

PUNTES offers courses for urban farmers

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By SONYA HERRERA

Eric Firpo stood beside the raised family plots at Boggs Tract Community Farm in west Stockton and explained how the soil is fertilized.



Jesus Aceves, works to prepare for the next set of crops to grow. PHOTO BY SONYA HERRERA

“The difference between our farm and other farms like this one is that there are ways to manage a farm so that you’re actually increasing fertility,” said Firpo. “That’s the key to sustainability, because if you don’t need to add a bunch of extra chemicals to grow crops, you can have a very long-lasting farm.”

Sustainability, both environmental and economic, is key to the mission of PUNTES, a non-profit organization based in Stockton that pays Firpo’s company, Stockton Harvest, to manage its Boggs Tract farm.

Jeremy Terhune, PUNTES’ executive director, said Stockton Harvest is a prime example of what the organization hopes to develop in the community: small, local businesses growing healthy, affordable food.

“Eric Firpo and Stockton Harvest are an example of what we want to cultivate in other people,” said Terhune. “The goal of PUNTES is to create a network of Stockton harvests, all spreading their business, and we will help however we can.”

That is why PUNTES has introduced a series of urban farming classes for those interested in starting a farming-related business within the city. Eric Firpo tends to other crops and a set of beds. PHOTO BY SONYA HERRERA



<http://deltacollegian.net/2014/03/21/puentes-offers-courses-urban-farmers/>

Ideas may be as simple as growing and selling fresh flowers.

The classes, which begin on April 5, are focused on creating a viable business plan centered on growing and selling crops.

Students are expected to arrive at the first session of class with a specific crop in mind.

A registration fee of \$50 must be paid online or in-person via cash or check to attend.

According to Terhune, scholarships to pay the registration fee are available for students who “can demonstrate they’re really going to do something with this, and they have a real need.”

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