



PHFA's Housing  
Services Department  
**Best Practices**

**Char House / Community Garden**

**Categories:** Healthy Living

**Outcomes:**

Residents are encouraged to participate in healthy eating  
Environmentally friendly gardening  
Provided an increase in community pride and cooperation

**Program Components:**

Since there was interest in the gardening concept, a meeting was held to determine what type of containers would be used and what type of plants would thrive best. It was decided that reusing two liter plastic soda bottles for containers would be environmentally friendly. The residents started collecting them and held a work day to clean and prepare them. The Maintenance Staff helped to assemble everything. One resident volunteered to be the "watering coordinator". She worked with other residents to create a schedule to ensure that the plants received the correct amount. The residents involved would tend to the trimming and watering until it was time to harvest. The herb garden constantly produced, so recipes were printed off and placed with cut herbs in the lobby for all to share. Residents who were unable to actually tend the garden remain actively involved in offering their advice and expertise. After the end of the growing season, a Master Gardener from Penn State evaluated the garden and offered advice for next year.

**Background:** Char House is a Senior Building for those 62 years of age or older as well as persons with disabilities.

**Investment in Services:**

The Redevelopment Authority of Washington County purchased plastic shelving so that a raised garden could be made to make it accessible to those in wheelchairs. They also purchased other containers to allow for deeper root plants to be planted. Some plants were grown in recyclable bags which were donated by a local agency.

**Units:** 104 units, sec 8, elderly occupancy  
**Management Agent:** Redevelopment Authority of Washington County  
**Service Provider:** American HealthCare Group  
**Service Coordinator:** Jill Mihoces  
724.483.2198  
[jmihoces@american-healthcare.net](mailto:jmihoces@american-healthcare.net)

**RESULTS**

- Community Involvement
- Stress Relief
- Cost savings on organic produce
- Healthy eating and healthy living



For more information,  
contact PHFA's Housing Services Department:  
412.429.2843  
[housingservices@phfa.org](mailto:housingservices@phfa.org)