



United States Department of Agriculture

Natural Resources Conservation Service Earth Team

Volunteer Showcase

Vintage Victory Poster Inspires Volunteer to Feed Homeless Vets

The message “*Sow the Seeds of Victory...Plant and Raise Your Own Vegetables*” on a World War I propaganda poster inspired North Carolina Earth Team volunteer and NRCS cartographic technician for the East Remote Sensing Lab (ERSL), Matthew Johnson to make a difference for homeless veterans.

Seeing the poster and hearing Tiffany Graves, coordinator for ESRL Feds Feed Families, say that fresh food would be a big improvement over the canned and processed food currently collected and distributed inspired Matthew to action.

“I like the idea of growing the food and giving it to people in contrast to the highly-processed food that constitutes most of the subsidized food supply,” said Johnson.

Armed with his idea, Matthew got busy, renovating an existing garden bed to grow lettuce, kale, squash, tomatoes and collards. He later built a larger bed to grow even more vegetables, concentrating on the darker, nutrient rich vegetables from non-GMO, heritage seed. Matthew has spent countless hours tending his garden, adhering to organic principles and ensuring petroleum-based chemicals are not part of the soil or fertilizer. He wants to expand his garden to three or four beds and increase the variety of plants he is growing.



Matthew Johnson (above) was inspired by the World War 1 poster (at left) to grow food for homeless veterans.

Matthew provides his produce to the Servant Center, a non-profit group that works with homeless veterans in Greensboro to get them off the street.

Matthew feels his actions represent USDA, the “People’s Department,” in a good light as well.

The Earth Team is the volunteer component of the Natural Resources Conservation Service. If you are interested in volunteering, contact the National Earth Team Office at 888-526-3227 or visit:

<http://go.usa.gov/cTwCh>

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