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Interview with Susan Stelljes, Woodlawn Community Garden, 2010 (audio)

Susan Stelljes

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PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW INDEX

INTERVIEWEE: Susan Stellijess

Interviewer: Stephanie Mackey

Date: 3/6/10

Location of Interview:

Research Assistant: Jeremy Cohen

Interview Series: SUSTAINING NORTHWEST LANDSCAPES & COMMUNITIES

Recording Equipment: DIGITAL RECORDER (WINDOWS MEDIA AUDIO FILE) WITH AN EXTERNAL, OMNIDIRECTIONAL MICROPHONE

Time	Notes
00:32	How long have you lived in Portland?
00:40	What brought you here?
01:48	How did you get involved with Woodlawn Garden?
	Became interested in the community garden as a place to grow lots of vegetables in one area
04:00	So were you elected as manager of garden?
	“fell in to job”. Became really involved during Earth Day celebration when they had Thai jar built. Talked about how the garden was neglected when she started. Discussed how run down the neighborhood was when she moved in. Talked about how neighborhood has improved and people are more interested in gardening.
08:15	In 2007 a 6 foot thai jar was installed in Woodlawn Garden, how has this affected water use?
	Stated they have been doing hand watering and the Thai jar is an attraction for the neighbors
10:50	How are children involved other than using the jar?
	Stated there is a lot of educational type programs as well as craft activities and harvest parties. Also extra food grown by children is donated to food bank
16:55	Woodlawn Garden has a sign posted in the garden that quoted Mahatma Gandhi “to forget how to dig the earth and till the soil is to forget oneself” how do you see this

	fitting in to the overall mission of Woodlawn Garden?
	Talked about sense of peace that comes with gardening and passing that on to kids
18:20	Does this idea of passing on the ideals of gardening fits with your idea of sustainability?
	Talked about gardening from her Grandma's generation through to hers. Discussed organic gardening.
22:58	Why did you get in to gardening, was it to stay active? Is this why other start?
	Talked about food safety and how people are more knowledgeable now than when she started gardening

Time	Notes
24:56	Why do people stop gardening?
25:33	Please describe a typical day
	Said likes to check in on garden because of issues with vandalism
28:24	What are some persistent challenges?
	Stated getting people to put in volunteer time
30:51	How many gardeners do you have
	Stated about 16-18. Talked about difficulty getting funding for children's garden
32:53	What are your proudest achievements?
	Discussed establishing relationships with neighbors. Talked further about changes in neighborhood.
36:47	How would you like to see Woodlawn progress in the future?
	Discussed possibility of more activities such as a picnic or cooking lessons
39:08	Do you work much with the parks department and the school?
40:15	Do you interact much with the gardening associations?
41:48	Is there anything else you want to add?
	Just wanted to stress improvement in neighborhood and increased interest in gardening

