



## Creating Policy, Systems, Environmental Change: Your Success Story and Lessons Learned

### Winton Creates a Community Garden

#### Intervention Summary

Winton is an unincorporated community bordered by agricultural fields, orchards and dairies. There are many farm workers who live in Winton, and almost 40% of the population live at <125% Federal Poverty Level. It is also a food desert. LifeLine Community Development Corporation has a community center in Winton, and facilitates community-driven activities. They grew a few vegetables behind their building. In the past 5 years they have started gardens, one at an elementary school, and one on private property, away from the city center. These gardens were not maintained over time, possibly due to location and restricted access.

One year ago LifeLine received a \$5,000 mini grant to start a community garden in Winton. They approached the owner of an empty lot across the street, who donated both the use of his land and access to water. The residents met to design and plan the garden, cleaned the lot, and built the raised beds. Within one year they were eating herbs and vegetables from their garden. Residents grew cucumbers, tomatoes, zucchini, eggplant, chili, onions, and melons.

Residents of Winton drive by this garden, as it is on the main road. They have told us how happy they are that something beautiful and positive is happening in Winton. Other business owners have expressed interest in starting more gardens in town. Also remarkable is that nobody has damaged the garden, even though there is no fence to protect it. (Note: LifeLine paints over graffiti every week in the city of Winton).

## Description of Barriers Encountered and Identified or Proposed Solutions

The drought restricted watering this summer, and some vegetables did not survive. Community gardens can be a challenge to sustain over many years. Our hope is that residents of Winton will continue to garden here because the community built this garden from the ground up. Lifeline will be on site to facilitate residents' interest and work in the garden. The location, central to the main road and intersection in town, is easily accessible.

## Future Directions/Sustainable Success

The residents have plans to expand the garden, adding cacti and fruit trees. Merced County Department of Public Health will continue to offer nutrition education at the community center, and now can hold workshops in the garden or feature produce being grown. LifeLine has a Master Gardener available for technical assistance. Last year the community assisted during the annual 'Love Winton' event.

## Contact information about this Narrative

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