Inception of the McMaster University Teaching & Community Garden

In the winter of 2012, Emily Taylor and Julianne Bagg, two students enrolled in the McMaster Integrated Science (iSci) Program, undertook the planning and facilitation of the McMaster Teaching and Community Garden (MTCG) with support from their professor and academic supervisor, Dr. Chad Harvey. Emily and Julianne utilized this experiential learning opportunity to fulfill requirements of their third-year independent study course, and each received course credit for the successful completion of the individual component of the project, which is described below.

Julianne worked with a number of campus stakeholders to create a detailed budget and anticipated costs to establish and operate the garden. In addition, Julianne wrote and applied for a total of six grants to fund the initial and ongoing costs of implementing the garden. By the time Julianne completed her course in April 2013, she had submitted all grant applications, resulting in a total of $16,500, enough to fund the implementation of the MTCG that summer.

Emily engaged with a number of groups, departments and individuals to establish strong connections to ensure the long-term success of the garden. An important aspect of this project is the engagement of the McMaster and broader community. The integration of the MTCG into the structure and operations of the university, students union and broader community has been an integral component of this project and greatly contributed to its success.

Following the work done by Julianne and Emily, a third student intern, Mike, took on the role to facilitate the physical implementation of the garden. Again, with the support from the Integrated Science Program and Office of Sustainability, Mike was able to complete the garden by July 2013.