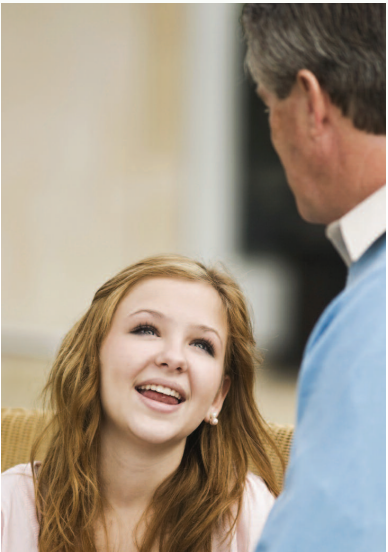




With the goal of a healthy community, United Way's Green Thumbs Up! partners have made communal gardens available to the public in Putnam. Green Thumbs Up! partner Cornell Cooperative Extension provides families with the opportunity to grow vegetables from seed, nurture an organic vegetable garden and harvest the crops. For a nominal fee, each family gets a 10'x10' garden plot, gardening tools, lessons in science and gardening, kid-friendly recipes incorporating the ultra-fresh ingredients, and expert help from volunteer Master Gardeners.

Utilizing its strengths as a community hub and center for learning, Green Thumbs Up! partner Patterson Library is providing a shared garden for all age groups to garden together, learn about and eat nutritious foods and enjoy satisfying fresh air exercise. Green Thumbs Up! partners are trying to influence the community's nutritional choices and health outlook by offering delicious and healthy alternatives to fast foods, as well as enjoyable outdoor exercise. A bountiful by-product is the satisfaction that comes with younger and older generations and families working together to produce something so tangibly good.

“What we have here is a failure to communicate...”



Can We Talk? Families are often so busy with work and activities that communication between parents and teens can suffer. Without the benefit of emotional, social and physical parental monitoring, adolescents and teens are prone to taking risks and making unhealthy decisions for themselves, like binge-drinking and unsafe sex, without regard to consequences. United Way's **Can We Talk?** initiative offers a school-based no-nonsense forum for teens and parents to talk openly about the challenges they both face, and to develop strategies to encourage better choices and safer behavior – and more effective communication.