

By: Carl C. Stafford
Senior Extension Agent

8/19/16

The Carver school has been busy in August with many activities which showcase progress on the overall project. The alumni association reunion hosted more than 500 attendees August 6th and land behind the school was cleared by Culpeper County (thank you Joe Koontz). Following clearing, lime was applied to balance ph (thank you CFC Farm and Home) and poultry litter to improve soil fertility (thank you Mt. Pony Farms). Then, the soil was tilled for planting (thank you Battle Park Farms) and cover crop seed donated (thank you County Farm Service). These 8 acres will be used to support planned work funded by the Ohrstrom Foundation to include vegetable production as a training ground for beginners, who will learn by doing. Roger Williams, retired Cisco engineer, is the volunteer leader of this project.

It warms the heart to have so many supporters pitch in to help make the "Carver Project" move. Just this week a used tractor and equipment were purchased with funds from the Ohrstrom Foundation. This equipment was hauled in using a donated truck (thank you Ron and Susan Gore) and loaned trailer (thank you Bordeaux Farm). Kitchen equipment was the next hauling job, bringing in donated ventilation hoods (thank you Jamie Nichol) for the commercial kitchen. Today we will finish up his donation by hauling in a commercial sink, display case and more ventilation equipment.

Janet Bearden and Becky Sheffield, kitchen project leaders, are making plans for the design of the commercial kitchen. Partners in planning have included Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Virginia Department of Health, Virginia Farm Bureau and Union Kitchen. Fund raising efforts are underway to make this center piece investment a reality at the school.

See our website <http://gwcarc.org/> for more details on planned programs. Just this week we planned with the George Washington Carver Regional High School Alumni Association how to use Ohrstrom grant funds to honor the school's history. This fall, Culpeper County will be renovating spaces on both sides of the school foyer as a first step in bringing the school back online. A history museum will occupy one space and offices for the project the other spaces, approximately 2000 square feet in all.

The local Extension office held its Leadership Council meeting at Carver, showcasing progress on site. Members saw firsthand examples of progress and toured the facility. Members of the Board of Supervisors, Extension staff and ELC members were present. Our newest member is Stevensburg resident Brian Thompson, attending his first meeting to begin a 3-year term.

This month we concluded an agreement between the Regional Planning Commission (RRRC) and the George Washington Carver Agriculture Research Center on administration of some of the Ohrstrom funds. Patrick Mauney and his staff have been excellent partners from the beginning when they managed our feasibility study and now partner in our programming work.