

## Historical Hobson City, Alabama

### Community Garden Project

In March of 2011, Mayor Alberta McCrory and members of the city council of Hobson City, Alabama met with representatives from the Natural Resources Conservation Service in Alabama to discuss potential grant funding to support a community garden. Through the support of the Alabama Natural Resources Conservation Service, Coosa Valley Resource Conservation and Development Council (Eddie May, former Coordinator), Tuskegee University Plant Breeder/Horticulturist, Mr. Victor Khan and Beshears Tractor Company; the Hobson City Community Garden was well underway by May 2011. With the support of conservation partners, community residents were able to take an old playground and feed many. The garden consists of approximately 1/10 of an acre.

The Community Garden name W.A.S. is in recognition to former graduates of the Calhoun County Training School, located in Historic Hobson City, Alabama.

**W** = DR. Booker Tillman Whatley (1915 – 2005), a native son of Calhoun County, AL and former faculty member of Tuskegee University. During his tenure at the university he established a successful Sweet Potato and Muscadine Breeding Program.

**A** = Dr. Alfonza Atkinson; (Died on September 7, 2004). He was a three time graduate of Tuskegee University (BS – Biology 1967, BS – Agriculture 1971, and a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine 1973). He served the university as the Dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine, Nursing and Allied Health from 1999 to the time of his death.

**S** = Dr. David Satcher (Born; March 2, 1941). Dr. Satcher is an American Physician and Public Health Administrator. He served as the 10<sup>th</sup> Assistant Secretary for Health and the 16<sup>th</sup> Surgeon General of the United States among other contributions. Presently, he serves on the board of Johnson and Johnson.

Youth and adults are exposed first hand to non-traditional gardening/farming techniques through the use of Micro-Irrigation. This practice is well known and adopted in the state through USDA-Environmental Quality Incentive Program.

On November 12, 2011, W.A.S. hosted its first produce (Collards Greens) sale in conjunction to an onsite Field Day/Health Screening Event. Prior to this date several pounds of produce (peas, corn, peanuts, beans, okra, tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, melons and squash) was given to citizens in the community.

The garden provides opportunities to educate youth and adults in healthy eating, vegetable nutrition values, etc. Local medical professionals, Mr. and Ms. Greene are also supporters of the garden and promote it through a mechanism to combat obesity along with other common medical conditions.

W.A.S. members are planning to convert the old school into an Agricultural Center which will include a high tunnel house, muscadine and blueberry vineyards, greenhouse, and an aqua-cultural facility. The center will be used to; teach the ABC's of gardening and agri-business to area youth and adults, provide a demonstration site for NRCS-EQIP practices, provide a community gardening model for other communities, provide fresh locally grown produce and to promote healthy eating and physical fitness. The motto of the club is, "Bloom Where You are Planted"!!

Submitted by: Alice Love, AL-NRCS



Pictured L-R: Dr. Cherice Green, Eddie May, Exec. Dir. Coosa Valley RC&D, Deneava Barnes – City Council Member, Veronica May - Assistant Principal at Oxford Elementary School, Alberta McCrory - Hobson City Mayor, Victor Kahn – Tuskegee University Plant Breeder/Horticulturist, Elijah Moore, retired NRCS-DC, Charles Gaddis.



Gardeners prepare collards for sale with the assistance of Mr. Kahn, Tuskegee University.



Community residents attend garden sale and other events during field day.