



Left to right: Joyce Scott of The Salvation Army, Carol Burke of THRIVE! and Shannon Thome, Manager of the SAE program



TOWER GARDENS

What is a Tower Garden? It is the process of growing plants in an air or mist environment without using soil. In keeping with its mission to improve the nutrition of area residents, THRIVE! set about to fund tower gardens at Wellington High School. This would enable Future Farmers of America (FFA) students who weren't able to grow produce at home to enjoy fresh vegetables or herbs. Managing the tower gardens would also enable seniors who were part of the Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) co-op to earn 1.25 academic credits.

The goal of the program was to enable students to provide produce to the school cafeteria, sell their produce or donate it to local food pantries. COVID has disrupted most of these activities for now, but the students, supervised by Shannon Thome, continue to nurture the tower gardens. There are 12 gardens in total with one student assigned per garden. Thus far, students have produced peppers, cabbage and lettuce.

The Wellington High School Endowment Fund felt the program was so important to FFA students that they funded half of the \$6,600 cost of the Gardens with THRIVE! paying the other half.