



## SP0160 Final Report

Please answer the following questions and return the completed form to the [SPF Staff](#) via e-mail.

**Project Title:** Thomson House Community Garden Upgrade

**Final Report prepared by:** K Hales, C Nygren

**E-mail:** katherine.hales@mcgill.ca

**Actual Project Start Date:** 5/31/2017

**Actual Project End Date:** 10/25/2017

### 1. Please summarize the project and its key accomplishments in 1-2 sentences.

(400 characters maximum)

After a lengthy approval process, we built a permanent community garden structure on the north side of Thomson House. Throughout the summer months, PGSS members rented plots, planted and harvested produce, and participated in workshops.

### 2. Your team listed the following goal in your application:

Convert the north side of Thomson House into an expanded community garden with permanent infrastructure.

**Did your team achieve your project's goal? In your answer, please describe the impact your project had on McGill's structures, processes, and/or systems. Also, please specify how this positively transformed people's behaviors/perspectives/habits on McGill campus(es).**

(Unlimited characters, suggested minimum ½ page or approximately 250 words)

We successfully implemented permanent infrastructure for the PGSS community garden. The structure itself was designed with two picnic tables built-in, as well as an additional wheelchair accessible space, where members of the McGill community are able to sit and chat, or enjoy lunch outside in the summer months. The programming associated with the community garden also provided an opportunity for PGSS members from different faculties across the university to meet others with a shared interest. The workshops both acted as a means of providing support to the gardeners, and facilitating new relationships.

### 3. Please describe the key successes and challenges of your project. (Minimum of two examples for each)

(Unlimited characters, suggested minimum ½ page or approximately 250 words)

The two key successes of the project:

1. Working with our designer and contractor, the nonprofit organization Ca Pousse, was a huge success. Building the structure with them went as flawlessly as possible considering the circumstances, even with all the various problems such as scheduling, rainy weather, and surprise underground foundations.

2. There was a high demand for plots, with people on the waiting list. Many were excited to plant their plots, and even those who could not come to the initial plot selection and planting session got in contact with us asking for other dates and advice regarding planting. Initial excitement for the garden was very high among the members.

Two challenges were faced were:

1. Although some of the committees / approving units met their self-imposed deadlines, others required extra reminders. The largest unforeseen challenge was a committee from which we needed approval but we did not know about until close to when we were ready to commence construction, which caused an extra delay which, in

combination with the inclement weather and a surprise in-ground foundation, caused a construction delay and, thus, a gardening delay of a few weeks.

2. Consistent participation: based on our experience with the garden and the demographic of participants the year before, we expected workshops to be somewhat popular, people to sign up for watering schedules without much prodding, and a larger sense of community (people spending time in the garden outside of workshops, posting in the Facebook group, etc). However, the majority of the workshops had low attendance (averaging probably around 4 people), we had to send several reminders for watering/organizers took on some extra watering duties, and although some people participated fully in the gardens, overall there was less in-person and online participation than the year previous.

**4. What key points of advice or lessons learned would you give to other SPF teams either regarding your experience managing your project or the project itself?**

(Unlimited characters, suggested minimum ½ page or approximately 250 words)

1. Make a list of what committees/groups from which you need approval, and then double-check with those committees if there are any others that you should approach. Avoid any possibility of having a last minute approval delay your project, especially if your project is sensitive to external factors like growing season times.
2. Timelines are difficult to estimate. If possible, build in plenty of padding to account for extra committees, the realities of students with busy schedules sending out emails a day or two late, and other factors that can change a beautiful, ideal timeline into something that is more realistic, but over a longer time span.

**5. What recommendations do you have for the future of this project to be continued and are there any opportunities for complementary projects? Who will take responsibility for the project's future and how can interested persons be in touch? The SPF team will also be in touch with this contact for updates on the project's progress in coming years, if ongoing.**

(Unlimited characters, suggested minimum 1 paragraph)

We would recommend having a reduced number of workshops (currently planning for two, as opposed to 8, for the next season), and streamlining the registration process by choosing plots for registrants instead of allowing them to choose their own plots. The latter sounded like a good idea that would give gardeners more independence and ownership of their plot, but it resulted in confusion, particularly as some people could not attend earlier in the season and planted their plots later in the month.

Reducing the number of workshops to two will also allow for a more affordable entry price and accessibility (gardener registration fees pay for the workshop facilitator).

In terms of maintenance of the garden itself, the Thomson House Upkeep fee paid by PGSS members can be used to contribute to the structure and space's upkeep.

**6. Would you or your project team member(s) be willing to serve as a mentor to SPF project teams?**

**Please choose one. If yes, SPF Staff will contact you with more information.** (800 characters maximum)

Yes  No

Katherine Hales

**7. In your application, you listed the following sources of funding:** Convert the north side of Thomson House into an expanded community garden with permanent infrastructure.

**Please confirm if you received this funding in the space below. In your response, please list the actual amount (in dollars) that you received. Note: If you received funding from a McGill Department or Unit, please attach a letter from its Financial/Budget Officer confirming the actual amount of support.**

(1,800 characters maximum)

As described below, the Thomson House Upkeep Fee can now be used to maintain the gardens; however, there is no set amount on this stream of funding.

**8. Did you purchase equipment or make an installation on campus?**  Yes  No

**If yes, please briefly describe how these items will be maintained and used in the future.**

(1,800 characters maximum)

The Thomson House Upkeep Fee stream has been redescribed in the PGSS guidelines so that it can now be used to include maintenance of the garden. This funding stream will provide for repairs to the garden structure, such as oiling the wood or repairing the fence, and tools needed to maintain the garden.

**9. The following Key Success Indicators were indicated in your project application and selected for tracking. Please indicate the actual results that you have achieved in the “Actual” column.**

Selected Key Success Indicators	Target	Actual
# of individuals registered by May 1, 2017	25	22
# of community activities organized during growing season 2017 (May, June, August, September)	4	8
# of other organizations using the garden space during summer 2017 ( e.g. Dandelion Collective)	4	1

**If there is a significant difference in the target numbers and the actual numbers achieved, please explain. If you have any additional information to share about these success indicators, please also include it below.**

(1,800 characters maximum)

All of the 20 garden plots were sold; however, there was not as much demand for the bins, which we are phasing out anyway.

Although we hoped to work with other organizations, such as the English Graduate Student Association, to hold events such as readings at the space, the two main volunteer organizers had too many other commitments to follow through on formal coordination. However, the space will be used by the PGSS Environment Committee for at least one workshop in the spring, and we remain confident that the gardens are a space that could be used by other organizations in the future.

**10. Please report on your results for the standard SPF Key Success Indicators in the “Actual” column.**

Standard SPF Key Success Indicators	Actual #
# of volunteers directly or indirectly engaged in the project	10
# of people (student, staff, or other) trained in the context of the project	7
\$ raised for project activities subsequent to SPF funding	0
# of partnerships or collaborations developed between the project team and other McGill administrative units, student groups, community groups, other universities, and/or other groups/organizations.	4

**Regarding the last Key Success Indicator, please list the groups and/or organizations that you counted.**

(Unlimited characters; point form acceptable.)

Dandelion Collective, PGSS, Thomson House admin, Ca Pousse

**If you have any additional information to share about the Standard SPF Key Success Indicators, please include it below.** (1,800 characters maximum)

The community gardens were a significant commitment for volunteers. While the responsibilities will be lighter in the future with the absence of such a large, demanding construction project, it may be advisable for McGill to have a

paid coordinator who could, for example, contract Ca Pousse to run regular workshops for all the community gardens on campus, have resources for starting new gardens (including what committees to contact and guidelines to follow), etc. If Santropol or another organization is not going to be involved in on-campus community gardening in the future, having a person with the institutional knowledge to coordinate the gardens - especially when students are generally only involved in an organizational capacity for a year or two - is especially important.

**11. Please indicate the McGill stakeholder groups that were involved with your project as a team member or collaborator/partner. Choose all that apply.**

- Undergraduate  Postgraduate  Administrative Staff  Academic Staff  Alumni

**12. Please rate your project team's overall satisfaction with the support provided by the SPF Staff. Choose only one response.**

- Very Dissatisfied  Dissatisfied  Neither Satisfied Nor Dissatisfied  Satisfied  Very Satisfied

**13. Please provide any feedback or recommendations regarding your team's experience with the SPF.**

(Unlimited characters, suggested minimum 1 paragraph)

**14. If there is additional information you would like to share about your project, please use the field below.**

(Unlimited characters)

Because this team is coordinated by volunteers, the sense of the community for the gardens and the number of events, especially with other groups of stakeholders, will vary by year.

**15. Has involvement in this SPF project positively impacted your team in the area of professional growth?**

**Please choose one. If you would like to elaborate, please use the field below.** (800 characters maximum)

- Yes  No  Prefer Not to Share

Yes: we have a significantly better understanding of the many steps needed to coordinate such a large project.

**16. Has involvement in this SPF project positively impacted your team in the area of personal growth?**

**Please choose one. If you would like to elaborate, please use the field below.** (800 characters maximum)

- Yes  No  Prefer Not to Share

Yes: the core organizing team has developed from a professional team into personal friendships that may continue to work on and develop projects in the future.

**17. Which of the following skills or attributes has your team improved through involvement in your SPF project? Choose all that apply.**

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Budgeting                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Networking                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Systems Thinking                          |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Planning               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Teamwork                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conflict Resolution       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Problem Solving        | <input type="checkbox"/> Technology                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Leadership                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Project Management     | <input type="checkbox"/> Time Management                           |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Listening      | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Speaking                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Writing                                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mentoring                 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stakeholder Engagement | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify in the field below) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Negotiating               | <input type="checkbox"/> Stakeholder Identification        |  |



Other:

**18. Since starting your SPF project, has your team improved its knowledge of sustainability?**

**Please choose one. If you would like to elaborate, please use the field below.** (800 characters maximum)

Yes  No  Prefer Not to Share

We have a significantly better understanding of all the bits and pieces needed to make a sustainable project come together, as well as how best to draw in stakeholders to engage with projects.

**19. (Optional) If applicable, please list the total number of team members voluntarily self-identifying as members of marginalized communities:**

**Please identify the represented communities below. (e.g. women, Indigenous people, people of colour, LGBTTQI, student parents, members of ethnic minorities, immigrants, people with disabilities)**

(1,800 characters maximum)

**Thank you for completing your Final Report!**

Please e-mail your report to the [SPF Staff](#) attaching any additional information that you would like to share about your project (e.g. other reports, research, documents, photos, etc.). Please note that this Final Report will be shared publicly on your SPF project's webpage.