

The Arc, Eden Mill join efforts to create garden

With the help of a grant from a Bel Air company, The Arc Northern Chesapeake Region recently created a community garden at Eden Mill Nature Center in Pylesville.

The garden at Eden Mill is part of The Arc's new initiative, "Learn As We Grow."

The project is being funded through a \$6,574 grant from Chesapeake Environmental Management Inc., a Bel Air company that, through its Charitable Giving Program, gives 5 percent of its profits each year back to charities "that help improve the human condition," according to a press release from Stephanie Novak Hau, president and CEO of the company.

Staff members review the grant applications and select the recipients.

"Our hope was that by involving the staff to a greater degree, they would see the very real impact of giving," Hau said in the release. "We also hope that our simple program might be a model for other small firms, who may not think they have enough resources to give to really make a difference."

Also receiving grants from CEM this year were Kennedy Krieger Institute, \$7,370, and Wounded

Warriors, \$5,976.

At Eden Mill, staff and volunteers are helping Arc clients in creating and maintaining a vegetable garden at Eden Mill Nature Center.

The harvest will be donated to the Faith Communities and Civic Agencies United (FCCA) homeless shelter and the Community Action Agency's food bank.

The garden initiative offers multifaceted benefits for all involved given that the garden will be educational, experiential and sustainable in nature, not only for participants from The Arc, but also for the entire community, according to the grant application submitted by The Arc.

Other possibilities include having youth in Eden Mill summer camps or other family/youth programs at the nature center cultivate and sustain one of the gardening areas. Other visitors to the center would be able to learn about organic and sustainable gardening techniques.

To do that, a freestanding greenhouse would be created to cultivate and grow their own seedlings on a year-round basis.



MATT BUTTON | AEGIS STAFF

Greg Meyers from the ARC Northern Chesapeake Region covers a strawberry plant after helping plant it in a new community garden at the Eden Mill Nature Center. The project is part of The Arc's new initiative, "Learn As We Grow" and was funded through a grant from Chesapeake Environmental Management Inc. in Bel Air.