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Interview with Sarah Patterson, Lettuce Grow Garden Foundation, 2009 (audio)

Sarah Patterson

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Interview Index-
Sarah Patterson- Lettuce Grow Foundation
By Diane Mahon

Part one Introduction information

0:09 What can you tell me about the Lettuce Grow Foundation?

Beginning- idea was started by an inmate that had taken a sustainability class at Portland State University

0:30 Food Fantasies being the inspiration for the idea

0:47 Kicking the can with the idea every 2 weeks

1:00 Foundations that Contributed

1:22 Coordinating with Coffee Creek Prison

1:30 August- September, Organic Farmers 5 year plan

2:05 Soliciting Security Badge volunteers

2:55 Supplies donated

3:37 Work assignment for inmates

3:50 Nutrition in the prison- kitchen staff serving 3000 meals a day

4:00 Adding inmates to the work assignment one at a time with the volunteers

4:45 Dynamic with the kitchen staff

5:40 Vocational Training

5:50 Certification

6:00 Nutritional Education

6:21 Her Phone Rings

Part 2

0:13 What the inmates can take back to their families

0:25 Organic Certification- Everything is grown Organic

1:15 Pause in Tape

1:31 What is your Definition of Sustainability

1:39 Sustainability is really 2 questions

What are you teaching?

Can you maintain it?

1:55 501 CB Certification- Fund Raising and Grant Writing Goals

2:26 Brought in wildlife to the prison that was never there before

2:45 Broaden the footprint of the Project

2:54 "Seed to Table"

2 Volunteers teach the class with in the prison

Teaching is done in the garden, not a class room

3:17 Security risks inside the prison

4 inmates working the garden right now

So many of the inmates don't have something to do

4:00 How Are those 4 chosen?

They Apply for it

Why stick only with minimum security inmates instead of medium

4:22 security inmates for the garden work?

Be successful in the start

operational issues

expanding is a future goal, but security issues take priority

5:40 How much of the food is actually making it to the prison kitchen?

Not much at this time

Beginning of the harvest season

Got started quickly and didn't consult with the kitchen as to what they actually needed/wanted so what they were given was what WE thought they would need

6:34 Mark B. - Organic Farmer

"If they were only growing Iceburg lettuce they would still be getting the education and skills"

7:00 What is planted?

Lettuce, Beans and a list is on the website

(In reference to Benefits of the Garden) What is the most important thing

7:22 your teaching them?

Gardening skills, Chemistry of Organic Gardening

Teamwork

Management

Interpersonal skills- many inmates have never had jobs

Volunteers have played a major role,

8:14 The education- is it in the field or a Classroom?

In the field, in the garden

(Referring to the Volunteers working with the inmates) Are there security

8:20 issues working side by side?

No- they are grateful to have someone else to talk to.

8:55 Tools to bring in?

Land was tilled for them

Staff does a lot of the work

20 yards of compost was donated

9:39 Failed previous growing project

Had the tools and they were retained.

10:40 Donated Compost

Outside sources

10:50 Nicolas Seed

11:05 Concentrates, seeds Donated from places in Portland

11:30 Compost from Fall Leaves

12:05 Does the prison use a compost pile on it's own?

It's a goal to have the prison use a compost pile

They had no recycling at one point

12:58 Compost Machine

Earth Advantage

So complicated that no one could run it

14:13 Sarah makes a reference to her housing building

Composting took the garbage collection by Half

13:35 Getting the Machine up?

Could be a staff of work program, but it's unclear yet

16:35 Future plans for partnerships

Phenix Rising, Mercy Corps, Tilth

17:25 Have you talked to those who worked in the garden and gotten out?

No, it's only started in Feb.

3 year or less sentences on the inmates, hopefully will stagger the release of people coming and going into the program.