

Elmwood Stock Farm

Faith Feeds



Kentucky School Garden Network



Bluegrass Local Food

System Summit

April 21, 2011



EMPLOYMENT SOLUTIONS



Walnut Hall Beef

EcoC2S

sustainlex.org
sustainable communities network



Lexington Pasta



INTERFAITH ALLIANCE OF THE BLUEGRASS

Bluegrass Local Food Summit

Eating From Our Own Soil

EDUCATE MOTIVATE POLLINATE

April 21, 2011 8am-4:00pm

Crestwood Christian Church, 1882 Bellefonte Dr. Lexington KY

8:00am-8:30am Check-in & Registration

CHALICE HALL

8:30am Welcome and Introductions

Jim Embry, Sustainable Communities Network

Rev Kory Wilcoxson, Crestwood Christian Church

Mayor Jim Gray, Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government

9:00-9:15am Food and Farming Transition to a Post Carbon Food System

Michael Bomford, *Kentucky State University*,

9:15-10:00am What's working and how do we enhance our support of Kentucky farmers?

Farmers Roundtable

Speakers: **John-Mark Hack**, *Marksbury Farm Market*; **Jeff Dabbelt**, *Lexington Farmers Market*

Resource people: **Terhan Jewell**, *Jewell Farms*; **Willis Sautter**, *Walnut Hall Beef*; **Dan Shelley Tucker**, *Tucker's Turkey Farm*; **Maria Turner**, *Garrard County Farmers' Market*, **Dean Tandy**- *Lexington USDA Office*

10:00-10:30 Local Government and Re-building our Local Food System

Sara Fritschner, **Joshua Jennings**, *Louisville Metro Government, Farm to Table, Health Equity & Food Policy*

Resource People: **Cheri Bryant Hamilton**, *Louisville Metro Council Member 5th District*

10:30-11:15am How Community Groups Connect with Local Foods

Lucinda Masterton, *Family Court Judge*;

Shelia Taluskie, Dazurae Blankenship *Chrysalis House Purple Lunch Box*;

Diane Fleet, Jessica Ballard, *Bluegrass Domestic Violence Program Farm*;

Rob Rumpke, *Bluegrass Tomorrow*;

Erica Horn, *Faith Feeds*

Soreyda Begley, *Lexington Design Collaborative*

11:15-12 noon **Educational Institutions and Local Foods**

K-12 Schools and Local Foods

Michelle Coker, Tresine Logsdon, Fayette County Public Schools

Sylvia Moore, Mercer County Schools-Farm-to-School

Higher education

Mark Williams, Keiko Tanaka, Tim Woods, University of Kentucky

12 noon-1pm Lunch

Lunch speaker: First Lady of Kentucky, Jane Beshear

1:15-2pm **Higher Education continued & State Government**

State Representative Rita Smart, *House District 81, House Standing Committee on Agriculture and Small Business*

David Cooke, *Berea College, Grow Appalachia*

Mac Stone, *Kentucky Department of Agriculture*

Matt Chaliff, *Kentucky Department of Education, Future Farmers of Kentucky*

2pm-3:45pm **Afternoon Working Groups**

These Working Group sessions are meant to discuss strategy, develop action steps for each sector that will serve to increase the growing, distribution, processing, procurement, affordable access, education, consumption and policy making of local foods. Recommendations from each Working Group will be compiled and submitted to Mayor Jim Gray/LFUCG, other local governments, Governor Beshear and KY congressional representatives.

SEEKERS CLASS MC4....Working Group #1 Faith and Food Invites all faith community leadership and laypersons to discuss local food, community food security issues and to provide entry points for people of faith to work together to make important connections between our local food systems, our lifestyles, social justice, environmental stewardship and, respect and care for the created order. Faith-based organizations and faith communities representing different traditions will share their work to support local farmers, develop community gardens, and increase healthy food accessibility.

Facilitators: **Erica Horn**-Faith Feeds; **Carol Devine**-Green Chalice/Disciples of Christ

Resource people: **Phyllis Fitzgerald**-Earth and Spirit Center; **Danny Everett**-United Methodist Church; **Lisa Satin**, Interfaith Alliance of the Bluegrass; **Caleb Mathis**, College Ministry, Crossroads Christian Church

BRADFORD ROOM..Working Group #2 Scaling Up: Meeting the Demand for Local Food

Robust local food systems offer social, environmental and economic benefits. Increasingly, wholesale buyers are demanding locally grown food and growers are looking for new regional markets. In order to meet the demand for locally and regionally grown food and move significant quantities of this food into markets such as restaurants, mainstream grocery stores and institutions, local food systems need to be scaled up or expanded from farmer-direct sales of small quantities of product to wholesale transactions. This session will include representatives from farmers, wholesalers, institutions, retailers and will develop strategies and action steps.

Facilitators: **John-Mark Hack**, Marksbury Farm Market; **Dan Arnett**, Good Foods Market and Café;

Speakers: **Dan Arnett**, Good Foods Market and Café; **Rick Christman**, Employment Solutions; **Beth Richardson**, Tarleton Tavern Farm; **Andre Barbour**- Barbour's Farm LLC;

Resource people: **Jeff Dabbelt**-Lexington Farmers Market; **Maria Turner**, Garrard County's Farmers' Market, **Willis Sautter**- Walnut Hall Beef; **Dan Shelley Tucker**-Tucker's Turkey Farm; **Terhan Jewell**-Jewell Farms; **John McAlonan**, Fire on The Ridge Farm

MARY and JOSEPH CLASS MC5...Working Group #3 Growing an Urban Agriculture Food System Economy

This groups invites everybody interested in urban agriculture to participate by sharing needs, experiences, questions, and project ideas that address the most important and controversial issues of poverty alleviation, environmental and waste management, local economic, social and community development. How do we collaborate, share resources and build the infrastructure for urban agriculture

Facilitators: **Sellus Wilder**-Commonwealth Gardens; **James Coles**, Community Ventures Corporation

Resource people: **Tresine Logsdon**-Fayette County Public Schools; **Steve Austin**-Bluegrass Community Foundation; **Timothy Mayer**-Community Farm Alliance, **Deborah Messenger**, Field to Fork Festival, **Matt Chaliff**, FFA , **Louise Caldwell-Edmonds**, LFUCG, **Jessica Mansfield**, The Rock/LaRoca United Methodist Church,

FAITH CLASS MC6..Working Group #4 Creating a Local Food Policy Council This session will work on education and development of food policy councils. It is appropriate for anyone who is interested in or involved with any organized effort to influence local and state food, agriculture, or nutrition policy. This session is an opportunity to learn more about policy, projects and partnerships that make up local food systems. It is also an occasion to network with individuals on the cutting edge of local and state food policy issues and will develop strategies for contributing to the development of the state food policy council and local councils throughout the state.

Facilitators:**Aloma Dew**, Sierra Club; **Joshua Jennings**, Louisville Metro Governmen, **Cassia Herron**, Community Farm Alliance

ANCHOR ROOM MC7...Working Group #5 Growing Food and Partnerships in Appalachia Building regional partnerships is critical to creating just and sustainable local food systems in any region of Kentucky. This session will discuss ways to build even greater collaboration and capacity-building projects that address needs such as: educating children about growing gardens, diet-related health concerns – obesity, diabetes, heart disease, affordability of fresh produce, local food in school lunches, preserving traditional knowledge, small business development, and much more!.

Facilitators: **Mike Stratford**, Christian Appalachian Project; **David Cooke**, Berea College;
Resource people: **Eveyn Knight**, UK Appalachian Center

3:45pm-4:00pm Working Group Reports & Adjourn

5pm-7pm Kentucky Wine and Food Tasting at Kentucky Proud Market, Downtown Civic Center Shops(Rupp Arena

Bluegrass Local Food Summit Co-sponsors: Employment Solutions/CTE, Interfaith Alliance of the Bluegrass, Bluegrass Community Foundation, Good Foods Market and Café', Green Chalice/Disciples of Christ, Kentucky Proud Market, Walnut Hall Beef, LFUCG Environmental Commission, Crestwood Christian Church, Community Ventures Corporation, Temple Adath Israel, Erica Horn, Lisa Satin, Sierra Club-Cumberland Chapter, EcoC2 Services, Central Kentucky Council for Peace and Justice, Kentucky Department of Agriculture, Elmwood Stock Farm, Lexington Pasta, Lexington Design Collaborative, Kentucky Department of Agriculture

Sustainable Communities Network <http://Sustainlex.org>

The food and farming transition: toward a post carbon food system

by Richard Heinberg and Michael Bomford, Ph.D.

Summary

The American food system rests on an unstable foundation of massive fossil fuel inputs. It must be reinvented in the face of declining fuel stocks. The new food system will use less energy, and the energy it uses will come from renewable sources. We can begin the transition to the new system immediately through a process of planned, graduated, rapid change. The unplanned alternative reconstruction from scratch after collapse would be chaotic and tragic.

The seeds of the new food system have already been planted. America's farmers have been reducing their energy use for decades. They are using less fertilizer and pesticide. The number of organic farms, farmers' markets, and CSA operations is growing rapidly. More people are thinking about where their food comes from.

These are important building blocks, but much remains to be done. Our new food system will require more farmers, smaller and more diversified farms, less processed and packaged food, and less long-distance hauling of food. Governments, communities, businesses, and families each have important parts to play in reinventing a food system that functions with limited renewable energy resources to feed our population for the long term.

<http://postcarbon.org/files/PCI-food-and-farming-transition.pdf>

Bluegrass Local Food System Summit

John-Mark Hack
Marksbury Farm Market
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Lancaster, Kentucky 40444
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jmhack@marksburyfarm.com

John-Mark Hack is a husband of 21 years to Rev. Carol Devine, and father of three beautiful people, Benjamin, Elijah and Sarah Hack. He is also a founding partner of Marksbury Farm Market, a new USDA-inspected processor and distributor of locally produced, naturally and humanely raised, pastured poultry, pork and beef. Marksbury was conceived as a hub for growing Kentucky's local food economy by offering a full range of pasture-based fresh and cooked products to individual consumers, as well as the grocery, restaurant and institutional food-service markets. Marksbury also offers professional processing services to farmers engaged in direct marketing of their own meat products.

What sets Marksbury apart from other processors are its full commercial kitchen, smoking and curing facilities, opening up new value-added opportunities for local meat that have been out of reach until now. Marksbury also has an uncompromising commitment to superior customer service. Opened in August 2010, the 12,000-square foot processing facility is located in northern Garrard County on the new four-lane U.S. 27, just 25 miles south of Lexington. The Marksbury Farm Market retail shop is located just a half-mile from the processing facility, just off KY 34 on Fisher Ford Road.

In collaboration with multiple partners, Mr. Hack will launch the Local Food Producers Association, a new national trade association for food producers placing products in local markets. Officially launching this summer, the LFPA will provide governmental advocacy services, continuing education opportunities, conferences and networking events for local food producers and their supporters. The group will also strive to bring strong coordination to the various organizations engaged in promoting sustainable and alternative agriculture to ensure that they are as well represented as possible during the development of the 2012 Farm Bill, our nation's preeminent food and farm policy.

From 1997 – 2003, Mr. Hack served in the administration of Governor Paul Patton. During his tenure, Mr. Hack founded the Governor's Office of Agricultural Policy, established the Governor's Commission on Family Farms, and served as the first President of the Kentucky Tobacco Settlement Trust Corporation, a position responsible for the distribution of more than \$600 million to Kentucky farm families as part of the national tobacco settlement. Mr. Hack also served as the first Chief Executive Officer of the Kentucky Agricultural Development Fund, leading the development and implementation of the policies and programs of the largest state-financed agricultural diversification effort in the history of the United States.

Since 2001, Mr. Hack has served on a PAPSAC, a food policy advisory committee based in the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. He also teaches “Contemporary Problems in Agriculture” at the University Of Kentucky College Of Agriculture. In this course, Mr. Hack leads his students through the history of the modern agriculture system by examining global population growth, land use policies, technology, capitalization, energy and environment, and food safety.

Mr. Hack also served as a County Extension Agent in Nicholas County for the UK Cooperative Extension Service, 1994 - 1997. He and his wife also worked on agricultural education projects while they served as Peace Corps Volunteers in Costa Rica (1992-1994).

Mr. Hack and Rev. Devine have recently been researching issues of food and faith, with plans to publish and speak on this and related topics. (Rev. Devine is serving as a facilitator of the Faith and Food Working group during the summit.) Mr. Hack and Rev. Devine live with their three children in southern Woodford County. They are proud members of a raw milk herd-share program, the Good Foods Co-op, and have strived to instill in their children the values related to local food and local economy through their buying habits, family dinners and various associations.

Tarleton Tavern Farm

4333 Frankfort Road
Georgetown, Kentucky 40324

Phone: 502.682.3750
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www.TarletonTavernFarm.com



ABOUT THE FARM:

At Tarleton Tavern Farm, we have a long history of hospitality and good foods going back to 1790 when the Tavern was built. At that time, the Tavern also served as the post office, stage coach stop and toll booth and was the center of the community known as White Sulphur in Scott County.

These days, the farm is home to the Enlow / Richardson family and many furred and feathered friends. We still pride ourselves on our hospitality, in addition to our great produce and meats.

Here at the farm we raise a large vegetable and herb garden that we market through our CSA program. We also use our greenhouse to start all of our own plants. Our vegetables and herbs are naturally grown from heirloom varieties.

Our cattle are raised and finished on pasture with no antibiotics, steroids or growth hormones.

Our pigs are raised on trimmings from our gardens and tables and are supplemented with organic grains. They are never given animal by-products or antibiotics.

Our chickens are free ranged on pasture. Our broilers average 6 - 7 lbs. and are sold whole. Our happy hens produce the most delicious eggs!

In the fall, we also raise huge, gorgeous Mums.

WHAT TO EXPECT:

Our members pay a fee upfront and receive a weekly basket (share) containing a variety of produce from May to October (20 weeks). The products may change weekly depending on what is in season in any given week. Pick ups are scheduled in Lexington, Georgetown and Frankfort, Kentucky.

With your delivery, you will receive a Newsletter with information about the vegetables in the box, helpful recipes and information about goings-on at the farm. We also host a yearly community event for our shareholders with a large meal and fellowship.

Our Vegetable / Herb Share will feed two adults or a small household most of their weekly vegetables. (@ 1/2 bushel)

If you wish to purchase Meats (Beef, Chicken or Pork), you can do so for an additional fee. We also offer free range eggs. These items can be included in your weekly deliveries.

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WHY A CSA?:

Since shareholders pay for their shares upfront in a CSA program, a farmer is able to be paid for his operating costs at the beginning of the season and does not have to wait until his harvest comes in. This allows for more planning of crops and revenue.

A CSA allows consumers to feel a real connection to their local farmers and the land on which they operate. CSA members will be receiving healthy, fresh, and local farm products weekly, while also knowing the farmers they are supporting.

A CSA Program fits in perfectly with the idea of "Buying Local". "Buying Local" not only benefits farmers for obvious economic reasons, but also benefits consumers. Studies have shown that eating a regional diet consumes 17 times less oil and gas than a typical diet based on food shipped across the country. Local foods can be grown for taste, rather than to survive the abuse of shipping and industrial harvesting. Most importantly, fresh food just tastes better! Most local produce has been picked within 24 hours.

OUR GREEN INITIATIVES:

We are currently pursuing Organic Certification for our vegetables and herbs, but already grow using Organic practices. We do not use any pesticides or herbicides and believe whole heartedly in natural methods for soil supplementation. Great soil makes for better vegetables!

We use a gravity-fed Drip Irrigation system using water collected from our barn roof. We also supplement our collected water with ground water from our tested well and spring fed pond.

Hardly anything is thrown away here on the farm. What food scraps that are not fed to the pigs are composted. That compost is later added to boost the soil.

We even try to use salvage materials in our building repairs and construction projects.

In general, it would be much easier to not maintain green practices. It would be easier to grow good looking produce if we sprayed for pests and pumped the ground full of artificial fertilizers. However, that good looking produce would not taste as good or be as healthy for our customers. It also would eventually ruin the quality of the land for future use.

"Green" farming is a constant challenge, but ultimately is very important for our customers and the future of our operation.

Tarleton Tavern Farm is Kentucky heritage at its' best!

Halcomb's Knob Farm
Deborah Messenger

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 639, Berea, KY 40403-0639
Farm Address: 430 Wallacetown Road, Paint Lick, KY 40461
859-619-0334
halcombsknob@windstream.net
<http://www.fieldtoforkfestival.com>

After fourteen years in the corporate world, the Deborah relocated from Indianapolis, Indiana to Paint Lick, Kentucky to launch Halcomb's Knob Farm in 2004. Recognized as a Certified Wildlife Habitat through the National Wildlife Federation, the Knob is a natural sanctuary where sustainable farm management is guided by a Christian theology of earth keeping. Relying on twenty-one years of event management and leadership development skills, in 2009, Deborah developed plans to expand the farm into an outdoor learning center through the presentation of community-based environmental education programs. On July 16, 2011, we will host central Kentucky's first Field to Fork Festival in conjunction with the Festival of Learnshops through Berea Tourist & Conventions Commission.

Bringing together the Commonwealth's Appalachian communities to highlight the efficiency of home sustainability was the initiative for Halcomb's Knob Farm to host the Field to Fork Festival. Designed to educate participants on the diversity and availability of home-produced foods, the Field to Fork Festival has evolved into a rural-urban partnership across county lines and into rural communities, working in cooperation with Garrard County Chamber of Commerce, Garrard County Farmers' Market, Madison County Farmers' Market as well as Berea Tourist & Conventions Commission.

Working with these community-based organizations, Halcomb's Knob Farm has collectively highlighted the individual offerings of multiple groups into a one-day unified program of sustainable agriculture. Providing 24 active training sessions for urban and rural gardeners and a broader approach for small-scale farmers at the Field to Fork Festival, Halcomb's Knob Farm and its partners are working together to expand the resilient community-based local food systems of the region.

While 2011 will mark the first year of the Field to Fork Festival on Halcomb's Knob Farm, plans are to continue the expansion of this one-day event in 2012 and subsequent years, building upon the accomplishments of 2011 and the emphasis of our tomorrows.

Growing, Healing, and Nurturing.

A plan for developing healing gardens and a small farm at the Bluegrass Domestic Violence Program

BDVP Farm/Garden Vision Statement.

It is the mission of this project to create an agricultural-based healing environment for residents and staff of BDVP that will, over time, become an economically self-sustaining program. Development and operation of this project will focus on the aesthetic, nutritional, environmental, emotional, and physical healing of all those involved. We envision a farm project at BDVP that promotes education, empowerment, healing, and nourishing of earth, mind, body, and spirit through cultivation and production of wholesome, organically grown fruits and vegetables as well as medicinal herbs, flowers, honey, and value-added products. We hope to develop potential for small business opportunities for women with a focus on teaching skills in production, processing, and marketing of crops and value-added products grown and processed on site. We hope that education and collaboration associated with production can build community and healing relationships and promote opportunities for communication and connection between residents, staff, and volunteers.

Keeping these visions in mind, it is important to allow time for development of economically feasible production practices that do not compromise our focus on healing, education, and empowerment. It is essential that fundraising, foundation money, and grant opportunities continue to be pursued so as to allow for time and space to cultivate appropriate systems and infrastructure and to employ a part-time (and eventually full-time) farmer. We hope to have the time to develop profitable enterprises without financial pressures compromising the focus on healing, education, and empowerment.

Vision for Jessica's involvement in this project.

Year One.

I see myself as a facilitator of education and production in association with this project. In year one I aspire to serve as a volunteer coordinator and production manager. I see this year as a foundation year for getting to know the land, developing and visioning a number of gardens for landscaping and production of perennial vegetation including native medicinal herbs and flowering plants, culinary herbs, blackberries, strawberries, asparagus, rhubarb, and

horseradish as well as incorporating an aesthetically pleasing flower garden that can also be used for cut flower production. I would like to design a large meditation garden that incorporates all of this plant material into a beautifully landscaped sitting area surrounded by a blackberry hedgerow and filled with aromatic herbs and flowers. I hope that this area can be a site for journaling, meditation, group discussion and relaxation as well as an evolving production site. Residents can observe growth and changes in this area as it is utilized for a number of purposes.

My intention for annual production includes the ongoing development of substantial residential food production to cut kitchen costs and nourish tenants while involving them in the growth, harvest and preservation process of bringing food to table. This should help to cut BDVP food costs while providing a consistently healthy menu for families living here. We can continue to utilize existing raised beds for this and also allow space in a larger garden plot for storage crops and vegetables for preserving such as peppers, potatoes, sweet potatoes, carrots, winter squash, beets, onions, and garlic for winter consumption for residents. Several $\frac{1}{4}$ acre plots may be created for potential marketable produce or be cover-cropped and prepped as necessary for the following season. Market produce for year one should be limited to less intensive crops that may be processed, sold, or utilized in the off season. Market produce may include sweet potatoes, dry beans, potatoes, and garlic. I would like to have dried herbs, chiles, beans etc. for packaging in the off season. This way, we can build stock for our marketing opportunities in year 2. If budget is sufficient, I would like to devote one quarter acre plot to strawberry and asparagus production for upcoming years.

In year one I would also like to experiment with early strawberry production in the initial hoop house and an early lettuce crop with ongoing cutting throughout early spring. Depending on yield, these crops may be marketable to local restaurants, however, I would like for the fruits of labor to be available for residents as well, as this production is experimental and we want to keep this all inclusive and available to the residents.

By the end of the first season, I hope we are finding ways to involve residents in utilizing some of our harvest through cooking and canning together and developing home processing skills. We can work to find systems to involve residents without overwhelming with hard farm labor.

Year 2.

A goal for this year could be to increase market production with a farmer's market stand for

sales of value added goods, greens, garlic, berries, flowers, herbs, etc. This may open up potential for on-line marketing options where customers can pre-order for market through our web-site or an alternate site such as Local Harvest. This year we can also continue to build relationships with local restaurants, utilizing their feedback for prospective sales. Goals for this year include additional installation of berry plants (raspberries, blackberries, strawberries), asparagus. I would also like to look at putting in another hoop house to begin to develop a rotational winter production system for winter greens, micro-greens, overwintering herbs, and a dynamic lettuce mix.

Year 3.

Experiment with small CSA, (pick-up through farmer's market), continue with on-line and farmer's market opportunities, continued relationships with local restaurants, look at installing another hoop house for increased extended season production, rotation. Funding for more labor hours, cultivating rotational field space with appropriate cover-cropping options harvest asparagus, blackberries, strawberries, raspberries for market

Each Sunday, June 5th – October 16th

Fresh Stop

Striving to alleviate hunger and malnutrition in downtown Lexington, support Kentucky family farmers, and better our environment and local economy through supporting sustainable farming practices.



Join Fresh Stop!

Fresh Stop is now accepting members for our third season! This season we will run from June 5th – October 16th. By becoming a Fresh Stop member you receive a weekly “share” of local, sustainably grown food. In addition to getting some wonderful food, 25% of your payments go towards paying for a share for a family in need. Please email freshstoplex@gmail.com for more information or to request a membership form.



What is Fresh Stop?

Fresh Stop is a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program with an urban development twist. We sell weekly food baskets that are priced on a sliding scale so that all can enjoy the harvest! (We are a nonprofit organization). All of our produce is grown in central Kentucky – mostly in Harrison County.

Our weekly baskets consist of 6-10 different fruits and vegetables.

Our distribution is on Sunday afternoon in downtown Lexington (please contact us if you are interested in becoming a member).

Summer of 2011 will be our third season!

Fresh Stop CSA

freshstoplex@gmail.com

859.608.5538

<http://freshstoplex.wordpress.com/>



Fayette County Public Schools Child Nutrition Program



USDA National School Breakfast/Lunch Program



\$16 Million Self- Supporting Enterprise



Funding = federal reimbursement + paying customers + ala carte + special functions + catering + interest



56 Feeding Sites = 54 kitchens + 1 vending + 1 delivery



400 + Staff = office (9) + supervisors (4) + managers (56) + kitchen (300+) + drivers (2) + maintenance (3)



Serve 30,000+ meals/day = 6000+ breakfasts + 24,000+ lunches
\$0.30/\$1.35/\$1.75 breakfast \$0.40/\$2.00/\$2.10/\$3.50 lunch



Meal Assistance = free/reduced program + on-line/scanned applications
(48% = 41.9% free + 6.1% red)



Other Services = early starts + afterschool snacks + summer feeding + snacks for testing + catering + vending + box lunches + birthday parties + theme meals



Wellness = whole/multi grains + fresh fruits/vegetables + 1%/skim milk + reducing/eliminating frying (26 sites) + portion control



USDA HealthierUS Challenge = 7 gold + 1 bronze elementary (nutrition, physical activity, nutrition/physical activity education, ALL elementary sites are on gold menus standards)



Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Grant = 10 elementary sites



Farm 2 School Projects (local & state)

Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Grant

This is the second year that FCPS has been awarded the Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Grant for 10 elementary Sites: Arlington, Booker T Washington Primary, Booker T Washington Intermediate, Breckinridge, Cardinal Valley, Harrison, Mary Todd, Northern, Russell Cave & William Wells Brown. In Kentucky, FCPS has the most sites on this grant. During the entire school year, a fresh fruit or vegetable is offered three days per week in the classroom during non-meal times. Educational material is provided on the items served.

Local Farm 2 School

FCPS Child Nutrition is working with UK, Lexington-Fayette County Health Department, Lexington Farmers Market, Fayette County Cooperation Extension Office, Arboretum, FCPS students and FCPS parents to promote and educate students about local agriculture and the benefits of locally grown products. The F2S team has piloted projects at Lansdowne Elementary in hopes to expand and implement the program into other schools. The pilot has included taste testings and classroom education on nutrition and agricultural science. Items served have been: hydroponic bibb lettuce, hydroponic leaf lettuce, hydroponic lettuce mix, hydroponic tomatoes, hydroponic cherry tomatoes, hydroponic cucumbers and whole sweet potatoes. The F2S team is in the process of applying for a mini-grant to support agriculture covering the 3 C's (cafeteria, classroom & community).

State Farm 2 School

FCPS Child Nutrition is a member of the State F2S Committee that is headed by the Department for Public Health. This committee is working on improving and strengthening F2S projects in regards to regulations and challenges. The committee is in the process of developing a F2S Week Recognition for Kentucky schools.

Connect the Dots

FCPS Child Nutrition has developed and implemented program called "Connect the Dots". This program is currently being piloted in 5 elementary sites. Connect the Dots utilizes the My Pyramid color scheme to promote a variety of healthy choices on the serving line for students select.

E=USE²

FCPS is committed to empowering our students, teachers, parents and community partners to design build and nurture outdoor garden space. We understand that learning outdoors and the health and environmental benefits of gardening are an important part of our students' learning and development. From the basics of understanding the composition of our soil, what components plants need to grow, the mutualistic relationship among all living things in our unique Lexington ecosystem, and how to make healthy food choices to the more advanced lessons of math, science, history and culture, a school garden can be a learning tool across our curriculum for all ages.

Through E=USE² (Education leads to **Understanding Energy, Sustainability and the Environment**) and the FCPS Sustainability Plan, our schools are encouraged to carefully organize, assign student leadership roles, design and install outdoor classroom spaces that may include a vegetable garden, rain garden, community garden, butterfly garden, arboretum, composting system, rain barrel, Three Sisters garden or herb garden. In cooperation and with the active support of the FCPS Child Nutrition, our schools are giving careful consideration to small scale composting for use on campus gardens. In recognition of this enthusiasm for composting, FCPS developed a *Composting Manual for Schools* to carefully guide our teachers and students through the planning, design and implementation phases of composting. Two of our school kitchens are working with LFUCG towards a kitchen composting pilot program Spring 2011.

FCPS Community Gardens

Some of our schools who currently nurture a community garden with neighboring organizations or associations are Henry Clay HS, Ashland Elementary, Russel Cave Elementary, Cassidy Elementary, Meadowthorpe Elementary, William Wells Brown Elementary and Arlington Elementary.



Henry Clay High School and Cassidy Elementary

FACE Refugee Community/ Henry Clay High School/ Lakeshore Village Inc. Community Garden Project

Overall goals of project:

- We hope to begin a community garden in Lakeview Park (350 Lakeshore Dr.) and/or on the grounds of Henry Clay High School that would be accessible to both the resettled refugee community in the area and the surrounding neighborhoods.
- The garden would be planted and maintained by volunteers that could enjoy the aesthetic and practical benefits of it.
- The garden would encourage interaction and cooperation between the African, Nepali, and other refugee communities in the area and Lexingtonians.
- We hope to plant vegetables as well as other plants to maintain soil quality so the garden can be enjoyed for generations.

-The vegetables grown in the garden would be harvested by the community and would enhance the diets of refugees that may not trust the source of or have enough knowledge of, or be able to afford produce at grocery stores.

Environmental Benefits:

- The garden would be planted with environmental sustainability in mind: including maintaining soil quality, composting, responsible water usage, etc.
- Maintenance of the garden will require frequent student and community presence in the area, discouraging environmentally irresponsible behavior in the park or on school grounds.
- The project would also help to spread awareness, through their involvement, about various non-profit organizations working towards a greener Lexington and their missions.

Education:

- The garden would be used to incorporate much needed nutrition education into the FACE after school program, summer program, and related programs to promote healthy eating habits among resettled refugee and immigrant populations.
- The project would also teach gardening skills and incorporate education about environmental responsibility and sustainability.



Meadowthorpe Elementary

The Meadowthorpe Gardens are in their second year, having transitioned from a three-quarter acre, student-driven heirloom garden supplying artisan vegetables to local gourmet restaurants, into an authentic relationship between school and the local community: the students maintain a one-third acre garden bed for the Spring and Autumn growing seasons, while the Meadowthorpe Neighborhood Association maintains the remaining garden beds beginning in late Spring through the early Fall harvest.



Arlington Elementary

Arlington Elementary has for two years partnered with La Roca (The Rock) United Methodist Church to build and harvest a community garden. Each spring after state accountability assessments, Arlington students walk to La Roca to learn about composting and plan small group excursions during recess to work with Pastor Aaron on weeding and maintaining the garden.



Ashland Elementary

Ashland Elementary, recipient of a 2010 LFUCG Sustainability grant, partners with nearby Temple Adath Israel to build, maintain and harvest an urban community garden.



William Wells Brown Elementary

WWB Elementary will be hosting their second annual "Growing Community" event on Saturday, May 14 from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. Community members are invited to participate in a variety of hands-on demonstrations and workshops that will cover topics such as soil preparation, plant care and maintenance, container gardening, etc. Each participant will be given a Garden Kit containing plants, seeds, tools and information to take home. This event is a collaboration between, the WWBrown Family Resource Center, UK Cooperative

Extension Service, Seedleaf, the Bluegrass Community Foundation and Parks and Recreation. WWB Elementary has installed six 3' x 5' raised beds for a spring salad garden and "bucket gardens" that students will tend at home to enter into a competition at the Bluegrass Fair in July.



Russel Cave Elementary

Located at the Community Action Council at 1169 Winburn Drive in Lexington, the Winburn Garden is a collaborative effort among the Community Action Council, the Winburn Neighborhood Association, Russell Cave Elementary, Bluegrass Partnership for a Green Community, Sustainable Communities Network, YMCA, the Northeast Lexington Initiative, and other individuals and businesses in the community. Children and adults are working side-by-side to create a beautiful space and nourishment.

http://wn.com/winburn_community_art_gardenflv

Demo

Update from The Purple Lunchbox and God's Closet for the Bluegrass Local Food System Summit



About Us

Since 1992, **God's Closet** provides a variety of services to women who have the initiative to gain employment. And since 2009 and the start of **The Purple Lunchbox**, we have been providing employment opportunities and skills training. All clients are low-income and have experienced incarceration, substance abuse recovery and treatment, domestic violence or many other situations leading to unemployment, lower self-esteem and feelings of helplessness.

The Purple Lunchbox

The Purple Lunchbox provides high quality yet cost effective meals for business clientele. Meals catered by The Purple Lunchbox include breakfast buffets, brunches, box lunches and plated events. Working in a highly competitive industry, The Purple Lunchbox relies on the fresh, homemade appeal of the food as well as the mission of God's Closet to acquire business.

Our Efforts in Local Foods

The Purple Lunchbox has strived to introduce as much local food product as possible and participate in promoting local foods. Below is a summary of the efforts made thus far and those to be made in the near future:

- Executive Director is a participating share holder of the Good Foods Co-Op
- Participated in panel discussions in the 2010 Bluegrass Local Food Summit
- Catered the Midway College SIFE Sustainability Education Fair on January 27, 2011
- Obtained a plot with Peace Meal Gardens to grow organic produce for use in The Purple Lunchbox catering
- Launching a new menu in 2011, highlighting meals with using locally grown produce
- Board members are participating in the CSA program with Elmwood Farm
- Catering the 2011 Bluegrass Local Food System Summit on April 21, 2011
- Partnering with local food groups in 2011 to increase local food dependence

Contact Information

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God's Closet

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A partnership of Bluegrass Tomorrow, the Bluegrass Area Development District, Bluegrass Pride and the University of Kentucky Tracy Farmer Institute for Sustainability & Environment.

“Bluegrass GreenVision” Strategy/Timeline/Budget

Updated: 1-31-11

Goal: To develop a program consisting of the development of “Green” local action plans focusing on energy efficiency, environment and sustainability in Bluegrass counties served by Bluegrass Tomorrow, Bluegrass PRIDE (6th Congressional District) and the Bluegrass Area Development District, which can be used as a model for the rest of the Commonwealth.

Objectives:

- Develop a Regional Bluegrass Greenvision Steering Committee, which will have oversight responsibility for the entire project.
- Develop Bluegrass Greenvision Steering Committees in each county that is made up of professionals with environment and energy expertise, solid waste coordinator, school superintendent and/or representative, UK Cooperative Extension Service representatives, business leaders, city and county leaders. This committee will be responsible for oversight of:
 - development of an inventory & needs assessment
 - development of a “Green” action document
 - implementation of recommendations
- In partnership with the Bluegrass ADD, and other partners, develop “Green Ambassadors” youth program in each counties, engaging school systems, colleges & universities of the region.
- Facilitate public meetings and charettes in each Bluegrass county, seeking public input into the development of new “Green” action plans
- Set up meetings with various energy suppliers/utilities in the region including KU/E.ON, Bluegrass Energy, Clark RECC/Touchstone, Ky. American Water, Columbia Gas, Delta Natural Gas, seeking their involvement with funding, internships and jobs.
- Continue to seek grant opportunities in partnership with Bluegrass PRIDE, the Bluegrass Area Development District, the Tracy Farmer Institute for Sustainability and the Environment at the University of Kentucky and the Energy & Environment Cabinet Commonwealth of Kentucky.
- A “Bluegrass Goes Green Sustainability Alliance” of companies, school districts, etc. who agree to participate in energy efficiency and local and regional goals, would be created by signing a local agreement that could be different for each county.



THE KENTUCKY PROUD STORY

Kentucky Proud means many things to many people – delicious blackberry jam, rich-tasting Kentucky country ham, mouth-watering tomatoes, and much more – all produced with the greatest care to offer a special treat to families throughout Kentucky, the nation and the world. When you buy Kentucky Proud, you're buying food that you can serve to your family with confidence. And you're helping your community by keeping your food dollars close to home.

The Kentucky Proud movement is growing by leaps and bounds. Kentucky Proud had about three dozen members in early 2004. Today about 2,500 farmers, processors, retailers, restaurants, farmers' markets, school systems, state parks and Kentucky Farm Bureau roadside markets are members of Kentucky Proud.

Kentucky Proud generated more than \$200 million in retail sales in 2010, making a total of a half-billion dollars in the past three years, just through Kentucky Proud member retailers. A 2008 University of Kentucky study found that every \$1 of tobacco settlement money invested in Kentucky Proud returned up to \$4.70 in new farm income.

Kentucky Proud became the state's official farm marketing program in 2008. The program is administered by the Kentucky Department of Agriculture.

Consumers today want to know what's in their food and where it came from. Kentucky Proud foods come from just down the road – not across the country or even overseas. Buy Kentucky Proud, and find out why "Nothing else is close."

For more information about Kentucky Proud, contact Bill Clary, the Kentucky Proud program manager, at (502) 564-1137 or bill.clary@ky.gov.

In the fall of 2009, Tommy Callahan, Vice President for Paul Mitchell Systems, Inc.—and a son of the mountains himself—contacted the Loyal Jones Appalachian Center at Berea College on behalf of his boss, John Paul DeJoria. Moved by how the recession was affecting Americans, Mr. DeJoria wanted to help. But he didn't merely want to throw money at a problem. Rather, Mr. DeJoria wanted to empower people, to offer a hand up, not a hand out.

Through the pledged support of Mr. DeJoria and through conversations between the Loyal Jones Appalachian Center and area agencies, Grow Appalachia was born. After only one growing season, Grow Appalachia has quickly become a successful and welcome presence in the communities it serves.

The Grow Appalachia project began as a partnership among five groups: the Loyal Jones Appalachian Center, the Pine Mountain Settlement School, the Red Bird Mission, the Henderson Settlement and the Laurel County African American Heritage Center. To be successful, these groups agreed that they must capitalize on the intangible positives of the region, primarily an ethic and willingness to commit to hard work and a well-established network of community and faith groups, schools, and other organizations equipped to make the most of any opportunity.

With access to fresh, nutritious food an ongoing issue in rural mountain communities and with hunger an increasing outcome of the recession, the vision of Grow Appalachia quickly became one of reversing these trends. Tied to these issues were others that the partners hoped Grow Appalachia could help address, including the high rates of obesity, diabetes, and heart disease caused in part by the prevalence of highly processed foods. By creating community gardens and teaching people to grow their own food, the partners recognized the opportunity to reverse some of those patterns of loss in the region—the loss of gardening and food cultivation knowledge, as well as the decline in cooking and food preservation skills.

Due to Mr. DeJoria's generosity, Grow Appalachia was able to make serious capital investments. Site managers purchased many tools—including shovels, spades, trowels, and hoes—for the participating families, tools they could not otherwise afford. Tillers were procured for each site and flawlessly prepared the fertile, but rocky soil. Food preservation equipment—hot water bath and pressure canners, canning and kitchen tools, jars and lids—was purchased for the families to use. One participant cried when given a \$75 pressure canner. She had wanted one for years but had never been able to afford it. Now she had the ability to put up food for the winter.

In order to participate in the program and receive the tools and other equipment, each gardener was required to attend classes that taught effective and safe handling of the tools. To address the unknowns surrounding food production, gardeners were asked to keep thorough records throughout the season. Project staff also interviewed gardeners on-site and made calculations based on these visits and conversations.

By the end of August, Grow Appalachia had helped 96 families create garden plots.

In addition to the individual garden plots, communal gardens were created at four partner sites in Eastern Kentucky. These gardens were maintained by Grow Appalachia staff, employees of the partner programs, and community volunteers. Staff then distributed the produce grown in these communal plots to needy members of the community. Additionally, each site offered a series of classes on growing and preserving, classes taught mostly by county extension agents. Perhaps the most rewarding aspect of the educational programming was watching the participants actively teach each other.

While initial estimates of the project's potential impact were somewhat conservative, not even the most optimistic of program partners could have anticipated Grow Appalachia's immense success. All told, 300–400 people received assistance by growing gardens, attending heart-healthy cooking classes, or learning food preservation techniques. Because of the participating families' powerful desire to share the fruits of their labors with those around them at least 2,800 people received some amount of fresh produce from Grow Appalachia gardens.

By the end of the season, best estimates indicate that Grow Appalachia gardens raised nearly 120,000 pounds of fresh produce. The Grow Appalachia field staff estimates that while the fresh vegetables and herbs were welcome on the families' tables, just as important was the fact that one-half to two-thirds of the harvest was frozen, canned, or dried in preparation for the winter. The preserved beans, tomatoes, corn, sauerkraut and pickles have been like gold in an economy as challenging as Central Appalachia's. Based solely on the monetary value of the vegetables produced, preserved, and distributed, the program was an enormous success. The cost of the vegetables raised was \$1.25 a pound, which is significantly less than market prices for produce of this quality.

In the second year, all of the partner sites from the first season are back, and the program is expanding to help serve the St. Vincents' Mission in Floyd County, Kentucky, the LMU Organic Gardening Project in Harrogate, Tennessee, and High Rocks for Girls in Greenbrier and Pocahontas counties, West Virginia. All told, 14 counties in four states and more than 260 families will be members of Grow Appalachia. Many tons of fresh, nutritious food will be placed on the tables and in the pantries of these hardworking folks, as they are reconnected to their communities, neighbors, and the skills necessary to feed themselves.

Grow Appalachia, in helping mountain families to acquire those tools and skills which lead to greater food security, has created that elusive "hand up, not a hand out" so often referred to and so seldom seen.

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The garden at The Rock / La Roca started in 2007 in some empty lots behind Arlington Elementary on North Limestone. The school and school system were very supportive of our work. The garden started with a simple purpose: the pastor likes to garden and the food would go to the folks in the neighborhood, especially those who struggle putting food on the table.

Very quickly, though, other purposes, plans, and blessings emerged. The church learned that there is very little access to fresh garden produce for the poorer elements of the community-- fresh food is simply priced too high for them! The church learned that there were many gardeners and a few organizations who had the same passion to get good food to hungry people. The church and neighborhood were blessed as people came out of yards and off porches to work in the garden! Young and old, black, white, Hispanic, African... it has been a beautiful thing! We thought we were growing vegetables. Turns out we were growing so much more!

Fast forward to 2010: things have really grown! The Lexington Fayette County Urban Government allows the church to use some plots, and has made grant money available to expand the harvest. The community groups, churches, and individual gardeners got together to make it the biggest year we have ever had. The downtown Farmer's Market donated produce through the efforts of Faith Feeds. First United Methodist put in a 10,000 sq. ft. garden. The Rock La Roca had about 2,500 sq. ft. A dedicated volunteer came in to supervise and organize. On Monday nights, after receiving the harvest from churches, the Farmer's Market and individual gardeners, the church hallways looked like a produce stand!

Each week of the harvest season, we got fresh food to about 300 people! This was distributed by way of a Monday night Service, as well as visits to shut-ins or people we knew were having a hard time. We were also fortunate to join partnerships with Seedleaf and host a few canning events which help us provide fresh food to children and families who come to Monday night meals.

The pastor tells the story of how he heard that a refugee family was eating in shifts-- half ate one day, the others ate the next day. The pastor knew there was no reason for that to happen, and the purpose of the garden is to make sure that no one on the Northside who needs the food will have to go hungry!

Our purpose to provide fresh food to families in need will continue. We are excited to see what new partnerships will emerge in 2011. The support from LFUCG Grants this past year will help us build our garden this summer and provide even more food than ever to families in need.



EConsulting™ is a small, local, and family-owned company. We formed in January 2006 and the first year, our focus was primarily on technology. However, we were not being true to ourselves, nor our purpose and mission, so we began phasing out our technology products and services and started to transform like a *butterfly*.

This transformation led us to go back to our *roots* and we have been providing products and services to help others develop or re-develop a **green** thumb since 2007. As a company, we know it's imperative that more food is grown locally and that the youth learn how to grow food because it is an essential part of human civilizations that has sadly become a *lost art*.

The problems that face all of US, including the youngest have roots in our lost sacred **Earth** connection. We have worked individually and with groups like Sustainable Communities Network to get the youth, mothers, and others to spend more time in what is real and natural (i.e., the living and breathing soil) as a means of gaining a greater sense of humanity and reconnecting with Nature.

In 2007, we started volunteering at local community gardens and educating on the importance of growing food and eating more local produce. We have encouraged our friends and loved ones to glean local community gardens after weeding and doing other needed work, to start a garden at their place of residence, and to support farmers selling locally grown produce at the Farmers Market.

We wrote pieces that have been published in the *Lexington-Herald Leader*, *Ace Weekly*, *North of Center*, *The KeyNews Journal* on food security, container gardening, health or lack of it, the local food system, rebuilding the local economy, etc.

We helped facilitate gardening and local food related workshops in 2007 and 2008 at the *Bluegrass Energy & Green Living Expo*. We had an educational booth every year from 2007 to 2009 at the *Peace and Global Citizenship Fair*, in which we sold seeds, seedlings, and container gardens; and provided information on gardening.

Earlier this month, we had a booth at the *2011 Home, Garden, and Flower Expo*. We sold heirloom seeds, educated people on the importance of heirloom seeds and growing food. We also disseminated recipes using garden fresh produce, a local planting guide, and information on healthy living, container gardens, companion planting, seed saving, and heirloom seeds.

Last Spring, we had a plot in Hill N Dale Park at the Southland Community Garden and through our design, we have been educating others on growing food in small spaces (an excuse often used for why one cannot garden) and companion planting. Our plot is 36 sq. feet and it contained 5 different gardens an inter-planting of cool and warm weather crops. At least 40% of the food that was harvested from the plot was donated to the Catholic Action Center.

Currently, our products include edible seeds (primarily heirloom/*old-time variety/heritage* seeds), self-contained container gardens. We support and believe in the *food not lawns* movement. As this is the case, the flower seeds that we sell are edible as we do not see the point in growing something that you cannot eat, especially in the wake of growing food prices and limited varieties of produce at grocery stores.

The container gardens that we sell are “self-contained,” which means that the plants can remain in the container until harvest time. With our container gardens, we prefer to use what we refer to the Cuban method of farming and we water our gardens using the basin/bottom so that water is not wasted and the roots can take up and use the water when the need arises. This method of watering also helps to keep down and/or eliminate soil-borne diseases that result from the soil being too moist and not drying completely.

In 2010, our gardening services took root as we developed a creative design for Latitude Artist Community (LAC), who also has a plot at the Southland Community Garden. In addition to the design for LAC, we worked as a *personal gardener* and maintained their plot and are doing the same this year too.

We hope to have more clients in 2011 that we can offer our services to as we want more people to be able to grow food and if they cannot do so for various reasons, we will assist them with a design, consult with them on problems that arise, and/or tend to the garden (and soil) on their behalf.



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Community Ventures Corporation is a relative newcomer to the Local Foods movement in the Bluegrass though we've been planning for it for many years.

CVC's Third Street Exchange at Third and Midland in downtown Lexington was built with an outdoor pavilion to accommodate a farmer's market. Though being constructed for this use, it was not until 2010 that our passion for local food from local farmers resulted in the **East End Community Farmer's Market**. As a result of CVC's partnership with multiple community organizations, fresh local foods can now be found in the food desert of the East End community during the growing season.

To further our entry into the local food economy, CVC has applied to be part of President and Mrs. Obama's **Healthy Food Financing Initiative**. We want to promote a range of interventions that expand access to nutritious foods, eliminate food deserts, and put our community on a better path to healthy lives.

CVC operates an **Agricultural Microenterprise Program**, designed to meet the specialized business training needs of farming families in Kentucky. Our farmers are asking for intensive business training and technical assistance to diversify from tobacco. It is one of CVC's strategic goals to assist tobacco farmers to successfully start ventures which will give them an alternative source of revenue.

The **Kentucky Small, Limited Resource Minority Farmer's Conference** held every fall at Kentucky State University has become a vehicle to get the word out about CVC's business opportunities relating to the development of food related industries. Through a partnership with this conference, farmers from across the state and from several surrounding states are learning how to access resources to grow and expand their farming operations to reach new customers.

Community Ventures Corporation was founded in 1982 to create economic opportunities for low income residents in a four-county area of Central Kentucky. Since that time, CVC has expanded its service area several times in response to demands from local community leaders, partners and customers. CVC now delivers its business development resources throughout the state.

Here at CVC, we are all about our customers. Through our customer's success, we find our success. Partnering with some of the brightest minds in the Bluegrass State, we've joined with over 5,000 entrepreneurs and are happy to be part of the creation of a thousand new businesses.

Working with leadership of new and expanding businesses who are helping rebuild local economies through expanded business activity, stabilization of jobs, and increased new employment opportunities for residents gives us the success we strive for in our work.

Our customers tell us that technical assistance provided by our expert staff is one of CVC's most highly valued services. In fact, the business survival rate is 80% among borrowers over the past few years. Without our customers and the support of the SBA and the USDA, we would not be able to provide this level of quality training and technical assistance.

Educating and Financing a New Generation of Home and Business Owners



For more information, please contact CVC at 1-800-299-0267 or go to www.CVCKY.org.

Demo



Farmers: Do you want another profitable outlet for the vegetables and meats you are producing?

Chefs: Do you want more reliable access to local foods throughout the year?

Bluegrass Farm Alliance

A new way to eat well!

For more info:

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www.BluegrassFarmAlliance.com

CommonWealth Gardens

Frankfort KY selluswilder@gmail.com

In the summer of 2007, Sellus Wilder and his wife Jessie Bessinger converted their front yard into a vegetable garden. So many friends and neighborhood children showed an interest in their yard that they soon realized there was enough support in the community to warrant a public garden in Dolly Graham Park.

The Frankfort Parks department happily gave them permission to convert a section of this City park into a community garden. Sellus went door-to-door distributing fliers inviting the community to an initial planning meeting. Countless volunteers pitched in to establish guidelines and break ground. The garden was a success, and it soon filled to overflowing as folks from other neighborhoods started to get in on the action.

The organizers of that first garden decided to form a network whose goal is to establish a community garden in every neighborhood in Frankfort. They determined that they could realize their vision within only a few years by growing exponentially (literally doubling the number of gardens every year). The network has actually grown so rapidly that they are already a full year ahead of schedule. They also expanded their mission to include school gardens, and are working to incorporate core curriculum requirements into these 'outdoor classrooms' so that students can discover math, science, and humanities in a healthy outdoor setting.

Along the way, the network branded itself as CommonWealth Gardens and became an official non-profit under the guidance of president Kris Shera and a dedicated board. UK's Franklin County Extension Office has been CommonWealth Gardens' closest ally. The network is also partnering with the local YMCA and the 'Pioneering Healthy Communities' initiative (generously supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to combat childhood obesity) in an effort to expand school gardens to every school in Franklin County. Kentucky State University MBA students have assisted in the grant-writing process, and recently helped secure a Home Depot Grant to help with school gardens. The Kentucky State University Land Grant Program and Agricultural Department also provide invaluable resources and expertise to the network. CommonWealth Gardens is also actively partnered with the City of Frankfort, the Governor's Office, and numerous community groups such as the Y-Corps and Go Frankfort.

One final goal of CommonWealth Gardens is to link the community and school gardens into a farm-to-school program that will integrate locally produced food into school cafeterias. To that end, some members are also engaged in the local farm-to-school effort, and are working to build support for a 'community kitchen.'

The following is a list of gardens that are either pending or currently in the CommonWealth Gardens network:

Logan Street Community Garden

Todd Street Community Garden

Bellepoint Community Garden

East Frankfort Park Community Garden

Immanuel Baptist Community Garden

Franklin County Women's Shelter Community Garden

Frankfort Firefighters Post 2 Garden

Elkhorn Elementary School Garden

Elkhorn Middle School Garden

Hearn Elementary School Garden

Collins Lane Elementary School Garden

Capital Day School Garden

Frankfort High School Garden

The Governor's Garden at Berry Hill Mansion

Franklin County Regional Jail Garden (pending)

State Street Community Garden (pending)

Riverside Park Community Garden (pending)

Kentucky State University Garden (pending)



Greening and Gardening Opportunities with Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government

Lexington-Fayette County is taking action to ensure its fine heritage is preserved and has initiated many programs geared toward "Keeping the Bluegrass Green". Protecting and preserving our unique cultural landscape, amazing bluegrass beauty and fertile rich limestone soil farmland are the keys to the quality of life we enjoy. This area is great for growing Kentucky bluegrass and food producing crops in which we all have great pride.

- The Division of Environmental Policy Pilot Program allows community gardens planted on suitable flood mitigation properties owned by LFUCG. The Lexington Department of Environmental Quality Community Gardens Program provides gardening and greening opportunities for the physical and social benefit of the people and neighborhoods of Lexington.
- A community garden program through the Lexington Fayette Urban County Government Department of General Services. Proposals for community gardens in parks owned by Urban County Government can be submitted to the Division of Parks and Recreation.
- Compost giveaway - Yard waste is recycled into mulch and a portion of it is available free on a first-come, first serve basis on the second and third Saturday in April, July, and October at the LFUCG Recycling Center.
- Recycled Herbie carts are converted into compost bins for backyard composting. Using compost made from organic material from your kitchen can reduce the need of water, fertilizers, and pesticides on your bushes, plants and garden. These bins are free on a first-come, first served basis at the same dates as the compost giveaway at the LFUCG Recycling Center.
- The Department of Environmental Quality offers yearly Neighborhood Community and Sustainability Grants for projects including community gardens, composting and other projects that are determined to improve the environmental health of the community and meet the principles of sustainability.
- The Division of Planning has greenway areas available for planting native plants and fruit/nut bearing trees.

Food Stamps for Fast Food? We Can Do Better

Editor's note: On Sunday, April 3rd, The Courier-Journal reported that Yum! Brands has been lobbying the Beshear Administration for almost a year to allow seniors, the homeless, and the disabled to use their SNAP benefits to purchase prepared foods at restaurants. See the link below to view the article.

For over a decade, Community Farm Alliance (CFA) members in Louisville have worked hard championing the development of what we call L.I.F.E. - a locally integrated food economy that provides healthy food to consumers and opens new markets to struggling Kentucky family farmers. In 2007, we published our community food assessment, "Bridging the Divide," which detailed West Louisville's lack of access to healthy, affordable food and revealed the high concentration of fast food restaurants in the affected neighborhoods. While our assessment focused on Louisville's West End, access to healthy, affordable food is a problem all across the state, from Lexington to Pike County to Fulton County.

The health risks associated with the most commonly purchased fast foods (which sometimes turn out to be the only available "food" for blocks, if not miles) are well known and well documented as are the costs to society in terms of medical care and absenteeism at school and at the workplace as a result of poor health. Increasing access to healthy, affordable food is therefore necessary to abate our current health crisis. Kentucky farmers can be part of that solution. Kentucky farmers need new markets in order to justify the transition from growing tobacco to raising crops for food. Those markets can be found in our underserved rural and urban communities; however they will not simply materialize. New markets for farmers will need policies and other incentives to make them both attractive and sustainable.

Regrettably, the proposal to allow seniors, the disabled and the homeless to use their food stamps to purchase prepared meals at fast food restaurants falls far short of being the kind of creative solution we need to address our Commonwealth's food and farm crises. Indeed, for years now policymakers in Louisville and those from across the state have been generating creative policies in collaboration with a wide range of governmental, business, and non-profit stakeholders to support the development of a local food economy.

Just this past month, Mayor Fischer took a big step forward by naming the members of the Food Policy Advisory Council who will begin to examine Louisville's entire food system and recommend policy changes to improve it. Louisville Metro Government and the YMCA are working hard to provide all of its citizens with healthy food through "Healthy in a Hurry," a project that puts fresh fruits and vegetables in corner stores. And most recently, Mayor Fischer announced that his office would oversee the development of a LIFE Zone (Local Food Enterprise Zone), an area in which individuals and other entities would be provided with incentives to create new food businesses.

To be sure, local food is not limited to Louisvillians alone. Under the Beshear Administration, we have seen a dramatic increase in the number of Kentuckians shopping at Farmers Markets, many of who seek out the Kentucky Proud label - a marketing program administered by the Kentucky Department of Agriculture (KDA). KDA has also made Farmers Market produce and

meat more accessible to all Kentuckians by allowing seniors and women (with infants and children) to use their food stamps and WIC benefits at the markets. In one of its more exciting programs, KDA (along with non-profit and other agency partners) has been working with school districts in dozens of counties across Kentucky to bring local food into school cafeterias. Even Lady Jane Beshear has made local food a priority; she maintains a garden providing the men's homeless shelter in Frankfort fresh produce during harvest season.

CFA believes that in order to provide new opportunities for our family-scale farmers and access to affordable, healthy food for all Kentuckians, our elected leaders, businesses, and community organizations must continue to work together to develop creative solutions for the seemingly intractable issues we face. For instance, a coalition of groups could work to enhance Louisville's most neglected neighborhoods by using food as a catalyst for redevelopment. The empty Winn-Dixie that sits on Fourth Street near Oak would be an excellent location for a local food processor or a community kitchen where entrepreneurs could prepare meals with food from local farms and community gardens to feed the thousands of seniors concentrated in Old Louisville. This would support business development, eliminate a blighted property and provide food access all at the same time. Or fast food companies could work to create a "local taco" or "local pizza" by sourcing products from Kentucky farmers.

We have come to expect creative solutions from our leaders that address the intertwining web of challenges we face today: chronic health conditions, poverty, dwindling markets for family farmers, and decaying urban communities just to name a few. CFA members will continue to expect and indeed advocate for such solutions but using food stamps for fast food is not one of them. We urge all Kentuckians to tell Governor Beshear that we need the kind of creative solutions that provide the most vulnerable in our society access to healthy, affordable food and promote the viability of family-scale farming.

Cassia Herron is a resident of Louisville and the Vice-president of Community Farm Alliance.

Employment Solutions

Employment Solutions is a not for profit corporation that assists people with barriers to employment. Among the various activities of our organization are several that also deal with food and nutrition. These include Fresh Approach, Summer Meals Program, Sauté Café and the Hoop House Project.

Fresh Approach

Using a workforce comprised primarily of people with mental retardation and operating out of a 7,500 square foot refrigerated building that was a former meat processing plant, Fresh Approach produces fresh food products for local restaurants and food distributors. Last year Fresh Approach processed over 500,000 lbs of raw product. Fresh Approach purchase product from local farmers whenever possible.

Summer Meals Program

Fresh Approach is a sponsor of the US Department of Agriculture's Summer Meals Program. As a sponsor, our organization prepares and distributes nutritious meals to children living in low income neighborhoods throughout Lexington during the summer months. Last year Employment Solutions prepared over 100,000 meals for this program.

Sauté Café

Sauté Café operates as a learning lab for College for Technical Education's Culinary Arts Program, another division of Employment Solutions. Culinary Arts students are encouraged to use fresh produce and health cooking techniques. Sauté Café also operates an extensive commercial catering business and can handle functions both large and small.

Hoop House Project

In conjunction with the Catholic Action Center, the Hoop House grows plantings for community gardens to be located throughout Lexington. Herbs and other vegetable products will also be grown. The Hoop House will utilize compose as a growing medium that is produced from the vegetable by products from Fresh Approach.

Contact Information

Fresh Approach-Walt Barbour phone 859-806-2832

Sauté Café-Cathy Vance phone 859-684-4937

College for Technical Education-Julie Goodpaster phone 859-272-5225