

Students harvest spuds at Yara community gardens

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MOOSE JAW TIMES-HERALD

Ten students from Peacock Collegiate took some time out of class on Wednesday to get their hands dirty.

The Grade 9 students spent the morning digging up eight rows of potatoes at the Yara Community Gardens and learning about the plants.

A different group of students had come in the spring to plant the spuds.

"We try to get them out as much as we possibly can," said Sarah Varey, Connecting as Neighbours project co-ordinator.

"They always enjoy it and they are hard workers. They can learn how things

grow," she added.

The potatoes harvested were those grown through the Grow-A-Row program. Through the initiative,

community groups and businesses sponsored six-metre long rows for \$150. Volunteers tended the rows throughout the summer.



Students from Peacock Collegiate harvest potatoes at the Yara Community Gardens on Wednesday. The students at front are, from left to right, David Freeland, Jesse Britton, Tyler Huber and Harley Rosevear. Times-Herald photo by Myles Fish

The students then delivered the potatoes, approximately 400 pounds worth, to Hunger in Moose Jaw and Riverside Mission.

Despite some problems with potato blight, a good crop was had, with six to eight spuds under each stalk.

Varey said garden health was emphasized during the harvest.

"We intercrop with beans to teach about companion planting, now we're burying the bean plants in, so we're talking about compost and how to build healthy soil. It is the whole cycle from beginning to end."

Peacock students have been helping at the South

Hill garden for a few years now, said the school's job coach Barry Tysdal. Not only does it provide good organic produce and aid charities, but it also helps the students, too.

"I think it teaches some good skills; working as a team and working with your hands, you can't beat that. It might pique an interest (with the students) to plant their own garden someday," said Tysdal.

Student Jesse Britton said he enjoyed the experience.

"I learned which potatoes are bad; how to identify rotten ones," he said.

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