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### HWS Community Garden Flourishes

Posted on Wednesday, September 05, 2012

"The impetus for the newly built garden on the HWS campus sprouted from a conversation with my older brother Zach, who is starting a greenhouse building business in Bozeman, Montana," explained recent Hobart graduate Derek Weiss '12

"I was trying to think of a way to build a greenhouse on campus, and Zach introduced me to the concept of cold frames, a cheaper alternative to a greenhouse."

Cold frames are insulated, raised garden beds, which act as miniature greenhouses, and prolong the growing season into the colder months.

During the fall 2011, the Hobart Student Government and William Smith Congress initiated a competition for a \$5,000 grant, funded in part by the William Smith Congress Extreme Campus Makeover competition, for a project that would benefit the campus in some way. Weiss decided to apply for the grant and, with extensive support from various faculty members, his proposal was accepted and he was named the grant recipient.

Weiss researched gardening methods and cold-frame techniques for the rest of the semester, and discussed possibilities for implementation throughout the process with David Iannicello, the grounds manager at the Colleges.

"From the preliminary planning phase, the focus shifted to developing a base of interest of students to use and care for the garden," explained Weiss. "I started the Sustainable Foods Club in an effort to promote student awareness about our food systems, and provide an avenue for students interested in growing their own food to come together and run a campus garden."

The garden was built and planted in the first-year lot across from Odell's this spring.

"The way the garden was planted was an attempt to provide an example of permaculture gardening techniques on a small scale," said Weiss. "Permaculture techniques are a way to provide the higher yield, lower effort and more ecological benefit than conventional modern techniques. All of the food plants grown are either perennial or self-seeding, which serves both to diversify the harvest, and to decrease the annual input needed, and greatly increase the permanence of the system."

As the summer progressed, a few core members of the Sustainable Foods Club, Sarah Meyer, community outreach coordinator of the Finger Lakes Institute, Sustainability Manager Jamie Landi, and Iannicello continued to take care of the garden and to develop the site, including the addition of a shed, creation of a watering schedule and installation of a water spigot on the site.

"My hope is that the garden will continue to grow, both literally and metaphorically, and provide an avenue for like-minded students to come together, think about our food systems, grow food, and connect with the natural world," said Weiss.



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