Pizza on the menu

by By Sharon Sullivan Moab Sun News
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Employees from the Moab Valley Multicultural Center will be cooking for the Youth Garden Project’s next Weed ‘N’ Feed on Wednesday, Aug. 7. Multicultural Center Education Coordinator Quincy Masur (left), Volunteer Coordinator Bradia Holmes, Executive Director Rhiana Medina, Outreach Coordinator Joanna Onorato and Programs Coordinator Zaida Agreda Winn (right) are pictured. [Courtesy photo]

Learn about gardening and have fun socializing while pulling weeds at the Youth Garden Project. Then, stay for dinner.

In an effort to promote community service and solicit help in maintaining its gardens, the YGP hosts “Weed ‘N’ Feed” events every other Wednesday, from
April through mid-October. Various Moab organizations and community members take turns volunteering as chefs for the evening.

Employees from the Moab Valley Multicultural Center are scheduled to cook for the next Weed ‘N’ Feed event on Wednesday, Aug. 7.

“We’re going to do pizza,” MVMC outreach coordinator Joanna Onorato said. “We’re happy to use whatever is on hand – the produce they have available. You can put anything on pizza!”

Plus, “we just had a donation from a local garden — we’ll use his tomatoes to make the sauce.”

Located on one-and-a-half acres of land next to Grand County High School, the YGP grows a wide variety of fruits and vegetables, raises chickens, offers community-supported-agriculture (CSA) shares, provides greens to the high school’s lunch program, and serves as an interactive garden classroom for students and the community at-large. In April, the YGP hosts a plant sale of vegetable starts grown at the gardens.

The YGP also offers high school internships where students can learn about agriculture, food production, entrepreneurship and nonprofit work. Seed Crew is a jobs training program offered during the summer, and an agriculture class is available during the school year.

Additionally, the Youth Garden Project helps out local farmers by hosting the Produce Stand Collective on its patio on Tuesdays from 5:30 to 8 p.m. Castle Valley Farms and other local growers sell produce there each week — filling a void that occurred when the Moab Farmers Market was discontinued.

Eggplants, tomatoes and peppers should be bountiful next week at the Youth Garden Project, so you can expect those veggies to be incorporated into the meal somehow, said YGP community programs coordinator and VISTA volunteer Abby Meyer. Guests are asked to arrive at 6 p.m. sharp to weed if
they intend to stay for dinner. Meals are vegetarian. Children of all ages are welcome.

“You can just show up — anyone and everyone is welcome to attend,” Meyer said. “We make sure and cook for the largest group possible so no one goes hungry.”

Onorato said three of their six staff members will be cooking on Wednesday. The MVMC has volunteered to cook for Weed ‘N’ Feed events on prior occasions.

“We love doing it,” Onorato said. “It’s always a lot of fun.”

The Moab Valley Multicultural Center’s mission is to “build bridges across language and culture through family support, community collaboration and education.” It accomplishes these goals by offering crisis resource and advocacy; youth education and outreach; interpretation and translation; language and life skills support; and cultural education and outreach, according to its website.

Currently, the MVMC is offering a summer camp for elementary-aged kids; at the camp, they learn Spanish for half a day and go swimming in the afternoon.

“We mix culture and celebration; we make it fun,” Onorato said.

Guest cooks at the YGP can be individuals, families, clubs, businesses or nonprofit organizations. If your group would like to participate in this event, contact Kate Niederehe at kate@youthgardenproject.org, or call 435-259-2326.

Youth Garden Project invites community members to help out in the garden, stay for dinner

When: Wednesday, Aug. 7, at 6 p.m.
Where: Youth Garden Project, 530 S. 400 East

Cost: Free

Information: 435-259-2326

“We love doing it ... It’s always a lot of fun.”

— Joanna Onorato