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PHOTO CAPTION:
Anne Schneider, Jefferson County Community Foundation board member and Grantmaker's Forum panelist, checks out seedlings that will be used for Sunfield Farm and School's Food Share project, alongside Farm Manager Sebastian Aguilar and Farm Director Christine Nock. The first $1,000 grant from the Community Foundation's permanent community endowment will fund the food self-sufficiency project this summer.
Photo by Shelly Randall

Community Foundation awards its first grant to Sunfield Farm

Panel of grantmakers decides $1,000 should support Food Share project

The first grant awarded by the newly formed Jefferson County Community Foundation will help 10 low-income families become more self-sufficient in meeting their food needs this summer by growing and eating their own organic fruits and vegetables.

The Community Foundation presented a $1,000 check to Sunfield Farm and School on May 9 as part of the 2007 Grantmaker's Forum held in Port Townsend. Sunfield's proposal for its Food Share project was unanimously recommended for funding by a distinguished panel of grantmakers who publicly critiqued the top 9 proposals of 22 submitted for consideration by Jefferson County nonprofits.

"We were looking at funding a very local project and making a really direct impact," said Katie Heinrich of the Medina Foundation, explaining the panel's decision.

"Sunfield's project directly addresses the vision of the Community Foundation, which is improving the quality of life in Jefferson County," added panelist Anne Schneider, a Community Foundation board member. "We are excited to fund a project that helps support our agricultural economy and also changes lives."

The Food Share project will teach 10 low-income participants how to grow their own organic food and use it to prepare nutritious meals, according to Sunfield Farm Director Christine Nock. It was piloted last year with six families and this year is also funded by the USDA Community Food Projects Competitive Grant Program, she said. The goal is

to eventually serve 25 families.

"Once you know how to grow your own food, it's very empowering," said Farm Manager Sebastian Aguilar. “And it gives you a sense of security that you can feed yourself.”

Sunfield is still seeking individuals or families to participate in Food Share, which starts June 4 and will be based on its farm in Port Hadlock. For more information, call the school at 360-385-3658 or visit the website, www.sunfieldfarm.org.

The grant to Sunfield is the first distribution of the interest income from the permanent community endowment known as the Jefferson County Community Foundation Fund of The Greater Tacoma Community Foundation.

The Grantmaker's Forum panelists singled out the following proposals for honorable mention: OlyCap's request for funds to renovate the Quilcene Community Center, Peninsula Pride Alliance's anti-bullying trainings for school personnel, the Port Townsend Marine Science Center's Onshore-Offshore marine ecology workshops for science teachers, and Sound Experience's multi-year Youth-at-Risk Initiative aboard the schooner *Adventuress*.

Sixty-one participants from 33 organizations attended the Grantmaker's Forum, which was sponsored by the Jefferson County Nonprofit Alliance, the educational arm of the Community Foundation. The goal was to increase participants' knowledge of proposal writing techniques and to provide a behind-the-scenes look at the decision-making processes of grantmakers in the field.

"This was probably the most targeted and helpful grant-related class I have ever been to," said Stephanie Reith, former director of Jefferson Land Trust and current board member of Sunfield Farm and School. "I thought that even before Sunfield won," she quickly added. "What a wonderful learning experience you created for us all."

For more information about the Jefferson County Community Foundation, visit www.jccfgives.org.

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