GIEI Statewide Meeting Minutes
Alicia Bembenek

Location: Howard County Extension office
Date: February 24, 2015
Time: 10:00am-1:00pm

Present: R.T. West (Calvert); Jo Ann Russo (Howard); Kay Rosedale (Howard); Ellen West (Frederick); Don Ludke (Frederick); Lily Bruch (Mont); Pam Hosimer (Mont); Erica Smith (Mont); Karin Millett (Mont); Mary Ann Normile (Mont); Donna Koczaja (PG); Gary Laidig (Howard); Sharon Smith (Howard); Bill Palm (Carroll); Naima Jenkins-El (Baltimore City); Lisa Gonzalez; Monyka Berrocosa (Baltimore City); Carol Cannon Savage (Howard); Bill Verman; Michelle Nelson; Barbara Klein (Howard); Sabine Harvey (Kent and QA); Ann Hackeling (Howard); Ellen Haas (Harford); Eleanor Cone (Harford); Joan Parris (Harford); Gul Behsudi (Howard); Patricia Strawder (Frederick); Alicia Bembenek (HGIC); Jon Traunfeld (HGIC); Ming Pang (Howard); Butch Willard (Carroll)

Jon Traunfeld opening remarks
• Encouraged everyone to take seeds to use in their county projects
  o There are bean and pea seeds in GIEI-labeled seed packets that folks can use in their demo gardens to celebrate the GIEI Year of Beans and Peas
  o If anyone wants more seeds just let Jon know (jont@umd.edu) and he can send them along to you

County Reports

Frederick
• Demo garden going strong
• Seminars are being conducted this year on a number of topics
• Garden project for homeless has been expanding
  o county received foundation funding for the project
  o in the 1st year the project started with 3 families, single mothers mostly
  o there are now 13 families involved
  o workshops are held that families can attend
    ▪ seminars at churches and they plant gardens with the MGs
- need assistance in transitioning from homelessness to gardening in their life
- MGs work with participants the entire growing season,
- families don’t always have yard space but they grow in containers
- grow lots of different crops and share the produce with their neighbors
- Leaders of the project happy to share the video they created about the project and discuss additional details if requested – contact Pat Strawder

Howard
- Continuing to do similar work as previous year(s)
- It appears that the GIEI workshops have saturated the market, they receive very few requests for GIEI presentations as compared to before.
- They tried something similar to Calvert Co (2014)
  - Doing “Garden Smarter” workshops in March, April, May 2015
  - A brochure for this workshop was passed out during the meeting
  - Covers GIEI and Bay Wise topics
- Community garden meetings: Lead by Columbia gardeners
  - Right now on BGE and Parks and Rec property
  - There are waiting lists to join the community garden
  - MGs are trying to find new property for more community gardens. BGE doesn’t want to host anymore
  - They may need to hire a garden manager to deal with the demand of community gardens
  - A suggestion: maybe they should get MGs to help out with the community garden management

Harford
- Numbers are falling off for basic and advanced GIEI classes
- They are now doing a class on just tomatoes, a class on just herbs
- MGs have had a gardening series before on just ornamentals, but now they have incorporated GIEI themed classes into that too
- MGs are working with a community garden in Darlington, on Parks and Rec property
- The produce goes to a pantry in Bel Air
• Jon Traunfeld encouraged folks to continue to send him their total pounds of food donated to pantries

Montgomery
• They are still getting new requests for GIEI classes
• Trying to focus on segments of the population
  o low income (Manna Project) and children
  o They took surveys from low income people to find out what they want
  o Discovered that folks want MGs to help them grow the produce
• Their events have about 20% children attending
• They will host Boy scouts and Girl scouts in future events and give out badges
  o The Boy scout sign up for this has been slower
• Their events are large, they are offering lots of different options
• They offer classes “down” county too
  o Now asking for a $5 donation to attend the class, but if a person don’t want to donate they can contact them to take the class for free
• They see a need for advanced classes now.  2/3 of the classes have advanced topics, 1/3 are not advanced topics
• In April they are offering a therapeutic topic, classes on mushrooms, fruits, veggies, herbs
• They will partner with Edible Landscaping to sell fruit trees at the events
• Upcoming class (April 18): low maintenance fruits
• Offering a tomato grafting class too -- for a charge
• In August: partnering with UMD folks to have a class about backyard chickens
• Advanced topic will be offered on fruit and grafting
• In August they will have a class on preservation

Baltimore City
• They have been trying to restructure their committee lately
• They have classes on making strawberry and apple butter
• They are offering GIEI classes in Spanish in the future. Talking to Anna Glenn (Baltimore County MG Coordinator) about this
• They need judges for the community garden contest in Baltimore city. One benefit of doing this is that you get a good tour of Baltimore

Lisa Gonzalez
• Answered questions about preservation topics in GIEI classes
  o We can tell them about the resources out there and general guidelines
  o Let the trained people give the classes
  o There will be a $35 charge and a kitchen is needed
    ▪ These requirements have been perceived as restrictive to some
  o There was a request that Lisa could put some guidelines in writing and people could know what to do / expect.
  o Lisa can send out contact names for different counties if they would like to offer a preservation class
  o Contact: lisacgo@umd.edu or Deborah Rhoades (drhoades@umd.edu) for Frederick County
  o Their main page is: http://extension.umd.edu/foodsafty
  o They can cover topics such as how to eat the produce, how to prepare it
  o Also: always a good idea to recommend that people look at the National Food Preservation website (http://nchfp.uga.edu/)
    ▪ They have an online training that is free
• Request for Lisa to create a list of all of the classes they are offering throughout the state this year
  o Canning, freezing, pickling classes are being planned
  o Lisa made notes and will bring these topics up with her colleagues and send out a survey to find out needs across counties

Baltimore County
• Similar classes being offered at libraries
• Staring a veggie garden, beyond basics
• Good interest in the classes. New libraries are now being used for the classes
• Doing mushrooms in future classes
• Continuing to try to expand into community gardens, but it is slow going
Carroll County

- What works well for recruiting MGs to the GIEI program: When MGs are in Basic Training, Butch Willard teaches small fruits and tree fruits and actively recruits during that class
- GIEI program currently has 20 active MGs and 40 total members
- They have areas of focus: The Twilight meetings (in April-Oct), the Demo Garden, and the Heirloom Garden at the Farm Museum (this has veggie plants from the 1600’s, 1700’s 1800’s)
- GIEI classes started in January and they run 8 weeks on 16 topics
  - Held at the Extension office that that increases the legitimacy of the classes
  - Cooking demos and door prizes given out each week
  - Charge: $10 per class, $65 for all 8 classes
- Recently created a Carroll County GIEI webpage

Calvert County

- This is their 10th year of the “Garden Smarter” workshops
  - January-Sept classes. A brochure was handed out
- They have a new partnership with the American Chestnut Foundation
- 5 MGs help out with the property. There was a CSA that could produce 5000 lbs of food in a year
- Main foci of Double Oak farm is to deliver food to pantries, improve soil, do demos on no till gardening
- Public can come in and they give tours

Kent and Queen Anne’s Counties

- They are rebuilding this year because they lost their most active GIEI people recently
- They will do a seed swap in a library in 2 weeks
- They are working with public schools to start veggie gardens
- Had mgs growing food in hay bales. They will have a short presentation on straw bale gardening

Prince George’s County

- They are doing community college classes
  - 11 people are currently signed up for it
  - Class is 9 hours total
- Classes are being offered in schools and libraries
• They want to use more venues, but new venues have been difficult to acquire
  o They Laurel community garden is doing a training in a few weeks
• They have a coordinator for a community garden for refugees
• They are going to DC for workshops: “Rooting DC” -- the workshops are free!
  o To find the events: Go to Eventbrite and type in “Rooting DC”
• Trying to establish a community garden in College Park
  o Visited a few sites to check them out as possible locations but haven’t found a good site yet
• Saturday, April 18 (9:00am-2:00pm): 3rd Annual Growing Community Gardens Gathering workshop in East Riverdale, MD
  o Registration ends March 28th
  o $12-$15, includes lunch and yoga too
  o Register at: http://www.eventbrite.com/e/3rd-annual-growing-community-gardens-registration-15920324118
• Backyard orchards will be a focus
• Their Library Lecture Series has a class that starts in next few weeks
• They are working with Terp Farm (UM student organic farm) and trying to get student participation

Anne Arundel County
• Sent their updates in a text message
  o They will be having GIEI seminars, classes at libraries and they have started 2 new community gardens

Jon Traunfeld
• National gardening surveys are sent out periodically
  o Compared data from 2008 to 2013:
    ▪ Survey indicated that 35% of households are doing home gardening
    ▪ Millenials increased their gardening by 65%
      o These people are willing to spend money to learn about food gardening
  o There is data about food gardening and the value of food production: $22 billion across country
• Questions, concerns about seed swaps and exchanges
  o Some people have had these in their counties
Librarians and MGs have been learning about seed libraries

Then Pennsylvania shut down seed libraries because they are perceived as seed distributors

How to interpret this new regulation:

- Authorities will not accept “full blown” seed libraries, but they are fine with seed swaps
- Some states are creating legislation in order to have seed libraries
- Seed swaps can and should be done
- The State MG office may coordinate a seed saving Advanced Training class this summer
- There is a 7 day course you can take (“Seed School”) in Arizona to learn about seed preservation
- There is an interesting documentary you can watch called Open Sesame: The story of seeds (http://www.opensesamemovie.com/)

- New PPT slides are on the GIEI website
- Grow 100 program
  - Should we modify the program for this year?
    - Have soft signup this year.
    - Register to receive emails about the program, make it open throughout season
    - No check-in’s, but people can report and submit their progress.
  - Feedback from meeting: This program is not for MGs, it is for the public – but is the word getting out to the public?
  - Initially, when program started last year, 38 people submitted. But at the end only 8-9 people were still in
  - Should we just tweak the program a little bit for this year?
    - Pros of keeping it: it does generate a lot of interesting pictures and tips
  - Feedback from meeting: There is a lot of interest in small space veggie gardening. The competition was daunting though. Next time allow more people to participate and make it less rigid
    - Suggestion: Make the ability to win as a random drawing. Or maybe there should be no prize? Maybe recognition instead of prizes?
Feedback: the cut off date was off putting. Posting pictures was tricky for people
This year: let’s link it to instagram, and put a hashtag on it #grow100
Let’s find out how to reach and connect to Millennials. They want to grow and spend money on growing food
Consensus: Let’s make a few changes and offer it again this year.
  ▪ But give it a benchmark of success to determine whether to do it again in 2016: need to have at least 100 contestants, approximately 50% mg
  ▪ Let’s also indicate: this # of containers = 100 sq ft. too

Erica on the GIEI Blog
• Audience of blog readers is up, but active bloggers are down.
• They need people to write for the blog!
• Authors does not have to be a MG
• Need 1 post per month from each new blogger
• Blog got recent redesign
• Open to using social media such as instagram and pinterest
• There were 65,000 new users last year!

BREAK

Alicia Bembenek on Evaluating the GIEI Program

Contact Alicia at aliciafb@umd.edu if you are interested in receiving assistance with evaluating your county GIEI program

The GIEI Program
• Created in 2009 because of requests by communities
• Goal: 1 million Marylanders growing their own food
• Currently 15 Maryland counties and Baltimore City have scheduled GIEI classes every year

Possible GIEI Program Objectives (Adapted from Miller & Arnold, 2012) were discussed and debated
• Participants will:
  o engage in best practices for nutrient management of the soil
  o learn to plant and grow the 10 “best” vegetable crops suited for Maryland
- learn and use the principles of Integrated Pest Management
- learn how to increase their yields and extend the season
- increase their consumption of locally or home grown produce over the next year
- increase their knowledge and skills in harvesting, cooking, and preserving vegetables

Are we fulfilling the program objectives? How do we know? Impact data is continuously needed

- MG coordinators may be asked to provide this information to their Area Extension Directors
- Stakeholders appreciate this information
- Grant applications often require evidence of impacts
- We can determine whether we have a program that works and then publish our impacts so that other states can model after our program

Impact Data May Include:
- Knowledge gained (e.g. correct identification of beneficial and problematic insects)
- New skills (e.g., performed a soil test and amended soil accordingly)
- New attitudes (e.g., refrained from indiscriminately using pesticides)
- Aspirations (e.g., reporting of intentions to grow in the future)
- Plans to implement knowledge gained (e.g., identification of cover crops to be planted)

Statewide Evaluation from Network (2009-2011): Data was collected from people using the GIEI website

Statewide Evaluation from MG led GIEI classes (2009-2011) included:

- 1. In what county did the class take place?
- 2. **What types of food to you currently grow in your yard, home or community?**
  - Select all that apply: Vegetables, Fruit, Herbs, None
- 3. What other types of food gardens do you currently grow?
- 4. **Before attending this workshop, what types of food gardens were you interested in starting?**
  - Select all that apply: Container, window sill, salad table, herb garden, edible landscape, in-ground vegetable garden, community garden space, fruit
- 5. What other types of food gardens were you interested in starting?
6. After attending this workshop what types of food gardens do you intend to start?
   - Select all that apply: Container, window sill, salad table, herb garden, edible landscape, in-ground vegetable garden, community garden space, fruit
7. What other types of food gardens do you intend to start?
8. What are your major reasons for wanting to start a food garden?
   - Select all that apply: For exercise, as a hobby, contribute to a more healthy diet, save money on food costs, interested in preserving (canning or freezing) my own food, increase my skills and abilities to take care of myself and/or my family
9. Why else do you want to start a food garden?
10. Would you recommend this workshop to other people interested in food gardening?
11. What did you like best about this workshop?
12. What did you like least about this workshop?
13. Any other comments?

Statewide Follow-up from MG led GIEI classes (2009-2011) included:
1. Before taking this workshop, did you have any vegetable gardening experience? Yes or No
2. How did you use the information from the GIEI vegetable gardening class? Started an in-ground or raised bed vegetable garden, started a container vegetable garden, started a salad table or salad box garden, renovated or reactivated a vegetable garden, expanded a vegetable garden, made my garden more productive, made me a more confident gardener, I did not start a garden, other
3. My vegetable or container garden... contributed to a more healthy diet for me and/or my family (a lot to not much); helped save money on food costs (a lot to not much); helped increase my skills and abilities to take care of myself and/or my family (a lot to not much)
4. If you were able to save money on food because of your garden, what is the estimated amount you saved? $0 to > $100
5. If you started a vegetable garden, we would like to know its approximate size. Small, medium, large, salad table, container, I do not have a vegetable garden

Carroll County GIEI Classes (2014)
Topics taught (January-March, Monday evenings, 6:30-9:00pm):
Getting started, Know your soil, Raised beds, Seed starting, Herbs, Intensive gardening, IPM, Pollination and pollinators, Bugs: The good, bad, and the ugly, Extending the season, Backyard greenhouses, Kitchen gardens, Community Supported Agriculture, Small fruits & tree fruits, Companion planting, GIEI crop of the year: cucurbits, Container gardening

Assessment of Carroll County GIEI Program (2014)
#1) Pre- and Post-test assessment of knowledge gained

- Administered via a handout during first class (January) and last class (March)
- 27 questions, multiple choice, fill in the blank, true/false (e.g., “Name one ‘good’ bug”, “Name one ‘bad’ bug”)
- Written up as a Research Brief (October, 2014)
  - Respondents ($N = 21$) answered more questions correctly on the post-test compared to the pre-test, $t(20) = 7.86$, $p < .05$.

#2) Survey of behavior change

- Sent via an email (November) with a link to a survey
- 18 questions, check all that apply (e.g., “After attending the class about ‘Getting Started’, I…”) (e.g., “Overall, how did you and your family benefit from your gardening activities?”)
- Very few respondents ($N = 5$)

Assessment of Carroll County GIEI Program (2015)

#1) Pre-test of knowledge gained, Post-test forthcoming

- Administered via a handout during first class (January) and last class (March)
  - 20 questions, multiple choice only (e.g., “Which of the following is a ‘good bug’?” a. spittlebug b. tomato hornworm c. braconid wasps d. all of the above)

#2) Survey of behavior change

- Will send via an email (in August) with a link to a survey

Peronto & Murphy (2009) provide useful possibilities for a survey of behavior change that could be administered to GIEI attendees (a portion of these may be used in the future):

As a result of taking the GIEI classes, I...

- 1. Started or improved my composting system
- 2. Added organic matter at least once a year to the soil
- 3. Had my soil tested
- 4. Amended my soil according to test recommendations
- 5. Started a new vegetable garden
- 6. Reduced soil erosion by using cover crops or mulches in the garden
- 7. Chose disease resistant varieties for my fruit and vegetable plantings
- 8. Scouted the garden for pests and diseases
- 9. Identified the insects in my garden before using control measures
- 10. Identified plant disease symptoms before using control measures
- 11. Practiced cultural (non chemical, non toxic) methods for managing pests (such as hand picking, row covers)
• 12. Used at least one new method to extend the growing season (plastic mulch, cold frame, floating row cover, appropriate variety selection, multiple plantings, etc.)
• 13. Used preservation techniques (canning, freezing, drying) to extend the storage of my produce.
• 13. Felt more confident in my abilities as a gardener
• 14. Saved money on groceries as a result of my food garden

Survey of Behavior Change (2015)
• Will be administered to Carroll County GIEI participants via a web link sent to their email
• With MGs help, can also be administered to the GIEI participants in your county

A sign-up sheet to obtain email addresses for this can specify that:
• Individuals will be sent the HGIC newsletter
• Individuals will be put on the county emailing list
• Individuals may be sent a GIEI survey
• This new sign-up sheet is posted on the MG website (http://extension.umd.edu/mg/adminreports/grow-it-eat-it, click on Signup form for HGIC newsletter)

Plans for 2016
• Measure behaviors/intentions on three occasions:
  o pre-class (January) (e.g., “Do you currently have a compost system?”)
  o post-class (March) (e.g., “Do you intend to start or improve a compost system?”)
  o follow-up (August) (e.g., “Did you start or improve a compost system?”)
• Need to determine:
  o Which counties would be willing and able to administer pre/post/follow-up to their attendees?
  o Do we have similarity of the class topics across counties?
  o And/or can we select and commit to teaching 5-10 best practices in our classes?