent	<input type="checkbox"/> Some College	<input type="checkbox"/> Associate's Degree
<input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's Degree	<input type="checkbox"/> Master's Degree	<input type="checkbox"/> Professional Degree	<input type="checkbox"/> Doctorate Degree	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify)

**Other:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Your gross income:**

<input type="checkbox"/> Under \$30,000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$30,000-39,999	<input type="checkbox"/> \$40,000-49,999	<input type="checkbox"/> \$50,000-59,999	<input type="checkbox"/> \$60,000-69,999
<input type="checkbox"/> \$70,000-79,000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$80,000-89,999	<input type="checkbox"/> \$90,000-99,999	<input type="checkbox"/> \$100,000-109,999	<input type="checkbox"/> \$110,000-119,999
<input type="checkbox"/> \$120,000-129,999	<input type="checkbox"/> \$130,000-139,999	<input type="checkbox"/> \$140,000-149,999	<input type="checkbox"/> \$150,000-159,999	<input type="checkbox"/> More than \$160,000

**Thank you!**

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**ABSTRACT****EXPLORING COMMUNITY GARDENING: MOTIVATIONS AND IMPACTS**

by

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Research shows the emergence of community gardens in urban areas serves to address issues such as food scarcity and community cohesion, creating positive implications at the neighborhood and city wide level. However, the research does not adequately address the impact it may have on a micro level in middle-upper class areas, potentially hindering the gardening movement. Understanding community gardens in all socioeconomic settings will be important to the broader sustainable food movement's current and future success. In this thesis, I ask: what are the motivations and impacts of community gardening? The objectives are to understand how motivations and impacts may be different depending on the community context of the garden, in this case a middle-upper class area. Using qualitative in-depth interviews, this study explores these issues and their implications at a small-scale community garden in a privileged neighborhood in a mid-western city. In addition it may highlight areas of community gardening that warrant further research studies.

**AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT**

I have a B.A in Sociology from Oakland University with a minor in Performing Arts Dance. During my time at Oakland University I was actively involved with InterVarsity Christian Fellowship and served as president of the organization my senior year. Through involvement with that organization I became interested in social justice issues, spurring on my decision to continue an education in sociology. I am particularly interested in health disparities with a focus on food inequality, sustainable agriculture, and the social cultures surrounding food consumption. My other areas of interest are medical sociology, community development, urban sociology, and environmental sociology. I am also a member of Alpha Kappa Delta International Sociology Honor Society.