



Ellen A'Key Grant 2017 Winner: *Skagit County Master Gardeners*

...by Master Gardener Bob Connor

We received four applications for the Ellen A'Key Grant award this year. Thank you to all Master Gardeners for your efforts in developing each submission.

Our committee of four, by a unanimous vote, chose the Skagit County project, Building Bridges between Master Gardeners and Latino Communities in Skagit County.

Skagit County is a growing rural agricultural area with the Latino Spanish-speaking community increasing the fastest. At this time, the Skagit County Master Gardeners (SCMG) can only provide minimal services to this population. They wish to develop an outreach approach to serve this community, asking them what their needs are rather than making assumptions.

SCMG proposes pairing with organizations that serve Latino communities, such as Community Action Skagit County and Skagit County Valley College, "to identify needs in home gardening, sustainability, and food access and then use the results to establish effective strategies to meet those needs."

SCMG anticipates those needs will require information provided in Spanish language or bilingual format where appropriate. The information would cover at least these areas:

- a. Vegetable gardening in the Pacific Northwest
- b. Soil preparation, planting, and composting
- c. Plant care and harvesting
- d. Gardening in small spaces and community gardens
- e. Sustainable gardening practices to include seed saving
- f. The development and support of community gardens as appropriate and available

SCMG will use this grant to make new videos and written materials, translate existing materials where appropriate, develop teaching/learning strategies, provide basic garden supplies, and develop community gardens. They hope to develop a replicable outreach model to serve Latino individuals and communities now and in the future.

The grant was named in memory of Ellen A'Key, King County Master Gardener, whose generous bequest enabled the Master Gardener Foundation of King County to establish a reserve fund. It is in her honor that we share our resources with other MGs around the state.