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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MARION LOCAL FFA & SHRINE PARTNER ON COMMUNITY GARDEN

MARIA STEIN, Ohio (June 17, 2019) – God has a special way of bringing people together. Thus was the case when Matt Hess, Ministry & Hospitality Director of the Maria Stein Shrine, reached out to Matt Elsass, Agricultural Education Advisor at Marion Local Schools about his idea for a community service project.

“I had been playing with the idea of a community garden on the Shrine grounds” stated Hess, “Sisters had gardens on this land from the very beginning and I felt a calling to reinstate them as a service project, but I wasn’t sure where to start.”



It wasn’t until Shrine staff member Susie Bergman, who has a child involved in the Versailles FFA program, suggested contacting the school, that it became clear just how significant God’s timing was. Turns out the Marion Local FFA students, who had always maintained a garden on school grounds, had just recently found themselves in need of a new location.

According to Elsass, “When I was contacted by Matt Hess last spring to gauge our interest in a community garden, we knew we wanted to be a part of this project. We are always looking for service learning opportunities so of course we were hooked!”

The biggest concern for both parties initially was maintaining the garden with volunteers throughout the growing season, but with the FFA and the Shrine both involved, they are confident many hands will make light work.

“Steadfast volunteerism at the Shrine is a primary reason it still thrives today as a place of peace, prayer and hospitality in our community” added Hess.

The garden is currently planted with onions, potatoes and peppers, with hopes to expand in the coming years. If you would like to volunteer your time to assist the Shrine and students with the garden, contact Matt Hess for more information at 419-925-4532.