

STATE OF NEW MEXICO

County of Luna

Joe L. Milo, Jr.
Commissioner, District 1

Linda M. Smrkovsky
Commissioner, District 2



R. Javier Diaz, Chairman
Commissioner, District 3

Charles “Tink” Jackson
County Manager

700 South Silver Avenue • Post Office Box 551 • Deming, New Mexico 88031
Telephone (575) 546-0494 Facsimile (575) 544-4293

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Contact: Matt Robinson, (575) 545-4627

Media Release

Access to fresh produce in the village of Columbus is on the rise, thanks to the Columbus Community Garden and a recent donation of a greenhouse by Luna County Healthy Kids Healthy Communities.

In late March, George Wertz from Deming High School delivered a greenhouse built by his students to the Columbus Community Garden, which has been operating with raised bed gardens for about a year. Village residents are allowed to tend a raised bed to grow fresh vegetables, then take the vegetables home to eat. The beds and materials are provided at no charge to participants. Dorian Dodson, president of the Community Garden, said the greenhouse will be used to start plants from seeds before moving over to the raised beds.

“By starting seeds in a greenhouse, we can get a head start on every growing season,” she explained. “This helps us realize our goal of having something green and growing all year round. For the citizens of Columbus, this is a wonderful gift.”

Wertz and his Construction Trades class at DHS built the 10 foot by 12 foot greenhouse from cedar and translucent paneling as part of their regular classroom duties. The students regularly build greenhouses, chairs, playhouses and other pieces of furniture, then sell what they built to help fund materials for more projects.

“It meant so much to us that the high school students would build such a nice greenhouse,” Dodson said. “I hope they realize their project will help us not only grow a wider variety of vegetables, but also incur fewer expenses as we move forward.”

The county’s HKHC program is a grant from the state to address obesity through improving the built environment, food access and education. There are HKHC sites across the state and the county is in its second year of implementing the program.

“There was a time when backyard and community gardens were much more common,” Luna County Board of Commissioners Chairman Javier Diaz said. “It’s good to see some in our community bringing that tradition back to help feed themselves and others.”

For more information about the county’s HKHC program, contact (575) 543-6585. Wertz’ class has two more greenhouses for sale. Those interested in more information should contact George.Wertz@demingsps.org.

PHOTO CAPTION

George Wertz, Construction Trades teacher at Deming High School, is shown surrounded by some of the students who build greenhouses in his class. The students are, from left: Daniel Martinez, Kevin Villescas, Enrique Santos, Ivan Lopez, Diego Mireles, Jose Nevarez and Ruben Aguilar. Some of the students who help build are not included in the photo.

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