



The Foundation Connection

A monthly e-newsletter from the Master Gardener Foundation of King County

The 2015 Ellen A'Key Grant Awarded to Pend Oreille County Master Gardener Program

In January of 2009, the Ellen A'Key Grant Program was born. The grant is named in memory of Ellen A'Key, King County Master Gardener, whose generous bequest enabled the Master Gardener Foundation of King County (MGFKC) to establish a reserve fund. It is in her honor that the MGFKC shares our resources with other Master Gardener programs around the state.

The Ellen A'Key Grant is designed to assist and support WSU Master Gardener projects in non-urban counties of Washington State; particular consideration is given to smaller counties where support dollars might be sparse.

The award is announced each year at the State Education Conference (see article highlighting the 2015 State Conference in this newsletter).

“We were pleased to receive five applications for the A'Key grant program this year – from Asotin, Benton-Franklin, Clallam, Pend Oreille and Skagit counties,” says Anne Ellett, Master Gardener Foundation of King County (MGFKC) Vice President.

The selection committee was composed of two King County Foundation board members (Anne Ellett and Stephenie Kramer) and two state foundation board members (Barbara Guiland and MaryJo Christensen).

The applications were reviewed and ranked by the committee based on criteria about whether the project: fosters innovation; makes possible programs that otherwise might never be able to progress beyond planning; contributes and expands the effectiveness of the Master Gardener program; and encourages a sense of community. Start-up and/or expansion for new programs is favored over funding of operating expenses.



Pend Oreille County's Master Gardener program will use the \$1500 A'Key grant award to help renovate a greenhouse and garden located on county property near the WSU Pend Oreille County Extension offices.



In the foreground, abandoned greenhouse on the left and abandoned garden on the right. The brick building in the background now houses Extension offices, a Master Gardener plant clinic and meeting / classroom space.

“All applications received were strong contenders” says Anne. “Projects were well-thought out and detailed. It was rewarding for the committee to read through the applications and see the impact and partnership with other community organizations the Master Gardener program has across the state,” she adds.

The 2015 Ellen A'Key grant was awarded to the Pend Oreille County Master Gardener program. Pend Oreille is a small county, with a total population of about 13,000. It is

located in the extreme northeast corner of Washington State, bordered on the north by Canada and on the east by Idaho. The county has 34 certified Master Gardeners serving the entire county.

The county's Master Gardener program will use the \$1,500 award to help renovate the greenhouse and garden located on county property near the WSU Pend Oreille County Extension offices. The emphasis of this newly planned demonstration garden will be on growing food, but the garden will also display educational native plant plots, water-wise gardening, fire-wise landscaping and other topics pertinent to the local area. Associated gardening classes, beginning as soon as March, will involve class participants with hands-on experience in all phases of gardening and landscaping: planning, construction, planting, maintenance and harvesting processes. The Master Gardeners also plan to partner with the Extension Food Sense Program to offer garden-to-table cooking classes. Any produce not used for cooking classes will be donated to local food banks.

"The Pend Oreille County Master Gardeners are very thankful to have this support from the King County Master Gardener Foundation," says Dixie Chichester, WSU Pend Oreille County Master Gardener Program Coordinator and Project Leader.

The other county projects that applied for this year's grant included:

- Benton Franklin -- a 'Low-Income Model Food Garden'
- Clallam County -- updating the electrical system in their indoor classroom
- Asotin County -- sponsoring beekeeping classes
- Skagit Count -- working to expand and improve their plant clinics.

Through the A'Key grant program (<http://www.mgfk.org/resources/ellen-a-key-grant>), MGFKC hopes to foster innovation and creativity, stimulate problem solving and creative solutions, encourage a sense of unity and community among all Master Gardeners in our state and to make possible programs that otherwise might struggle or never be able to progress beyond the planning stage.

Ellen A'Key loved demonstration gardens and loved being a Master Gardener; she would be proud to know what has been created in her name.