

Church offers garden space to low-income residents

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As part of a joint project with Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon, Westside Community Church is offering space to low-income families interested in growing their own food in its new community garden at 4000 S.W. Western Blvd.

"We provide the garden space, water, amendments and tools," said garden coordinator Sue Domingues. "You provide the labor."

The church received an EMO grant earlier this month to establish the community garden on its property just off Philomath Boulevard in southwest Corvallis. The garden is just one element of a three-year program sponsored by the EMO's Interfaith Food and Farm Partnership which promotes links between Benton County farmers, faith communities and low-income consumers.

Other projects include cooking classes, a produce buying club and the "That's My Farmer" coupon program for shopping at local farm stands and farmers' markets. Funded primarily by a USDA Community Food Projects Grant, the campaign emphasizes community self-reliance and comprehensive responses to local food, farm and nutrition issues.

The Westside garden offers family plots as well as a swath of community farming space devoted to growing produce for the project's cooking classes and local food banks.

Gardeners are asked to pay an initial sliding-scale fee of \$5 to \$35 for a 400-square-foot plot. The fee grants gardeners access to water and other supplies.

Liv Gifford, project manager for the interfaith partnership, said scholarships are available for low-income gardeners, including bus vouchers for those needing help with transportation.

All the garden plots are available on a first-come, first-served basis. To inquire about a plot or to volunteer to help in the garden, people should contact Domingues at 754-7239 or by e-mail at sdomingues@emoregon.org.