

*Enhancing social,
economic and cultural
well being of Regina
residents through
community gardening*



Annual Report 2009



Message from the Chairperson of the Board



This past year has been a very busy and productive one for Grow Regina. At the organizational level, the board has been working towards creating the most effective governance organization possible. This has resulted in the development of a new mission statement and the crafting of a new set of bylaws. On behalf of the Grow Regina Board, I wish to express a special thank you to Wayne Hellquist, CEO of the Regina & District Food Bank, for his support and guidance through this process. At the operational level, much work continues to be done to further develop the YARA-Grow Regina Community Garden, making it safe, well-organized and inviting for the individuals, families and groups that rely on the garden for their main source of nutrition.

There is much more work to be done if we are to continue to be successful in promoting social, economic and cultural well-being for Regina residents through community gardening. As the cost of food increases and the nutritional value decreases due to the distance of distribution, many people are asking to grow their food locally. The need for nutritional, fresh produce, in addition to the obvious physical and social benefits of gardening in a nurturing environment, motivates Grow Regina to continue to explore new paths to allow gardening to be enjoyed by all generations.

Grow Regina has been very fortunate to receive the funds necessary to offer community gardening for those who want to grow food for themselves. Their investment in the YARA-Grow Regina Community Garden has provided an environment where many gardeners enjoy the deep contentment and satisfaction of growing their own fruits and vegetables – and to be able to generously donate produce to the Regina & District Food Bank aiding in their work towards eliminating hunger. Grow Regina would not exist, of course, without the many tireless volunteers whose individual contributions help to sustain our efforts. Thank you to each and every individual who made 2009 gardening season possible from the beginning of the season to its final cleanup.

Karen Watkins

Karen Watkins, Chairperson of the Board



Summary of Committee Reports for 2009



- **Fulfilling our mission**

Grow Regina continues to strive towards fulfilling our mandate to enhance social, economic and cultural well being of Regina residents through community gardening. We are proud of our accomplishments, and will continue to advance our efforts to incorporate new ideas and partnerships in 2010.

- **Communication Committee**

The Communications Committee improved communications with Grow Regina Members and Regina residents with enhancements to the website, newsletter and community announcements.

In March Grow Regina changed web hosting provider to enhance websites features. A new design was established to improve our communication with members and residents. Content was updated on a regular basis to keep the gardeners informed about YARA-GRCG activities and local events.

This forum has allowed us to begin teaching people about gardening techniques and – by identifying Weeds Common to YARA-GRCG. Other stories that highlighted how the garden improved their well being drew a lot of attention. Since June 28th, Grow Regina received over 1,800 visits from 31 countries.

Grow Regina produced four newsletter publications for 2009: Spring, Summer, Fall and, of course, this Special Winter issue of the 2009 Annual Report.

Community announcements have been promoted with the cooperation of the Lakeview Community Association. In addition to the regular web articles, LCA posted the Official YARA-GRCG on their association board near the corner of Elphinstone Street and Hill Avenue. Louise Arndt has been our official 2009 GR Liaison with LCA. It has been a pleasure working with Mark Dyck at the LCA.

Thank you to the committee for your valued contributions.

- **Construction & Maintenance Committee**

The Construction & Maintenance Committee was not as active in 2009 due to the need to prepare design specifications and receive approval for several construction projects in the garden; however, some construction continued on the water service kiosk, composting stations, and perennial flower beds.

We hope to share good news during the winter months and anticipate a very busy year in 2010 with the development of the WALMART Evergreen Accessible Gardening site and the installation of the Cicansky sculptures at the Queen Street Entrance. There are also several other Design Features that we hope to get started including upgrades to the garden shed exterior, vegetable washing stations, information boards, raised beds, trellises and benches, just to mention a few.



- **Fundraising, Planning & Development Committee**

The Fundraising, Planning and Development Committee was successful in developing strong relationships with two sponsors who provided resources for new design features at YARA-Grow Regina Community Garden.

In addition to the initial donation of \$50,000 that helped Grow Regina establish the YARA-Grow Regina Community Garden at 3500 Queen Street in McLeod Park, Yara has also committed to donating an additional amount up to \$5,000 towards Queen Street Entrance signage and two sculptures designed by Vic Cicansky, a world renowned artist and recently named to the Order of Canada. We are currently in discussions with the City of Regina for placement approval and protection of the sculptures.

Grow Regina was awarded \$10,000 from WALMART – Evergreen Fund towards the development of an Accessible Gardening Project and a Community Greening Project.

- *Accessible Gardening Project:* provides a gardening area that will accommodate individuals with varying degrees of disabilities.

The accessible gardening site has been reserved on the southeast corner of the garden. A sub-committee is currently working with representatives from the Saskatchewan Abilities Council (SAC), South Saskatchewan Independent Living Centre (SSILC), and Saskatchewan Institute for the Brain Injured Association (SARBI) to establish the needs for this area.

- *Community Greening Project:* development of native tree planting along northern edge of YARA-GRCG.

Grow Regina is working with the City of Regina to enhance the property boundary of North Parliament Park bordering McLeod Park along its northern edge. Grow Regina will plant trees and shrubs under the terms outlines in City’s “Private Plantings in Public Open Spaces”. The proposed plantings would replace dead trees and shrubs and fill open areas with native plantings to create a shelterbelt to protect YARA-GRCG from prevailing northern winds, as well as beautify the view of the Storm Channel.

Grow Regina has hired Landscape Designer, Ingrid Thiessen, to develop a conceptual plan of YARA-Grow Regina Community Garden in cooperation with Vic Cicansky, Artistic Consultant for YARA-Grow Regina Community Garden. This design will assist in future fundraising activities as well as establish a blueprint for development of future community gardens in Regina.

Thank you to the committee for your valued contributions. A special thank you to Wade Zawalski for his contribution of the vision for developing YARA-Grow Regina Community Garden into a world class garden.



- **Garden Operation Committee**

The scope of the Operations Committee covers implementing and assuring compliances of the Grow Regina Garden Guidelines and recommending procedures and policies affecting activity in the gardens.

Recognizing that control of weeds in the garden is a concern of all gardeners, attempting to define what constitutes unacceptable conditions for individual plots is difficult. Once weeds reach the flower and seed stage of their growth, then it becomes the concern of all gardeners and of the Garden Operations committee. A set of procedures will be put in place, starting with polite reminders that garden plots have been neglected and require attention. Failure to respond may lead to eventual confiscation of garden plots and the rights of individuals to return as gardeners.

The composting program for the gardens puts great demand on our garden resources; not only the hours of labour required but the space requirements necessary for the collection and storage of the materials. There is a need for some education of what composting is and how gardeners should treat their plant waste. The amount of space we require for the compost piles was underestimated. Trying to maintain the park-like appearance of the gardens will put stresses on the compost piles and location(s).

Judging by the amount of perennials and the installation of “semi-permanent” fixtures appearing in the gardens, our gardeners have been responding to the decision that they are individually responsible for the digging and rototilling of their plot. It was not an easy decision to make, but our gardens were not designed for mass tilling.

The various structures appearing in the gardens required setting new guidelines to regulate what can be allowed and what can remain in the garden over winter. Common sense and community standards should be the determining factors for gardeners in deciding how they wish to install structures. Our winter conditions and the openness of the garden dictates that anything that can be effected by the winds must be removed from the gardens each fall. Basically, anything not solidly build and fixed to the ground must be removed.

We have also experienced gardeners wanting to increase the elevation of their plots and they have been adding to the height of the cribbing along the pathways. Guidelines have been approved as to what materials can be used and the height restrictions that will be allowed.

We are looking forward to, and anticipating the creativity of gardeners when it comes to installing garden structures and decorating their plots.

Thanks to all the volunteers who came forward to help make this a true community garden.



• **Membership Committee**

A person becomes a member of Grow Regina by renting a garden plot from Grow Regina. Though a garden plot may be registered in more than one name, there is only one vote per plot. In 2009, our YARA Grow Regina Community Garden had all available garden plots allocated. Several plots were not allocated along the south side and the Queen Street entrance due to unfinished garden construction and for our commitment to provide food to the Regina and District Food Bank.

In 2009 we had 239 families gardening plus several plots dedicated for growing vegetables for the Regina & District Food Bank. We already have a waiting list in excess of 35 requesting a garden plot in 2010.

In 2009 the YARA Grow Regina Community Garden accommodated the following gardens:

Garden Plot Description	Size	# of Gardeners
Mini	10x10	42
Small	10x20	49
Standard	20x20	109
Large	20x30	39
TOTAL		239

Starting in 2010, the large gardens upon surrender will be divided into smaller plots to accommodate the growing demand by new gardeners. The only garden sizes available new gardeners will be 10x10, 10x20, or 20x20. Space will only be available if an existing gardener does not renew.

• **Orchard Committee**

To date 50 trees are planted in the northeast and northwest corner of YARA-GRCG. Additional land has been broken on the west side to prepare a strip of soil for planting of fruit trees/shrubs in 2010. As a committee, we learned about the impact of Saskatchewan winter on young tree seedlings, as well as, how to protect the young seedlings from animal damage during the winter.



Grow Regina is pleased to announce a planned planting of 65 native trees in 2010 as part of the WALMART-Evergreen Community Greening Project plantings. These will include:

- Buffalo Berry
- Cranberry
- Saskatoon
- American Plum
- Pincherry
- Haskap
- Hybrid Cherry
- Hazel Nut
- Crab Apple

Thank you to the City of Regina for your cooperation and approval to move forward on the planting of these trees. Members and community will benefit from the beautification of YARA-GRCG along its northern edge.

● Social & Education Committee

The Social & Education Committee coordinated several events to provide an opportunity for Grow Regina members to celebrate the opening of YARA-Grow Regina Community Garden.

Grow Regina held its 2nd Annual Spring Gardeners' Meeting at St. Mark's Lutheran Church on April 27, 2009 with over 150 gardeners in attendance. A *new* numbering system was introduced to make assignment and management of the garden plots easier. A map of the new layout was posted for viewing at www.growregina.ca and on the garden shed at YARA-GRCG.

In the spring of 2009, Grow Regina encouraged ALL gardeners to grow vegetables to donate to the Regina & District Food Bank whether you planted in a community garden or your own back yard. Jack MacKenzie School accepted the challenge from Ruth M. Buck School to grow the most vegetables for the Food Bank. Students selected to participate in a Clay Sculpture Workshop presented by world renowned artist Victor Cicansky were selected from the winning school. In 2009, Ruth M. Buck School and Jack MacKenzie School donated over 1500 lbs. to the Regina Food Bank. In total, the Plant a Row – Grow a Row Program collected close to 4,000 lbs. in fresh produce for donation to the Food Bank to feed the hungry and teach our children about spirit of generosity.



Grow Regina members celebrated the Official Opening Celebration of YARA-GRCG to the new community garden with two events. On June 23rd, Regina Mayor Pat Fiocco joined Andrew Swenson, Yara Belle Plaine's Corporate Affairs Specialist, and Wayne Hellquist, CEO of the Regina and District Food Bank Inc., in formally cutting the ribbon to officially celebrate the Yara-Grow Regina Community Garden opening at 3500 Queen Street. Again on June 27, a BBQ was held to celebrate with the members in the garden.

The Annual Fall BBQ & Food Bank Collection Day was held on September 26th with families and friends. The garden was also very active with members who took advantage of the beautiful weather to harvest their crops and clean up their garden plots. The Food Bank truck & driver was onsite to deliver the final harvest of vegetables from dedicated Food Bank plots at YARA-GRCG directly to cold storage. Thank you to the volunteers who assisted with this harvest.

Thank you to the committee and dedicated volunteers for your support and valued contributions.

Grow Regina Board of Directors



Over the past year, the Grow Regina Board of Directors was comprised of 12 elected members and two liaisons. These individuals are all members of the community who volunteer their time to help Grow Regina shape and fulfill its role as a human service agency. Board members bring with them a wealth of experience and knowledge not only of gardening, but in the effective governance of an organization such as ours.

The Board provides strategic oversight for Grow Regina, as well as ensuring the financial viability of the organization. Much of the governance work and leadership is provided by Board Committees: Communications; Construction & Maintenance; Finance; Garden Operations; Membership; Orchard; Social & Education; Fundraising, Planning & Development; and an Executive Committee. Over the past year, the Board has developed a strategic plan, crafted a new mission statement, rewritten the Bylaws of the organization and initiated a review of all governance policies. The Board enjoys a close working relationship, which aids in the achievement of the goals identified in the overall plan.

Serving as members of the Board over the past year were the following:

Karen Watkins – Chairperson

Harold Fenske

Mike Ligtermoet – Vice Chairperson

Gene Lauman

John Fagan – Treasurer

Karl Mueller

Robert (Bob) Wuschenny – Secretary

Norm Silzer

Louise Arndt – Liaison Lakeview Community Association

Patti Walker

Ryan Emmons – Liaison Regina & District Food Bank

In recognition of the importance of ensuring that the YARA–Grow Regina Community Garden operations and activities are in harmony with the local neighbourhood and our parent organization, Grow Regina has two appointed Board positions held by a liaison from the Lakeview Community Association and the Regina & District Food Bank Inc. In addition, to ensure good relations are maintained with the adjoining St. Mark’s Lutheran Church, a Board Member is designated to be the primary contact with church representatives to resolve problems that may arise and deal with issues of common concern. Mr. Brian Miller represents St. Mark’s in dealing with Grow Regina.

Grow Regina’s mandate is to promote the economic, social and cultural well being of Regina residents through community gardening.

Volunteering at YARA-Grow Regina Community Garden



Grow Regina volunteers serve on committees throughout the year, but most of the visible labour takes place at YARA-Grow Regina Community Garden during the gardening season. In addition to developing a world class community garden for all residents of Regina, Grow Regina dedicates 15% of its growing area to produce vegetable crops for donation to the Food Bank at harvest.

We are only able to accomplish this through the contributions of dedicated volunteers who give generously of their time to their community each month. It is impossible to acknowledge all the volunteers who put in so many hours each year helping with the numerous events that take place, plus the planting and weeding of the Food Bank plots, and harvest in the fall.

Each year the number of events and activities increases. In 2009, events like the Spring Gardeners' Meeting, Plant a Row – Grow a Row, Official Opening Celebrations, Annual Fall BBQ and Garden Clean Up, provided the means to communicate our belief in community gardening and the value it brings to the lives of our families and friends.

As demand for community gardening increases, so too will the need for willing volunteers to give back to their community. Grow Regina is sustainable only through the continued support of many committed volunteers and community leaders. A big thank you to all those who have given of their time to help develop and maintain YARA-Grow Regina Community Garden at 3500 Queen Street in McLeod Park.

A special thank you to all volunteers and gardeners for responding to the call to clean up the garden before the winter snow.

For more information on how you can become part of our volunteer team, visit www.growregina.ca or contact Aldona Torgunrud, our Volunteer Coordinator, at contact@growregina.ca.



Media for Grow Regina



Grow Regina continued to stay in front of the public with excellent media exposure throughout the growing season. Most of the radio and television coverage was tied to the Official Opening Celebrations with a focus on new Grow Regina members from the Regina Open Door Society. One general interest story revealed how a Regina garden brings Afghan women peace and friendship. Without the continued support of our media partners, Grow Regina would be unable to tell our story to the community and to generate the support required to serve the residents of Regina through community gardening.

The Grow Regina website www.growregina.ca serves as another source of information and education, and helps assist the public in learning more about YARA-Grow Regina Community Garden and gardening related events in our community. The website has become an excellent tool for raising general awareness and is now being updated regularly to help promote Grow Regina activities and other important events. Since June 28th, Grow Regina's website has been visited by over 1,700 visits from 34 countries.



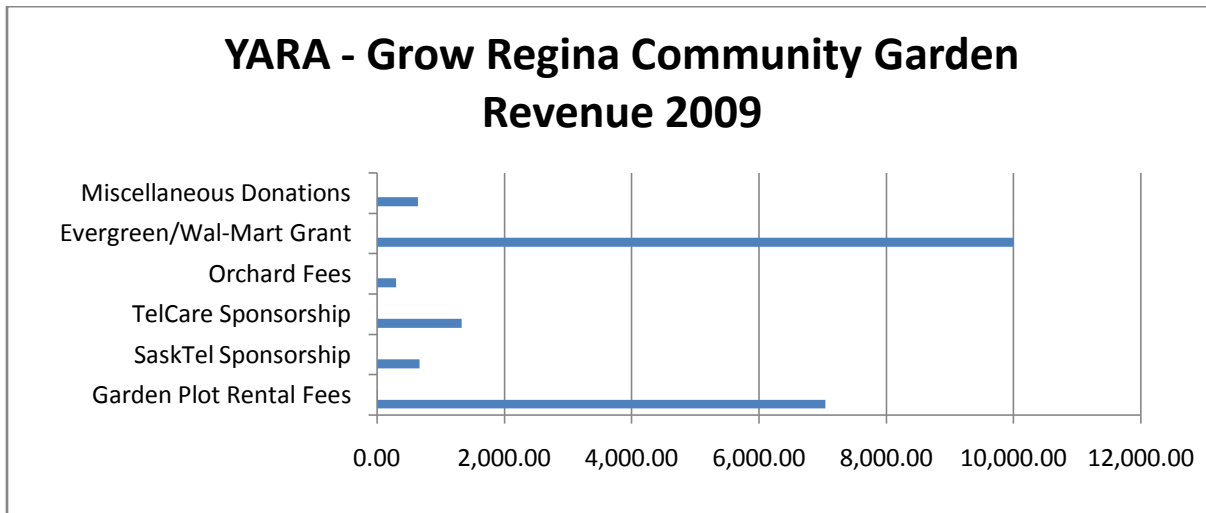
Accounting of Expenses in 2009



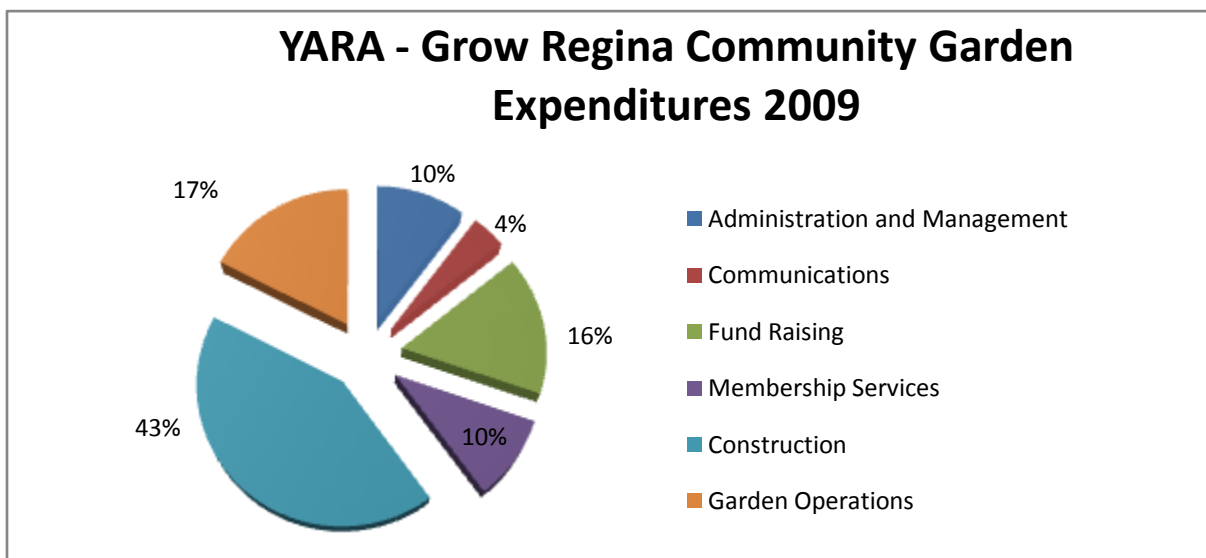
TO THE MEMBERS OF GROW REGINA

Since Grow Regina operates under the umbrella of the Regina and District Food Bank, the financial administration and oversight is reported through their office and is the responsibility of the management of the Food Bank and is subject to the annual audit of the Food Bank.

A summary of revenue from three main sources is outlined below.



A summary of the operating expenses is shown below.





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