

Sharing backyard bounty to fight hunger

By GARY OPPENHEIMER

MANY PEOPLE may have recently heard or read about Ample Harvest and the AmpleHarvest.org campaign ("Food pantries to reap bounty of excess harvest," Page L-1, June 22). These two programs are in place to address an unfortunate reality – that an average of one out of eight people in America is food-insecure, defined as either not having enough food, or having the real concern that they may shortly not have enough food.

Ample Harvest is a program from Sustainable West Milford's Community Garden to distribute fresh produce from the garden to food pantries in the township. The gardeners grow organic crops and may elect to put aside a portion of their harvest, which will then be delivered by members of the community garden's Ample Harvest committee to participating food pantries.

Both A&P and ShopRite in West Milford have made arrangements for delivery of excess produce to a regional food bank some 51 miles away. Ample Harvest is a first local effort. Members of the community garden have expressed a great deal of enthusiasm about Ample Harvest, and the pantries have made it clear that



Gardening for the needy in West Milford.

they very much appreciate the distribution that will be shortly under way.

The AmpleHarvest.org campaign takes Ample Harvest to a national level. Created because most

of the 30,000 to 40,000 food pantries nationwide are not easily located, it is designed to enable millions of backyard gardeners to find neighborhood food pantries with which to share part of their gar-

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den bounty. The site also enables food pantries to list store-bought items they separately need.

AmpleHarvest.org rolled out May 18 and already has registered one out of every 100 food pantries in the country, with more signing on every day.

If you are a gardener and have more produce than you can use (despite the remarkable growing season we've had so far), please visit www.AmpleHarvest.org to find a food pantry eager for produce and generously share your bounty with them.

At a time when giving money to charity is particularly difficult for many people, AmpleHarvest.org enables millions of people to reach into their back yards instead of their back pockets to help neighbors in need.

Gary Oppenheimer of Newfoundland is director of the West Milford Community Garden. This article was written on behalf of Sustainable West Milford Community Garden's Ample Harvest committee.