

Abbey GARDENS

Inspiring Global Change Through Local Action





Five years ago we asked ourselves:

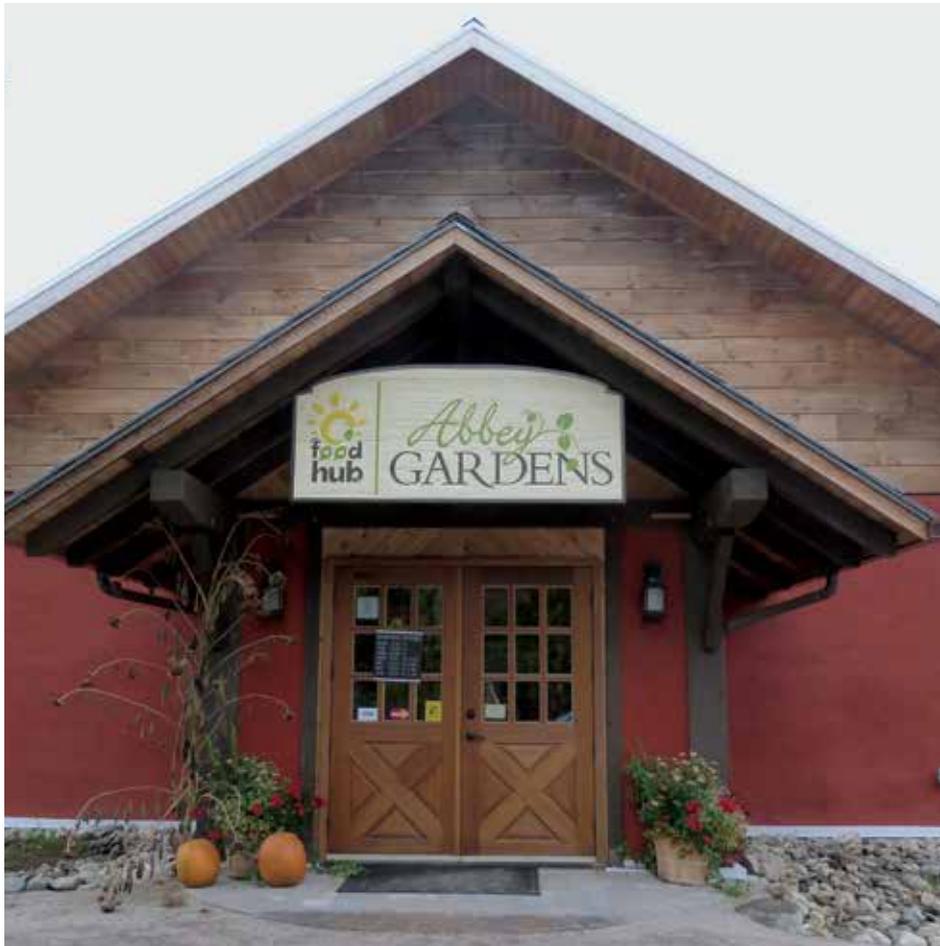
How will we build an organization with the capacity to **respond locally to the global environmental challenges** that affect us all?

How will we show people **how to grow** their own quality chemical-free food?

How will we **showcase** new and innovative technologies and become **better stewards** of our environment?

How will we **build community** and **create jobs**?

How will we build a model that may be **replicated** by others time and time again?



No Easy Task. Our Answer...

Create a place of Demonstration and Education that changes the way people think about the world around them:
Abbey Gardens Community Trust.

So, we purchased a 210 acre exhausted gravel pit, and got to work.

And we planned...

First, let's address our environmental challenges from the perspective of local food. Let's build a 2-acre expandable market garden where we can produce high quality food, using new chemical-free approaches for growing in a less than hospitable environment.

Let's provide workshops for residents and eco-tourists so they can learn how to do this in their communities. Let's engage as many people as we can – volunteers, funders, social service organizations, school groups, post-secondary institutions, growers, restaurants, and artist groups – and entice them to work with us and to carry the knowledge gained at Abbey Gardens to other sites and communities.

Let's work with nature to reclaim the land that has been stripped and 'used up'.

Let's build a strong organization that employs local, passionate and committed individuals, partnering to contribute economic solutions for the region.

And we did.



Abbey Gardens Community Trust is a charitable organization focused on a community-based effort to remediate a soon-to-be decommissioned gravel pit into a sustainable centre for innovation. It is an inspired community project that encourages visitors to think more sustainably about land, food, energy, and economy.

Our vision is to inspire a healthy community through demonstration, education, and incubation of innovative and sustainable businesses. We recognize that the deeply embedded social economic structures of western culture often function at the expense of the planet. We also recognize that the *multiplier effect* of local action will contribute to global solutions. Abbey Gardens intends to show a path to change that can be emulated.

In fulfilling our mission, Abbey Gardens will tap into local expertise, nurture entrepreneurial spirit and community pride through leadership and collaboration, and contribute significantly to economic vitality and environmental sustainability in our region.

The Abbey Gardens property is already proving to be a landmark attraction for Haliburton County. The 210-acre gravel pit is surrounded by farmlands and borders on pristine Grass Lake. The market garden and public spaces currently available are accessible and attractive. The first stage of the remediation of the gravel pit is underway, and current work is focused in the areas of shoreline naturalization, land reclamation, conservation of the geological features for educational purposes, and the protection of natural habitat for native species of animals and birds.

What is now a dramatic scar on the landscape of rock, sand and gravel can become a productive, extraordinarily attractive area where commerce, agriculture and entertainment will breathe new life into our community. **What better way to demonstrate the possibilities for helping our world?**

“Nature will certainly triumph.
Whether it triumphs over us,
or in us and through us,
remains to be seen.”

– Wayland Drew



Tackling the Environmental Challenge on the Local Level.

It isn't hard to imagine the future of our world as two different scenarios: one as a world fighting over diminishing fossil fuels, where global warming escalates and access to quality food and clean water is limited.

We at Abbey Gardens are putting our efforts into a second scenario: reducing greenhouse gas emissions, assuring quality food and clean water for everyone, and paving the way for a new sustainable way of life.

And so we invite you to join in our vision:

Innovation. Demonstration. Education.

Greater Than The Sum Of Our Parts = Our Accomplishments

Abbey Gardens Community Trust has made great strides in assembling the building blocks necessary to foster local environmental, ecological, and agricultural initiatives that may be replicated in other communities. Here are a few of the projects that are attracting attention:

The 2-Acre Market Garden ... with Hoop Houses and hands-on demonstrations of chemical-free growing principles and soil improvement techniques.

The Food Hub & Community Kitchen ... with fresh and canned produce from our gardens and local growers, in a state-of-the-art straw bale building featuring geothermal heating and cooling, solar net metering, rainwater collection, and a green roof.

Practical Education and Demonstration Initiatives ... engaging primarily youth and seniors in taking an active role in their own food production and preparation, and promoting environmental awareness of ecosystems, biodiversity, green building, and resource stewardship.

Readying the Canvas ... by completing a detailed Environmental Site Study.

Sharing the Garden's harvest ... with those in the community who are in need of healthy food.

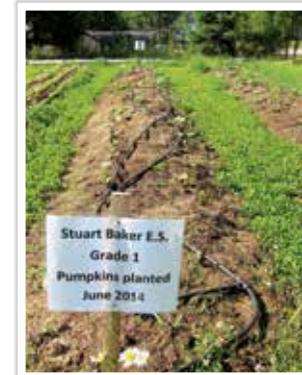
Promoting heritage breeds ... preserving biodiversity & addressing food security.

Incubating local business initiatives ... to boost entrepreneurship and small business development within an environmentally sustainable model.

Partnering with our community ... local food initiatives, sustainable energy, ecological projects and more.

Engaging ... directors, volunteers, partners & knowledgeable staff.

Profiles of each of these accomplishments are available at www.abbeygardens.ca



Shared Vision & Replication of our Approach

Abbey Gardens is inspired by other organizations who have responded in exciting ways to the environmental challenges facing us all. We are fortunate to share a vision in keeping with other projects and organizations that are making a difference in their communities and world-wide: The Eden Project in the UK, The Stop in Toronto, The Brickworks in Toronto, and many local organizations with whom we are proud to be associated.

Abbey Gardens is already recognized as a place to come to learn about best practices. We aim to motivate others to replicate our fundamental approach to sustainability and community economic development through innovation, demonstration, and education. We do this by sharing the fundamentals for replicating our model, educational resources developed by our staff, panels and forums promoting best practices, and showcasing our successes with innovative projects.



“We loved visiting your garden!! It really rocked my world! We all felt like we really learned something in such a short time. I cook in the city and hope to have my own place someday. The passion and knowledge you have was so inspiring to see.”

Tommy and Mary
(and Lucy and Cree)



“Starting a new business is an expensive and risky venture. Working with Abbey Gardens allowed us to successfully pilot our business and establish a base for growth. We look forward to continuing to expand our business, our relationship with Abbey Gardens and our contribution to a sustainable local food network.”

Jewelle Schiedel-Webb
Principal, Haliburton Highlands Brewing

Abbey GARDENS

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