

Lewiston Rain Barrel Helps Lots to Gardens

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Thanks to a joint effort between the City of Lewiston Public Works Engineering Division and the Lewiston School Department, the local Lots to Garden initiative now has an additional source of water for its garden located by the Lewiston High School (LHS) ball field dugouts in Franklin Pasture.



Lewiston Engineering Intern Ben Sullivan, Lots to Gardens Education & Outreach Coordinator Bridgette Bartlett, and Lewiston Engineering Intern Greg LaBonte.

Lots to Gardens is a youth and community driven organization, sponsored by St. Mary's Health System, that uses sustainable urban agriculture to create access to fresh food and to nurture both healthy youth and a healthy community. Individuals are taught how to grow their own food, access affordable fresh food, and youth are involved as leaders. Lots to Gardens also helps families and youth develop skills towards lifelong and community-wide change. Since 1999, Lots to Gardens has built 15 gardens and green spaces in 4 diverse Lewiston

neighborhoods.

To provide participating gardeners with additional water, Engineering Division summer interns, Ben Sullivan and Greg LaBonte, installed gutters and downspouts on the LHS dugout and located a rain barrel under the downspout. The rain water runoff from the dugout roof fills the barrel providing water for the gardeners. The dugout roof, measuring 36' by 11,' provides 250 gallons of runoff in a one-inch rain storm.

Bridgette Bartlett, Education & Outreach Coordinator for Lots to Gardens, states, "***The community gardeners will really benefit from all the extra drops of water this rain barrel can collect. St. Mary's Lots to Gardens is excited about the educational aspect as well as the overall benefits to the community when the City and other agencies can work together to help make a project happen.***"

As a money saver, residents are also encouraged to install a rain barrel at their respective homes to collect water for lawns and gardens. In addition, by utilizing such runoff at homes, local rivers, streams, and lakes will be kept cleaner, as stormwater runoff is the biggest threat to water quality. By collecting the water prior to it becoming street/road runoff sweeping up pollutants and discharging them into water without any treatment, the concern is considerably lessened for that area.

Jan Patterson, Lewiston Project Engineer, further praised the rain barrel at the dugouts, stating, "***This project will be a living stormwater education project.***"