

Rice Street Gardens (RSG) 2020 Report

Introduction and Summary

The 2020 garden season was very successful, with good weather and smooth operations. RSG continues to provide wonderful exercise and nourishment opportunities for our community. A grant from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) enabled us to hire an excellent administrator to help out. Of course, the coronavirus caused confusion and concern, but we developed strategies to proceed safely through a new season. The gardeners themselves helped out with garden maintenance more than in the past. Our finances are strong going into next year. We are aware that the Saint Paul Area Water Services' land will be sold and developed in the future, but that it won't affect the garden operations in 2021. RSG participated in the Rice/LarpenTOUR this year and the final closeout is scheduled for October 24th. Thank you everyone for all your support and encouragement.

Domestic Hunger Grant

We received a national grant from the ELCA of \$3000, which is renewable for two more years. This grant was used to pay for critical translation services this year and, more importantly, enable us to hire an extremely competent and proactive administrator, Dana Ferguson. Thank you ELCA for this timely support.



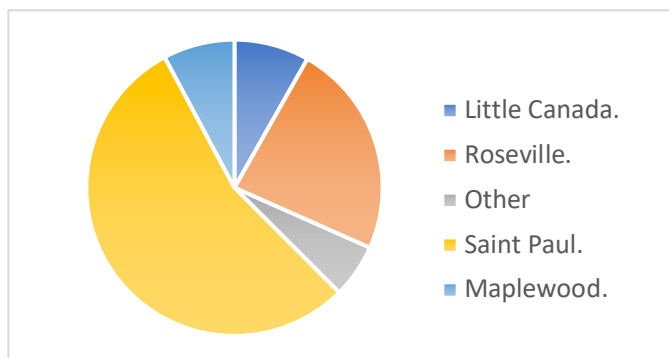
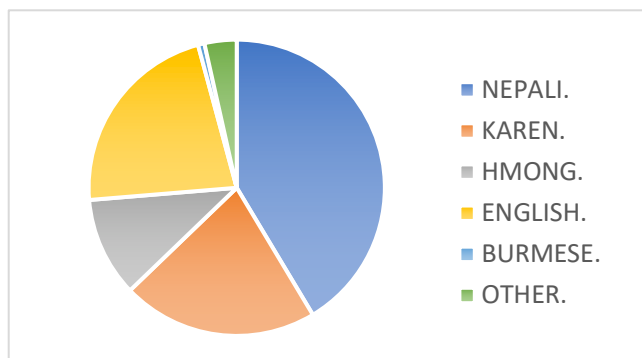
Dana Ferguson

Coronavirus

In March, we recognized that the COVID-19 virus would dramatically change our plans for 2020. We changed our minds several times before deciding to proceed with a plan for extreme caution. The gardens simply meant too much for the gardeners for us to give up. Rather than our usual indoors training and sign-up sessions we translated all the regular garden rules and new safe gardening rules into Karen and Nepali. We put up several signs with the rules and used multiple means of communication to relay this information. To pay their garden fees, gardeners drove through the parking lot and dropped their \$20 and information into a basket, where we again handed out instructions for the coming year. Soap was hung by each water spigot and tables and biffy were repeatedly sanitized. There was one incident of coughing unmasked in a garden, but that was handled. In some ways, our process this year went more smoothly than usual, and we have heard of no illness among the gardeners this year.

Gardener Statistics

RSG continues to be a multiethnic undertaking that supports the residents (and especially the recent immigrants) from multiple local communities. There were 258 garden plots this year. The ethnicities in the following chart represents the gardener's native language. Many now speak English as well.



Garden Maintenance

The gardeners themselves did an excellent job of maintaining the cleanliness and function of the gardens this year. We especially want to thank someone everyone calls Mr. Lu who spends many days at the gardens and regularly mows the pathways. We are giving him a wooden wall plaque to thank him for his efforts.



Mr. Lu Shwe

Finance

We will end 2020 with about \$6,300 in our account. Income this year included the \$20 plot fees from all gardeners and the \$3,000 grant from the ELCA. Expenses included our administrator (somewhat over the \$3,000 grant), new lawnmowers, hoses, and dozens of small items.

Sale of Land on Which the RSG Resides

The water department board has approved the purchase of their land by PAK Properties and the purchase will likely close in early 2022. This purchase, which includes our RSG space, will not affect our operations through 2021, but it is anticipated the RSG will not be able to operate in 2022.

Rice/LarpenTOUR & Season Closeout

RSG participated in the community celebration on September 26 of shops and organizations along the Rice Street corridor. It was a nice way to enjoy the harvest season. Many people stopped by. Official closeout day at the gardens was October 24th.

RSG, a place of beauty and abundance.

