

Costilla County Conservancy District Scholarship Essay

My name is Jeremy Sandoval, I'm a senior in high school. I was born in 2007 and have lived in San Luis my whole life. I plan on going to college after I graduate high school to get my barbering certificate. My favorite things to do in my free time are playing basketball, hunting, fishing, working, and hanging out with friends and family.

A community farm park in a small community like San Luis could bring tremendous benefits. In many small towns, getting fresh and healthy food can be a challenge. Grocery stores might be far away, too expensive, or not offer many healthy options. A community farm park could be an amazing solution to this problem. Not only would it give people better access to fresh fruits and vegetables, but it would also offer educational opportunities, bring people together, and help take care of the environment through sustainable farming. It could use traditional systems like acequia irrigation to conserve water and support long-term food production. A place like this would help people, the planet, and the whole community grow stronger.

One of the biggest problems that many small communities face is limited access to healthy food. A community farm park could help by growing fresh fruits, vegetables, and other crops that are affordable and close by. Families who can't always buy fresh produce from stores could visit the farm to buy or even pick their own food. The farm could also partner with local food banks or schools to share extra produce with people who need it most. This would help make sure that everyone in the community has the chance to eat healthy food and live a better life.

Another big benefit of a community farm park is education. People of all ages could learn important life skills like how to grow their own food, take care of plants, and cook healthy meals. Schools could use the farm as an outdoor classroom, where students learn about science, health, and the environment in a fun and hands-on way. There could also be workshops and classes for adults on things like composting, water conservation, and sustainable farming practices. These kinds of lessons are really valuable, especially now that more people are trying to live eco-friendly lives.

One traditional and sustainable system that the farm could use is acequia irrigation. This method, used for hundreds of years in places like New Mexico and Colorado, involves sharing water fairly through hand-dug ditches that bring water from rivers to farms and gardens. The cool thing about acequia systems is that they don't waste water and they bring the community together, since everyone works to take care of the canals and share the water. In a time when drought and water shortages are real problems, using acequias would show respect for the land and for the people who have used these systems for generations.

Water conservation is another huge part of making the farm sustainable. The community farm park could collect rainwater, use drip irrigation, and grow native plants that don't need much water. These small changes would save a lot of water and protect the local environment. The farm could also teach people how to do these things at home, helping them save money and take care of the planet at the same time.

Sustainable agriculture is about more than just saving water—it's also about growing food in ways that keep the soil healthy and don't harm nature. The farm could rotate crops to avoid wearing out the soil, use compost instead of chemical fertilizers, and avoid harmful pesticides. These practices would make the farm stronger in the long run and help teach the community how to grow food in a way that supports the Earth. Plus, growing a mix of crops and vegetables can help create a more diverse and stable food supply, which is super important during hard times.

The farm park would also bring people closer together. It could have community garden plots, where families or individuals grow their own food. There could be cooking areas, picnic spots, and places for community events like harvest festivals or cultural food nights. People from different backgrounds could grow crops that are important to their culture, like chile peppers, corn, or herbs, and share stories and traditions through food. This would help build understanding, respect, and pride in the community's diversity.

In the end, a community farm park would be much more than just a place to grow vegetables. It would help people access healthy food, learn new skills, save water, protect the environment, and connect with one another. By using traditional methods like acequia irrigation and focusing on sustainable agriculture, the farm would show how old wisdom and modern ideas can work together. Most of all, it would show what's possible when a community comes together to grow something meaningful—not just food, but a healthier, stronger future.