

# MBC students use Apple Day to give back



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STAUNTON – It was an overcast morning with a slight breeze, and as you walked around the corner towards Hunt Dining Hall Monday on Mary Baldwin College's campus, the first thing that hit you was the fragrance of rosemary and sage.

There was also basil, lemon balm, echinacea and epazote – but it was the rosemary and sage that were the most potent and pleasant.

Students were cowering in the school's herb garden harvesting the last of the year's crop, bundling them for drying and pulling out the invasive wire grass that had infiltrated the large bed.

The project was part of a Mary Baldwin tradition dating back 60 years: Apple Day.

Although it was once a surprise to students, the date of Apple Day and activities are announced in advance. Perks include canceled classes, a carnival, apple gleaning and a plethora of apple dishes served at the dining hall.

It is also a chance for students to get involved in community service throughout the Valley. While many students chose to take part in service activities outside of campus, a few recognized a need at home – the overgrown herb garden that supplies fresh seasoning to the dining hall.

Leading Monday's activity was Kate Hopkins, a fellow with the Allegheny Mountain School. As part of her fellowship she is spending a year serving the community. She spends four days a week with the Valley Conservation Council and one day a week working at Mary Baldwin, where the herb garden is just one of the projects she is responsible for.

"It's been neglected this year," Hopkins said. "The other garden is in much better shape."

Next year Mary Baldwin will have a full-time Allegheny Mountain School fellow and Hopkins didn't want to leave the herb garden in a state of overgrowth.

The wire grass was the main culprit, Hopkins said. Students helped her lay down black tarps that when the sun shined down, would bake and destroy the wire grass without the need for harsh chemicals.

Mary Ruth Wossum-Fisher, a freshman, was one of the half dozen students who helped tend the herb garden Monday.

"I like gardening," she said as she trimmed the ends of the rosemary and carefully tied twine around them. "But I've never bundled herbs before, so that's new."

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