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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Highland Community Garden/Doniphan West FFA receives grant from Kansas Community Gardens Project

HIGHLAND, KS – Highland Community Garden/Doniphan West FFA has been awarded a \$2115 grant through the Kansas Community Gardens Project, a joint initiative of the Kansas Health Foundation and K-State Research and Extension. Highland Community Garden is one of 35 community garden projects in the state to receive this funding, which will help support the goal of bringing fresh produce to Highland since the loss of the local grocery store in 2012.

Elmer Schmitz, Doniphan West FFA Advisor states, “The community garden will bring residents of our community together through working in the garden, and will provide local access to fresh produce. Several groups will be involved with the garden including Doniphan West FFA, high school students needing community service hours, Highland PRIDE, Highland Food Pantry, Doniphan County Extension Office, NEK Multi-County Health and the Highland Cloverpatch 4-H Club. “

From fostering a greater level of community involvement, to providing healthy foods for schools and nonprofit events, to the personal health of individuals, community garden projects can make a lasting and positive impact on their communities. Through the Kansas Community Gardens Project, the Kansas Health Foundation and K-State Research and Extension look to spread these benefits throughout Kansas by providing not only the grant funds, but also information and assistance to help make the individual garden projects successful community ventures.

Volunteers will be needed to weed the garden and harvest produce throughout the season. Monetary donations are being accepted to purchase seeds and plants for the garden as these are not covered by the grant. Donations can be sent to Doniphan West FFA Garden Funds, Doniphan West High School, 402 E. Main, Highland, KS 66035.

Grant recipients were selected through a competitive application process, which drew interest from organizations and gardens throughout the state. The Kansas Community Gardens Project is a three-year initiative, with this year’s recipients representing the second group of gardens selected. During the inaugural year of grants, 24 gardens were selected.

“This grant has provided a tremendous opportunity for reaching out across the state to help people grow their own fresh produce. We anticipate a significant number of people will be impacted by this generous award as our goal is that each of these gardens still be thriving in a sustainable way in 10 years,” said Dr. Cheryl Boyer, assistant professor and extension specialist, ornamental nursery crops,

with K-State Research and Extension. “We are proud of the quality, variety and geographic coverage of the proposals we received this year and that we were able to fund so many great projects.”

“As winter turns into spring, people naturally begin thinking about getting outside and starting a garden,” said Steve Coen, president and CEO of the Kansas Health Foundation. “Through the Kansas Community Gardens Project, our hope is that people will take that desire and energy and channel it into contributing to a community garden for the benefit of their entire community.”

For more information about the Highland Community Garden or to learn how you can participate, please check us out on Facebook at www.facebook.com/HighlandCommunityGarden. You may also contact Wendy Simmons or Becky Gilmore at 785-742-7192 or email nektobaccoedu@yahoo.com.

To speak with someone in more detail about the Kansas Community Gardens Project, please contact Cheryl Boyer (785-532-3504 or crboyer@ksu.edu) or Evelyn Neier (785-410-3760 or eneier@ksu.edu).

About Highland Community Garden

The garden is located at 101 S. Kansas in Highland and consists of two separate plots. The south plot will be planted with grapes, raspberries and gooseberries as well as rhubarb and various herbs. The north plot will be planted with a variety of vegetables. Plans are to plant a fall garden as well. Produce will be sold at Highland’s Farmers Market on Saturday mornings at 8:00a.m. Proceeds from the garden will be reinvested in the garden with some of the proceeds being donated to the food pantry. Fresh produce will also be donated to the food pantry.

About the Kansas Health Foundation

The Kansas Health Foundation is a private philanthropy based in Wichita, but statewide in its focus. Its mission is to improve the health of all Kansans. To learn more about the Foundation, please visit www.kansashealth.org.

About K-State Research and Extension

K-State Research and Extension is the short name for the Kansas Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service. It is a partnership between Kansas State University and federal, state, and county government, with offices in every Kansas county. To learn more, please visit <http://www.ksre.ksu.edu/>.