

ORGANIC FOOD FOR FREE!

This year, Sheffield Organic Food Initiative have been running a Green Gym in association with the Healthy Living Centre. This means that more than 20 local people have been able to participate in growing and eating organic fruit and vegetables produced on local allotments. They have benefited through access to gentle exercise, the freshest food possible and being in the calming environment of productive organic allotments. Regular volunteer Liz Simpson says, "It's helped keep me going through thick and thin."

As well as visiting SOFI's ten established allotments in Crookes and Rivelin, the project has helped to develop a Womens' Community Organic Allotments in Walkley, organised by Zoy Greaves. The Womens' allotments now have a secure shelter and lock-up, a new polytunnel and will be able to establish an orchard this winter. Local artist, Mandy Burton from Garden Rooms, is now working with the group to create a mosaic . The Womens' allotments provide a unique facility for local women who want to grow organically.

Some participants have now gone on to start their own allotments, like Margot Armitage, who says "The allotment keeps me going, I just love it! Without SOFI's help, I would never have achieved all that I have." Another volunteer, Lyn Russell, also helps to run a special needs allotment group for people from Limbrick Daybase and has found it invaluable to receive ideas and support from SOFI's experts. The Green Peppers group at Netherthorpe school have been given seeds to grow through the winter. September's raffle prize at the Healthy Living Centre consisted of a hamper of organic fruit and vegetables grown on the allotments. SOFI have also been working with the Garden Rooms 'Art in the Area' project, advising on what to plant inside the mosaics on the Ponderosa and providing produce for their celebration.

Project co-ordinator, Richard Clare, has been active in environmental and edible matters in this area for over a decade. He supervised the planting of the woodland and the Community Orchard on the Ponderosa and established the garden at the back of Crookesmoor Community Centre, which is now fully developed and a great asset for all users of the building.

Anyone interested in finding out more about the many therapeutic values of Organic growing, please contact SOFI on 2686727.

