

Allotment News from Dig Deep Autumn 2010



Seeds of Change for Disused Allotments



Just over a year ago, our outreach worker Angie, came across a successful allotment project in West Watford, run by Farming for All. The project gave attendees confidence, new skills and the opportunity to meet new friends and seemed the perfect project to bring to ASCEND—especially as there were few opportunities in the area for outdoor learning. With help from Three Rivers District Council, an overgrown disused allotment site was identified in South Oxhey, and after consultations with neighbours and discussions with community partners and local police, Dig Deep was born.



Teaming up with Farming for All, the first challenge was to clear the section of land, nearest to the entrance. West Herts College stepped in and suggested that they could run a 20 hour 'Gardening for Beginners' course at the allotment. It was the start Dig Deep needed with ten clients successfully completing the course covering Credit Crunch Cultivation, seed and plug planting, recycling, soil testing, planting hanging baskets, conservation and the natural use of plants for dying fabric and making fertilisers and nettle rope.

The course was a huge success - boosting client confidence and self-esteem. Many of the attendees have continued to garden, either as Dig Deep volunteers or helping others in the community with their gardens.

"I really enjoyed the course, great tutor, great group and exciting things to do"



Thank You....thank you....thank you



We knew that for Dig Deep to work long term, we would need lots of help, not only with funding but also with maintenance such as weeding, sowing and clearance so that we could run lots of successful courses to meet demand.

So we would like to say a BIG thank you to:-

1. Our allotment neighbours who have been incredibly kind and supportive.
2. Ipsos MORI, John Lewis, M&S, GE Capital and Northwick Day Centre for clearing the site, and buying decking and a new greenhouse.
3. West Herts College and ESF for funding courses.
4. Rickmansworth Rotary, Thrive Homes, United House, and Santander for providing funding for tools and our shed.
5. Our wonderful Dig Deep volunteers and all our community partners.

DID YOU KNOW? The Dig Deep Allotment training project is run by ASCEND in partnership with Farming for All CIC. It is part of ASCEND's Involve 2 Evolve project funded by The Big Lottery.



LOTTERY FUNDED

Charity no: 1073909

Official launch of the Dig Deep Project

With a cut of the secateurs, Anne Shaw (Leader of Three Rivers District Council) officially launched ASCEND's Dig Deep Project on Tuesday 29th June.



The opening saw members of the first course being presented with their certificates by Sean Hughes, Head of Business Improvement from Thrive Homes (ASCEND's Dig Deep Project is the first to receive funding

from Thrive Homes community initiative) and Councillor Ron Spellen planted a vine to commemorate the event.



ASCEND Patron Gareth Malone is extremely enthusiastic about this project. He said, "Singing is good for the soul and so

is gardening. This is another ingenious scheme from ASCEND to encourage people, to give them confidence in their skills and to have a good time getting their hands mucky. I'm proud to be a patron of ASCEND and wish them luck with this excellent idea. I shall be hoping for some potatoes, come the Autumn!"



A Tale from Dig Deep

Lee had been unemployed for seven months when he came to ASCEND in 2009. He joined the Job Club and when Dig Deep started, he wanted to be part of the project. Jude Allen (tutor from Farming For All) takes up the story:

"I initially met Lee when he was attending a Conservation and Land Based Skills workshop as a student. The course was designed for multi-ability participants and in this session there was a wide range of abilities. Lee was a natural in assisting others get the best out of the session whilst also learning himself. He helped others with tools and activities, was ever cheerful and positive and was also an enthusiastic student. He deservedly went on to become a volunteer 'Learning Champion' as his confidence grew and

became a real help to me on further courses, ensuring that other students were relaxed and engaged as well as helping with the practicalities of the course such as setting up and clearing up at the end. I knew I could always count on him within the sessions and I am very pleased that he is still striving to develop himself. His hard work, positive attitude and determination will take him far. I wish him all the luck for the future."



In May 2010, Lee started full time employment in a Warehouse and within three months progressed to store manager. The last word belongs to Lee, " ***I want to continue learning and build on the learning I have done at ASCEND. So far I have completed a Fire safety at work course and am due to start a first aid course this month.***"

Want to be part of Dig Deep??

Over the Winter months there will still be plenty to do on the Dig Deep allotment as well as courses on Bush Craft, Seasonal Crafts and Lotions



and Potions. For further information please ring ASCEND on 0208 420 1364 or take a look at our website at www.ascend.org.uk Happy Gardening!

Could Your Company Dig Deep?

- Have you met your CSR goals?
- Want to support a local charity?
- Looking for a team building challenge in the great outdoors?



Then contact the Dig Deep allotment project to organise an exciting day of clearing, digging, planting, bush-craft and conservation.

Refreshments provided

020 8420 1364



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Charity no: 1073909