

The Astoria Valley Times 10/11/09

Deacon Mimi Eick uses her green thumb to connect with kids in Tigard

(Kristen Forbes is a freelance writer. To view her blog, visit www.krissymick.blogspot.com).

Mimi Eick came on board as a volunteer at Greenburg Oaks, an apartment complex in Tigard run by Community Partners for Affordable Housing, five years ago. She was in the process of becoming ordained as a deacon and was looking for a community service project for her field experience.

She had a friend who lived at Greenburg Oaks, so she familiarized herself with the program and soon began volunteering. She became involved with CPAH's summer youth program, serving meals and assisting kids with

FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS



KRISTEN FORBES

their artwork, games, homework and more. She chaperoned field trips, tutored students in math and English and helped out with special projects.

A year before her arrival at CPAH, a group of volunteers from Intel had constructed a garden area behind one of the Greenburg Oaks buildings. Eick, who has always had a passion for gardening, volunteered to tend to the garden and teach the residents in the youth program about growing and nurturing plants and vegetables.

When vandalism in the garden surfaced, Eick realized she needed to get kids more involved and teach them to take pride in what they were growing and creating. She instructed kids in Greenburg Oaks after-school program and OAKS summer program on the ways of caring for a garden. She then collaborated

with the kids to create a cookbook filled with recipes comprised of garden-grown fruits and vegetables.

The recipes came from families who lived in the complex, favorite cookbooks and the kids themselves. "Delicious Delights from OAKS Kids — A Book Inspired by our Garden" was born.

Kids in the youth program drew illustrations, and OAKS teens spent hours typing the recipes and text for the cookbook. Eick took the book to Hillsboro Quick Print, where Gary and Carol Davis offered up their creativity and resources to have 60 of the cookbooks printed for free.

■ See EICK, B3



KRISTEN FORBES/For Times Newspapers

GARDEN GURU — Deacon Mimi Eick and the fruits of her labor: a thriving garden and a cookbook compiled by kids at Greenburg Oaks, a housing complex run by Community Partners for Affordable Housing.