



## **SCHENECTADY COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAM (SCAP)**

Deb Schimpf, 518-374-9181, [scapdir@nycap.rr.com](mailto:scapdir@nycap.rr.com)

Laura Perry, 518-374-9181, [scaplaurap@nycap.rr.com](mailto:scaplaurap@nycap.rr.com)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, June 11, 2010

### **CHILDREN'S GARDEN PROJECT HELPS FAMILIES LEARN ABOUT NUTRITION Benefits Children and Prevents Childhood Obesity**

Schenectady Community Action Program (SCAP) Executive Director, Deb Schimpf, announced the start of the Children's Garden Project. SCAP received a \$5,500 grant from Schenectady County's Strategic Alliance for Health to improve access to healthy foods and reduce childhood obesity through the creation of the Children's Garden Project. SCAP is working closely with Parsons Child and Family Center on this project and vegetable gardens are underway at SCAP Bigelow Avenue Head Start, Parsons Early Head Start Program, Howe Elementary School and Glen Worden Elementary School.

"The Children's Garden Project is a preventative approach to battling childhood obesity, said Executive Director Deb Schimpf. "We are teaching the children and their families about growing and eating healthy foods in a fun, hands-on manner. The children and parents will be involved in all aspects of the project, from digging and planting the seeds, to harvesting the produce, to preparing and eating the fresh nutritious foods," added Executive Director Schimpf.

SCAP has enlisted the help of a master gardener from the Cornell Cooperative Extension to ensure a successful early summer and fall harvest. The Head Start programs have incorporated the Garden Project into their nutrition curriculum and also plans to conduct parent workshops on gardening and nutrition. Families will benefit from spending time together outdoors and using gardening as a fun, physical activity. "Each year our students learn about nutrition and healthy foods, but with the added experience of planting and watching the crops grow, they will see, first-hand, where fruits and vegetables come from and how to prepare them, continued Executive Director Schimpf. "It is our hope that this experience will provide the children and their parents with the knowledge and skills they need to sustain a lifetime of healthy nutritional habits and perhaps a fondness for gardening as well. "

"We are happy to provide SCAP with this grant through Schenectady County's Strategic Alliance for Health," said Susan Savage, Chairwoman of the Schenectady County Legislature. "This project will make a big difference in our community by making more nutritious foods available. We should do everything we can to encourage our children to make healthy choices so they will grow into healthier adults."

SCAP is one of four agencies involved in the Bigelow Corners project. The other three are Parsons Child and Family Center, the Capital District Child Care Council and the Schenectady City school district. The goal of this partnership is to help children be successful from birth through college.

SCAP serves individuals and families in crisis due to homelessness, unemployment and poverty. The SCAP mission is to help families help themselves so they can break the cycle of poverty. Those who need assistance should contact SCAP by calling 518-374-9181 or visit SCAP at 913 Albany Street, Schenectady. Hours of operation are Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and until 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday. For more information about SCAP programs, go to [www.scapny.org](http://www.scapny.org).

###