

ELKS PLANT SEED for GARDEN CLUB

Guest article by Chris Shott, Wicked Local



WAREHAM—Highly regarded as a haven for recreation and education, the Wareham Unit of the Boys & Girls Club of New Bedford in Onset has lately moved into the agriculture business.

Thanks to a grant from the Wareham-New Bedford Lodge of Elks #73, club members recently planted six beds of vegetables in the front yard of its facility, the former Ethel Hammond Elementary School on Highland Avenue. Noticeably sprouting now are various breeds of edible plants, including tomatoes, watermelons, cucumbers, cilantro and thyme.

Through a national Gratitude Grant program offered by the Chicago-based Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the United States, the local organization donated \$641.75 to the Boys & Girls club to plant vegetable beds, providing all essential planting supplies and implements. The beds were cleared and seeded in June and the results are paying off just a month later.

“We have 30 kids involved in this program right now, with five kids assigned to each bed,” said Unit Director Ken Fontes. “They love it and are taking great pride in what they have planted.”

Donna Allen and Terri Scott of the Elks lodge visited the club one recent afternoon and marveled at the horticultural creations of its members. “It’s absolutely incredible,” Allen said while surveying the beds, while Scott simply added, “Amazing.”

Allen said Lodge members were very pleased to be able to contribute to a viable learning experience for youngsters.

“We have worked with Boys & Girls Club in the past and Ken (Fontes) asked us for our help after identifying a need,” Allen said. “We’re just grateful that we could help out.”

For his part, Fontes stressed the “totality” of the grant donation from the lodge.

“With the extra 75 cents, we were able to buy two more tomato plants and they are both growing well,” he said.

As for the ultimate fate of the growing vegetables, fonts said the club knows exactly how to maximize their crop yields.

“We’re going to have a great end-of-summer cookout this year,” he said.

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