

# MAKING A DIFFERENCE



## Grand Challenges

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- Global Food Systems
- Water
- Health
- Community Vitality
- Developing Tomorrow's Leaders

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## Grand Challenge: Health

**Garden to Plate: Food Security and Community Partnerships during COVID-19**

### Why is this issue important?

Each year, the Shawnee County SNAP-Ed Program, Extension Master Gardeners, Shawnee County Parks and Recreation, and Topeka Common Ground work together to distribute seeds and seedlings and provide education to community and backyard gardeners in Shawnee County. This year with the Safe at Home Order, face to face meetings were cancelled, so the groups had to come up with a contact free way of distributing of the seeds and seedlings.

### How did Extension address this issue?

Shawnee County SNAP-Ed received a grant for seeds through the Extension Education Foundation. Topeka Common Ground matched the grant to purchase a variety of seeds. Extension Master Gardeners and Shawnee County Parks and Recreation grew the seedlings which included broccoli rabe, cabbage, cauliflower, tomatoes and peppers. Seed potatoes and onion sets provided by Topeka Common Ground were also distributed. Shawnee County SNAP-Ed coordinated contact-free distribution through Topeka Common Ground who delivered the seeds and seedlings or set up drive-through pick-up for the community gardens on three days. More than 1500 seedlings were distributed to 22 community gardens and Habitat for Humanity. Seeds were also delivered to Harvesters, Catholic Charities and Habitat for Humanity to share with clients.



### What was the impact?

Nikki MacMillan with Habitat for Humanity reported she never expected to be involved in making sure her homeowners and clients had food until faced with the pandemic. She and her clients are grateful for the new partnerships that emerged. Her clients wanted to grow gardens and the fresh produce provides nutritious food for people who need it.