



SEEDS OF HOPE WILSON



Jim Howard
Executive Director
252-469-3823

From the Executive Director

Greetings! Wow, 2021 was a fantastic year for Seeds of Hope Wilson. Pandemic and all, Seeds of Hope Wilson had the opportunity to make a difference. We increased our garden ministries with "Backyard Buddies" in 2021. Twelve raised beds were built and distributed throughout eastern Wilson. We made two special raised garden beds for Diversified Opportunities Industries. The boxes allow participants a new appreciation and understanding about gardening. A new and welcome partnership.

Our Promotoras saw it's ministry expand in the Wilson Latinx community. Their first Dia de los Muertos event in October at the Whirligig Park was a wonderful success. Families got to experience and celebrate Mexican and Hispanic culture and customs. We hope to make this year's event bigger and better. New partnerships for 2022 event, hopes to include, Arts Council of Wilson, Casa Azul, Historic Downtown Wilson, Casita Brewing Company and many others. Way to go Promotoras!

Our Pirate Forest Garden (PFG) project is slowly growing. We are continuing to battle weeds, vines and undergrowth. However a new energy is being filtered into this task. A platform/ stage was constructed, a picnic table was purchased and the Seeds of Hope little library was relocated to the PFG, this past year. We will be looking forward to the PFG taking shape in 2022!

Winstead United Methodist Men's group partnered with West Nash United Methodist Men's group to build a food pantry called "The Neighborly Food Closet." It was a fun and important project - to serve our neighbors at Seeds of Hope Wilson. It allows our neighbors access to food without the stigma of asking for help. People simply can help themselves. We are hoping to have our dedication and blessing of the "Neighborly Food Closet" Sunday, March 6, 2022 at 1:30 pm, weather and pandemic permitting. Please join us if you can.

Seeds of Hope Wilson welcomed several new board members in 2021. Pastor Rachel Price, Pastor Heather Wong, Rhyann Breen, Heather Winstead, and Martha Levy are bringing new energy. We are excited

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IN THE GARDEN

By Julia Newton,
Community Garden Coordinator

Despite the cold and gloomy weather, the Teaching and Community Garden is full of life—and fresh vegetables! Over the past couple of months, we have harvested loads of winter greens like cabbage, collards, kale, mustard, and lettuces. Winter carrots are sweet and delicious, and the cool weather makes our cilantro and parsley extra flavorful. We have been able to share fresh food with our gardeners, neighbors, and beyond, as well as Hope Station's fresh food pantry. We are also seeing more neighbors come to the garden to harvest food themselves.



Our gardeners have been busy with winter projects to improve our grounds and growing beds. We applied a new layer of mulch to the paths and walkways in our vegetable garden, and to flowering perennials in our herb and flower beds. Mulch helps control weed growth and regulates moisture and temperature in the soil. We are lucky to have great municipal mulch to use in our garden. We have also been turning and improving the soil all over the garden, especially in our raised beds. In a few weeks we will turn and harvest our compost piles, adding even more nutrients and organic matter to our soil.

Looking ahead, we have started another round of cool-weather seedlings under grow lights inside Seeds of Hope House. We are growing more greens, lettuces, and herbs, and have started seeds for an asparagus bed. These seedlings should be

ready to plant outside mid-February along with our other spring crops like potatoes, peas, and onions. We'll start a group of summer seedlings after that: tomatoes, chiles, eggplants, and summer herbs. We will also grow seedlings for several different projects such as Backyard Buddies, Diversified Opportunities, and our booth at the Farmer's Market.

We continue to hold our regular Tuesday and Saturday morning workdays, 8-10 am, and you are always welcome to join us. It has been chilly in the garden lately, but we always find some good work and exercise to warm us up! Look for coming volunteer opportunities in the garden with Vick schoolchildren and other groups. Help us spread the joy of Happy Growing!

Seeds of Hope Needs Volunteers

By Peggie Shultz

Seeds of Hope Wilson will have students in the garden beginning in March! We are so excited to have them back.

In order for them to have a meaningful experience, we need volunteers to help guide the lessons planned.

You would only need to volunteer one day a month (or more if you can). The specific days have not been determined yet. You would be helping the leader guide the students through each lesson. All lessons would be outside in the garden unless the weather is severe.

Please consider helping us as we finally get back to what Seeds of Hope was envisioned to be.

Contact Peggie Shultz at pshultz70@gmail.com if you have questions or to volunteer.

IN THE COMMUNITY

(Continued from page 1)

Executive Director (cont'd)

about bringing Eva Smithwick to our board soon. Eva has been volunteering with us this past year. Her enthusiasm is contagious and we welcome her to Seeds of Hope Wilson.

Great news! We will be getting Vick Elementary students back into the gardens in early March! I had the pleasure to speak with Principal Faison, who is excited about Seeds of Hope Wilson. Julia Newton and I then met with Carol Price, STEM coordinator for the school, about programs we can implement with the students. Julia shared information on a curriculum based on a Berkley University Garden model. We hope to adopt this with the Vick Elementary students very soon. A big shout out to Julia Newton.

Again, let me say Seeds of Hope Wilson has an incredible network of people. Claudia, Lorena, Isaiah and Sophie, with the guidance of Julia, keep our gardens magnificent. Vicenta and Maria continue to enrich our community with our Promotoras Ministry. Our chairperson, Peggie Shultz, vice chairperson Heather Winstead, secretary Mary Ellen Bass, financial consultant Linda Lane and the rest of the Seeds of Hope Wilson board, are the most dedicated group to this organization. It is a privilege to work alongside these people.

2022 is shaping up to be an even more exciting year. The 3rd annual Seeds of Hope Wilson Golf tournament is scheduled for May 13, 2022. The Farmer's Market will kick off this spring. The Promotoras' Day of the Dead celebration is sched-

uled for October 29, 2022. We have several opportunities for you to help this coming year. Feel free to contact me with any questions, ideas or comments!

In his service,

Jim Howard, Executive Director

jshowardiv@yahoo.com or 252-469-3823



*Vicenta Cariño
Hispanic Project
Coordinator*

Promotoras have been active in our community. They have been providing information about vaccines sites as well as sharing the experience of being vaccinated. They have also helped to make appointments to get the vaccine.

December was a great month to care for our community and Promotoras worked together with the Knights of Columbus at St. Therese Catholic Church to create and share food baskets and gift cards for families in need in our community. This is the second year of this project.

We are planning to participate in the Black and Brown Community Event sponsored by Living the Word: Justice and Equity. This event is aimed at bringing together groups and cultures to appreciate and celebrate our diversity. It will be either the first or second Saturday in April. Be on the lookout for more details.

NEIGHBORLY FOOD CLOSET

Dedication, Sunday, March 6 at 1:30 pm

A huge thank you to Winstead UMC Methodist Men and West Nash UMC Methodist Men who partnered to create the Seeds of Hope Wilson Neighborly Food Closet! The Closet works like the little neighborhood libraries: anyone may donate items or take items at any time. Join us for the dedication on March 6, but the closet is stocked and operating now!



L to R: Fred Hight, Ryan Kirby, Elijah Kirby, Josiah Kirby, Gabe Ruotolo, Jim Howard

SAVE VICK ELEMENTARY



As you may have heard, the Wilson County School Board is exploring the possibility of elementary school closures. Vick Elementary was one of the schools recommended for possible closure. No decision has been made and further public hearings will be held.

If you would like write a letter to the School Board to let them know you support Vick, a sample is included at the end of this article. Here are some suggestions for information you might include in your letter:

- The school is the heartbeat of the community. It gives vitality and purpose to this underserved neighborhood.
- The school not only provides a neighborhood school to which students can walk but also provides programs and events for their families, many of whom do not have transportation.
- The school system, along with the state of NC, has invested substantial funds into the school to bolster academics. It sometimes takes several years to see the fruits of such investment. Closing the school will negate the work that has been ongoing.

Include any ways you may have helped Vick by participating in Seeds of Hope Wilson activities:

- Volunteering as a tutor

- Volunteering with the "Vick Gets Fit" program or "Girls on the Run."
- Helping serve meals for parent meetings
- Helping with student programs in the garden
- Helping with the after school program
- Volunteering in the community garden
- Donating to Seeds of Hope Wilson

Sample letter

Dr. Lane Mills, Superintendent and BOE Members
Wilson County Schools
100 Tarboro Street
Wilson, North Carolina 27893

Dear Wilson County School Officials,

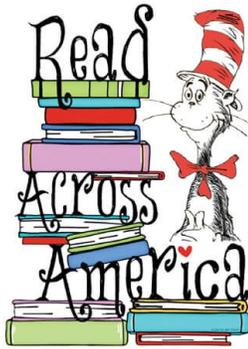
I am writing in support of Vick Elementary School and in opposition to any effort to close this school.

I am a board member of Seeds of Hope Wilson and/or a friend of Seeds of Hope Wilson. We have supported Vick Elementary School with our donations and our volunteerism for over five years.

We consider these children as our children. Uprooting them from their community would do them harm and so I ask you to keep Vick Elementary School open and invest even more fully in the school itself to promote the betterment of our students and their families.

Sincerely,
Your name

IN THE COMMUNITY



Read across America

Each year schools across America celebrate Dr. Seuss's birthday with a week of activities, including a day where volunteers read books to every classroom.

This year, because of Covid restrictions, Vick Elementary is asking volunteers to record themselves reading a book and to send the file to Martha Levey, Vick librarian. She will make these recordings available to the teachers. And, of course, Dr. Seuss books are an obvious choice, but any book is welcome.

If you would like to submit a video, choose your book, make the video (using any recording program) and send to Martha at martha.levey@wilsonschoolsnc.net. Begin your video by giving your name, and the name and author of the book you will be reading. Stories will be shared with the students on Monday, February 28.

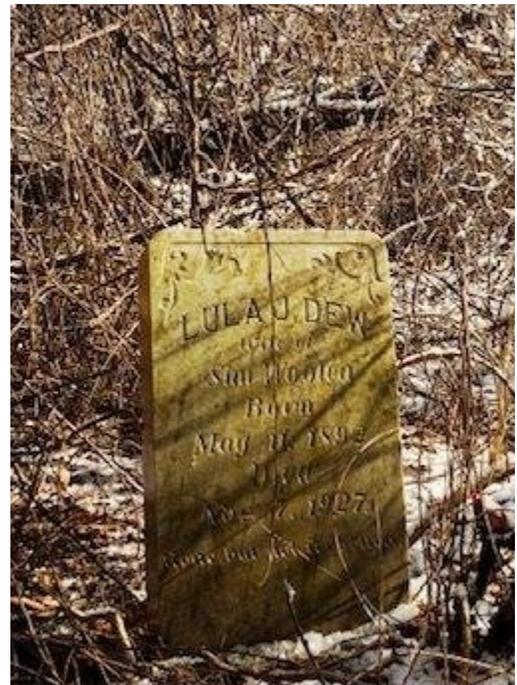
Thanks so much for reading with us!

Lane Street Project

The Lane Street Project is dedicated to the restoration of three historic African-American cemeteries in Wilson and to the preservation of our community's culture and history.

On Saturday, February 12, they will once again sponsor a clean up of the Odd Fellows Cemetery, 2102 Sandy Creek Dr SE. from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm This has traditionally been a project for Martin Luther King Day of Service, but inclement weather this year caused it to be rescheduled. Seeds of Hope Wilson will participate again this year.

Bring your clean up tools and come help restore this historic cemetery. (Masks are required for this event.)



Seeds of Hope Wilson Mission

To promote student achievement, influence the spiritual, physical, and emotional wellbeing of families and friends of Vick Elementary School, and to expand the community conversation as we work toward building a more inclusive community.

Executive Director:

Jim Howard

Officers

Board Chair: Peggie Shultz

Vice Chair: Heather Winstead

Secretary: MaryEllen Bass

Board Members

Rhyan Breen

Vicenta Cariño

Gary Farmer

Mandy Jenkins

Julia Newton

Maria Resendez

M. K. Smith

Heather Wong

Ex Officio members:

Martha Levey, Vick staff

Rev. Rachel Price, Pastor,

Winstead UMC

For more information contact:

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Published by:

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ON THE CALENDAR

February

Tuesday, February 1

8:00 am - 10:00 am Community Garden Workday

Saturday, February 5

8:00 am - 10:00 am Community Garden Workday

Tuesday, February 8

8:00 am - 10:00 am Community Garden Workday

7:00 pm SOHW Board Meeting

Saturday, February 12

8:00 am - 10:00 am Community Garden Workday

10:00 am - 2:00 pm Lane Street Project at Odd Fellows Cemetery

Tuesday, February 15

8:00 am - 10:00 am Community Garden Workday

Saturday, February 19

8:00 am - 10:00 am Community Garden Workday

Tuesday, February 22

8:00 am - 10:00 am Community Garden Workday

Saturday, February 26

8:00 am - 10:00 am Community Garden Workday

March

Tuesday, March 1

8:00 am - 10:00 am Community Garden Workday

Saturday, March 5

8:00 am - 10:00 am Community Garden Workday

Sunday, March 6

1:30 pm Neighborly Food Closet Dedication
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Tuesday, March 8

8:00 am - 10:00 am Community Garden Workday

4:00 pm SOHW Executive Committee Meeting

Saturday, March 12

8:00 am - 10:00 am Community Garden Workday

Sunday, March 13

Daylight Saving Time Begins

Tuesday, March 15

8:00 am - 10:00 am Community Garden Workday

Tuesday, March 22

8:00 am - 10:00 am Community Garden Workday

Saturday, March 26

8:00 am - 10:00 am Community Garden Workday

Tuesday, March 29

8:00 am - 10:00 am Community Garden Workday