

Louis LaPierre

Healthy Hall of Fame, Spring 2016

Inspiration for the Richard Kelley Learning & Healing Garden: Being involved with the Lower Columbia School Gardens and attending sustainability & higher ed workshops inspired Louis to bring a garden to LCC. After Richard Kelley, social science instructor of 39 years, was diagnosed with terminal cancer, his fellow colleges, friends, family, and students wanted to find a way to honor him. Richard was passionate about teaching and an avid gardener so establishing the Richard Kelley Learning & Healing garden was the perfect way to honor and remember him.

Louis, along with many volunteers, including Richard's family, current faculty, retired faculty, and other members of the community have transformed what once was a grassy area between the Library and Applied Arts building into a magnificent garden.

Health eating options in the garden: Kale, lettuce, cabbage, cauliflower, onions, radishes, sugar pod and snap peas, broccoli, arugula, carrots, and beets are all blooming in the raised beds. Louis hopes that the kitchen will soon be providing healthy food options grown right here on campus. Louis is the main cook in his family and always uses fresh fruits and vegetables from their garden.

Goals: Louis has started incorporating learning for students. This quarter he is offering students in his Biology 101 class the opportunity for service learning (volunteer basis). By fall, he will have aspects of the garden incorporated into his curriculum and other instructors have expressed an interest in using the garden for classes as well. Louis also plans to include a raised bed for the pre-k students at Head Start and a dig area for the younger children at the Early Learning Center. This provides continuity as the children grow as well since there are already gardens in many of the elementary and middle schools in the area.

Progress: Louis is pleased with the progress of the learning & healing garden and notes that the work has been "very rewarding." The green house and raised beds are finished with the next phases being the gazebo and sitting areas. The garden will be a great place for people to relax, take a break, and relive stress.

Tips: Louis says "not to be afraid to utilize any space you have at home for a garden." He also mentions how rewarding it is to grow and eat your own food especially because you are getting more nutrients than pre-made products.