

“EDIBLE MEDFORD”

Faith Church’s HOPE Garden Invests in Kindness

Medford’s Faith Church has a vision. The church’s Helping Other People Eat (HOPE) Garden has been delivering fresh vegetables for eight years to local organizations that run active food programs in Burlington and Camden counties. The church is now looking to expand this mission even further through additional Medford-based partners.

The HOPE Garden began in 2010 as a 25 square-foot experimental plot that has since expanded to a 25’ x 175’ garden and annex that yields 1,000-2,000 pounds of vegetables each growing season. There are also a number of fruit trees. Over the years, fresh produce has been distributed to the Christian Caring Center in Browns Mills, My Brother’s Keeper, Urban Promise and New Visions in Camden, as well as Migrant Worker Outreach in Medford that assists workers in South Jersey who arrive for the blueberry harvest in June.



Deliveries are also made weekly to the St. Vincent de Paul Society’s food pantry in Medford. “We typically do not have fresh produce to distribute to our clients, so the newly harvested lettuce, tomatoes, cucumbers, squash and beans from the Hope Garden are truly a welcome and healthy addition,” said Jim Quigley, Vice President, Food Pantry, at St. Vincent’s. The organization also runs a thrift store and assists with living expenses for those in need in Medford, Medford Lakes, Moorestown, Pemberton and Browns Mills.

While the HOPE Garden mission continues to be a true blessing in terms of providing nutritious food to those in need, those involved also treasure the building of relationships with others in the community. Area garden centers and college nurseries generously donate vegetable plants and wood chips. Nearby horse farms supply manure for fertilization. Local Boy Scouts designed the Children’s Garden in front of the church and will be assisting with building a frame around the garden’s compost. Students from Memorial School located just behind the church have tended a plot in past years, as have so many wonderful community friends who assist with all of the planting, watering, weeding and harvesting that make this mission possible.



These *blessings* have turned to *inspiration* this year as Faith’s HOPE Garden is seeking to partner with additional local organizations to “grow” this food donation program beyond its very active current operation. They are looking for area churches, civic groups, schools, retirement communities, garden clubs and others to join them by helping to raise vegetables on their own property.

“Any corner, any lot and any open space can be turned into a garden,” explains Jack Carman, co-founder and coordinator of Faith’s HOPE Garden. “By combining many individual contributions, our community has a great opportunity to invest in kindness to our neighbors in need, to each other and to our environment,” he added.

The new, expanded mission is being called “**EDIBLE MEDFORD**.” If your organization would like to learn more about participating in this growing mission, please send an email to jack@designforgenerations.com or contact Faith Presbyterian Church, 318 Stokes Road, Medford, NJ at (609) 654-5148.