

2020 Annual Report

Cornell Cooperative Extension Tompkins County



Photo by Jacob Mroczek

Cover: Tompkins County Community Beautification program assistant Eileen Sheehan with pansies to be planted on the Ithaca Commons in April 2020. Photo by Jacob Mroczek for The Ithaca Voice.

2020 ANNUAL REPORT

Our Mission: To strengthen youth, adults, families and communities through learning partnerships that put knowledge to work.



Farm To School

After switching to a farm-to-home model to serve remote learners, this program still met all its first year goals.



Solidarity Gardens

A multifaceted community program builds new gardens while creating a network of gardening options for BIPOC residents.



50th Annual 4-H Fair

After much planning, Tompkins County 4-H'ers presented their 50th annual youth run fair safely and with social distancing.

FEATURES

3 Director's Message

A 2020 program update and a look ahead from Ken Schlather, Executive Director.

7 Farm Safety Supplies

CCE-Tompkins coordinates local distribution of free sanitizer and masks to farms and farmworkers.

10 Parenting Education

Educators ask what families need most then retool parenting workshops for online delivery.

14 Primitive Pursuits

After a spring of remote schooling, kids thrived outside at summer camp with safety protocols.

18 Virtual Open Farm Days

Apple, pumpkin and squash farms and cideries opened their doors for virtual behind-the-scenes tours.

20 Mural Project

Ithaca Murals is raising funds for a new mural by artist Terrance Vann on our Education Center building.

5 Local Food Access

Direct-to-consumer produce and meat sales help local residents avoid food chain shortages.

8 Sharing Seeds

More than 4000 free packs of seeds were shared with gardeners eager to grow their own food.

11 Zooming Without Video

A local mom finds her voice and learns that a Zoom workshop can have a real impact by phone.

16 Healthy Food For All

"Solidarity CSA" boxes met the urgent food needs of thirty-five local households

19 Tompkins Food Task Force

Renewed support from a local foundation keeps this community collaboration going strong.

21 Beautification Program

In spite of many challenges caused by COVID-19, Community Beautification efforts went on.

6 Way2Go Switches Gears

By pivoting its working model this transportation information program helped meet urgent local needs.

9 Spring Plant Sale

A popular spring event moves to the Ithaca Farmers' Market to ensure safe social distancing.

13 4-H Rubber Duck Race

Fans livestreamed the 2020 Compost Fair as ducks raced for prizes in a backyard pool.

17 Energy Team

Helping municipalities meet their energy goals is one of the ways our team fights climate change.

20 2020 Annual Meeting

Strategic Planning was the focus at CCE-Tompkins' first ever Zoom Annual Meeting.

22 Article Continuations

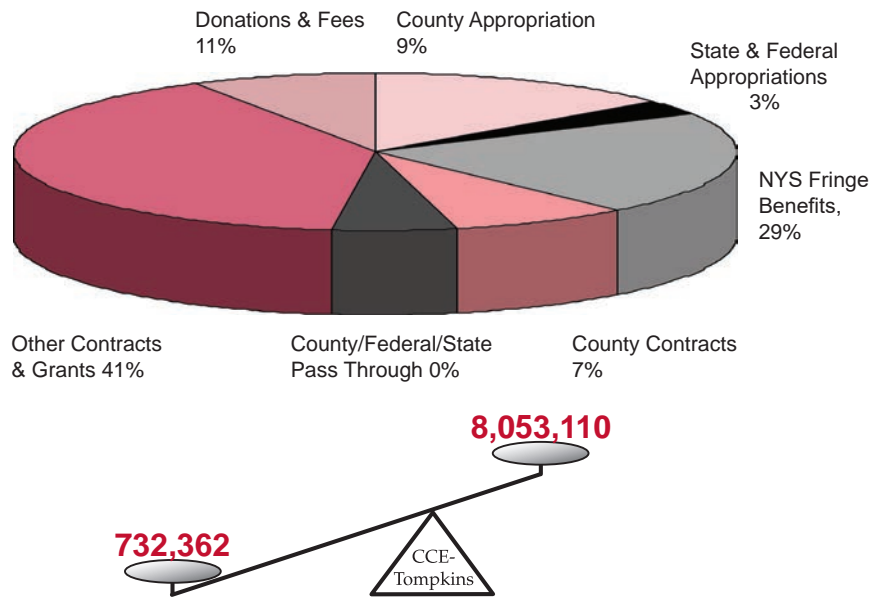
Longer articles continue on pages 22-26 with selected photos from 2020 program activities.

Tompkins County Appropriation Leveraged the Following Support in 2020

Cooperative Extension uses its unique partnership with federal, state, and local governments, adding volunteer involvement, fund raising and in-kind contributions to bring an 11-fold return in educational resources for each Tompkins County tax dollar received.

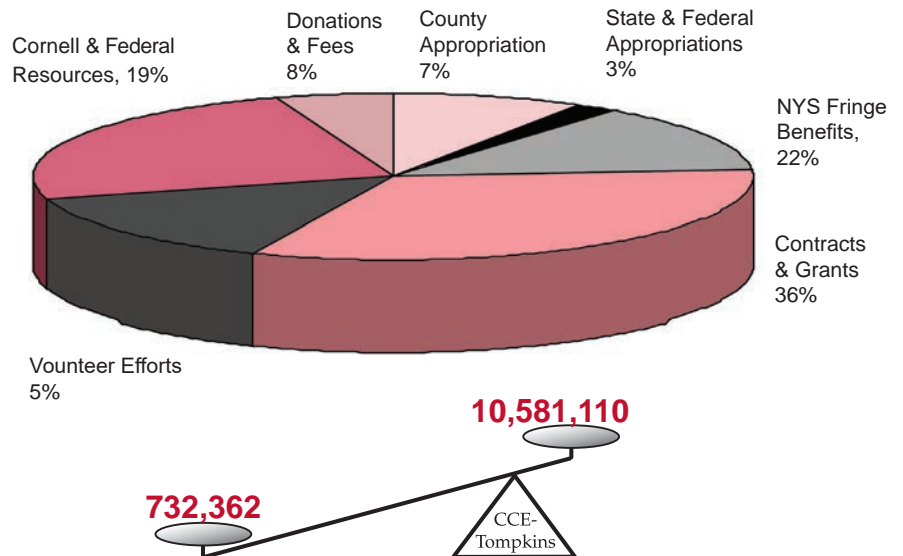
Direct Support Ratio 1 : 11

County Appropriation	\$732,362
State and Federal Appropriations	262,459
Fringe Benefits, NYS	2,371,189
County Contracts	592,958
County Fed./State Pass Through	0
Other Contracts/Grants	3,215,825
Donations & Fees	878,317
Total	\$8,053,110

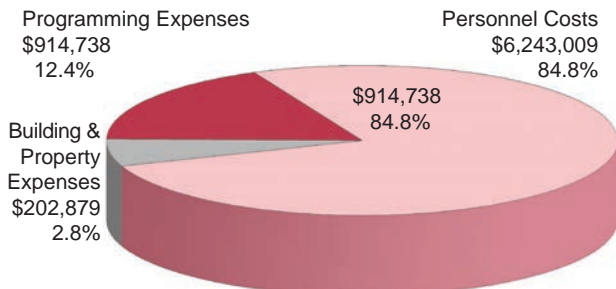


In-Kind & Direct Support Ratio 1 : 14.4

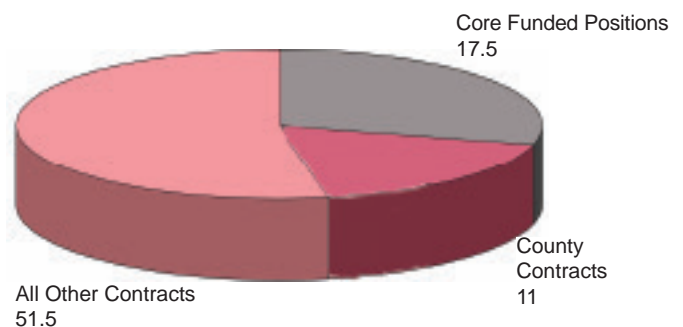
County Appropriation	\$732,362
State and Federal Appropriations	262,459
Fringe Benefits, NYS	2,371,189
Contracts/Grants	3,808,783
Volunteer Efforts	550,000
Cornell & Federal Resources	1,984,000
Donations & Fees	878,317
Total	\$10,581,110



2020 Expenses by Type



2020 Employees (FTEs) by Funding Source



BOARD OF DIRECTORS & PROGRAM COMMITTEES 2020



Association Officers

Sarah Barden* & Tisa Fontaine Hill,* Co-Presidents
Janice Pfaff,* Secretary
Edd Farmer, Treasurer

Board Members

Tom Hirasuna*	Donna Lucy-Lender
Tracy McLellan	Randi Quackenbush
Carol West*	Patrick Woods

Agriculture & Horticulture

Jonathan Bates	Erica Frenay
Jean Gerow	Todd McLane
Tracy McLellan	Janice Pfaff*
Nancy Taber	Ariana Taylor-Stanley
Bob Tuori	

Environmental Issues

Karyn Bischoff	Rebecca Evans
Monica Hargraves	Karin Harjes
Tom Hirasuna*	David Kay
Ann Stork	Kristi Sullivan

Family & Community Development

Hallie Chase	Susie Hatch
Kathy Lind	Katy Pearce
Susan Perkins	Jude Rose
Carol West*	

Nutrition, Health & Safety

Tisa Fontaine Hill*	Beth Krause
---------------------	-------------

4-H Youth Development

Sarah Barden*	Beth Goelzer Lyons
Joann Gruttadaurio	Mike Tenkate
Nancy Tenkate	Lincoln Young

Legislative Liaisons

Amanda Champion, *Tompkins County Legislator*
Dave McKenna, *Tompkins County Legislator*

Extension Rep

Paul O'Connor

* indicates Program Representative to the Board

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

It's nearly inevitable that any organization's 2020 annual report will include something about COVID-19. Ours is no exception. And as we shaped this report we wanted it to reflect what became so obvious throughout the year: how so many of Tompkins County's communities' effective responses to the pandemic emerged from the partnerships, lessons learned and collective leadership of individuals and organizations that have been nurtured over years and decades.

Still other responses emerged from individual and small group initiative — where people saw a problem and determined to do something about it. CCE-Tompkins is not the only organization in the county that supports partnerships and nurtures grassroots initiative and leadership: by definition there can't be a partnership between organizations if only one of them is supporting it. But it is a key part of our mission to “*strengthen youth, adults, families and communities through learning partnerships that put knowledge to work*”. It was heartening and inspiring to see so many organizations and individuals with whom we have worked join together to address critical and sometimes even life-threatening issues brought on by the pandemic.

For many people 2020 provided a preview of the challenges that communities will face as our climate continues to change at an ever increasing rate. It's also important to note that while the timing of the pandemic was unexpected the fact that we had one was not. With climate change we can expect other disastrous events but not necessarily know when they will come. What we can do is work together to prepare for them and to be able to respond to the many unplanned problems that will arise during each event in ways that will help us emerge stronger from the disaster, not weaker. That's what resilient communities do.

That's what we all want our communities to do. And this report is packed with stories about how individuals and organizations came together to do just that. I hope that you are inspired by them--- and as always if **you** see a critical issue that needs to be addressed in **your** community and you want to work on it please consider CCE-Tompkins as one of your resources to help address it. We'd like to put knowledge to work in a learning partnership with you.

Ken Schlather
Executive Director

FARM TO SCHOOL

COVID TRANSFORMS PROGRAM TO FARM-TO-HOME

Across Tompkins County, school districts have been working to add more fresh, local and regional farm products to their cafeteria menus. Starting in 2019, they've had support for these efforts from the Tompkins County Farm to School program which successfully reached its first-year goals despite many challenges presented by COVID-19.

Childhood obesity in Tompkins County is relatively high with 26.6 % of all school aged youth considered overweight or obese (Tompkins County Health Department: Community Health Assessment 2013-2017). Farm to School exposes students to local foods and nutrition education, which can lead to improvements in diet quality. A grant from the New York Farm to School program enabled Cornell Cooperative Extension Tompkins County (CCE-Tompkins) to establish a county-wide Farm to School buying program and hire Chloe Boutelle to coordinate it. Boutelle made connections between school districts and Headwater Food Hub (the project's regional food supplier) and worked with the districts to support a series of new "Harvest of the Month" menu items featuring seasonal New York farm products.

Due to COVID-19, Tompkins County schools issued an emergency school closure and turned to remote learning on March 17th, 2020. The crisis quickly caused widespread local unemployment resulting in financial hardship and food insecurity for many families, who came to rely on school food sources during the pandemic. Plans to promote spring Harvest of the Month dishes were set aside as local school food service operations scrambled to serve remote learners, sending food home on buses and to centralized pick up locations. Despite this, schools could only send home food for children, and not parents. Many schools also had decreases in their staffing and were able to send home only the USDA's minimum nutritional standards instead of the additional Harvest items that were planned. Fresh fruits and vegetables became an urgent need in Tompkins County.

To ensure that students and their families with food insecurity received fresh produce, Tompkins County Farm to School quickly switched to a "farm-to-home" model in partnership with the school districts, Headwater Food Hub and CCE-Tompkins' Healthy Food For All (HFFA) subsidized CSA program.

A grant from the Community Foundation of Tompkins County and funds raised by Headwater Food Hub covered the cost of the additional vegetables and fruits. These Harvest of the Month boxes contained local produce, Farm to School educational materials, and recipes that would enable families to make the featured produce dishes at home with produce that in some cases was unfamiliar to them.

Farm to School also worked with the Tompkins County Food Task Force (a collaboration of area hunger relief and social service groups, see article on P. 19) to distribute 760 boxes – including Harvest of the Month produce boxes and pantry boxes from Food Bank of the Southern Tier -- to families in Tompkins County's largest district, Ithaca City Schools. Between April and August 2020, 1649 food boxes were delivered to families across the county to supplement the food that was sent home by their local schools.

Boutelle credits school food service staff for keeping this new program going despite the many challenges presented by the pandemic. "It is incredibly hard work feeding our students, and the essential workers in the schools have put in a tremendous effort," she says. "Farm to School is immensely grateful to the food service staffs, farmers, and the transportation and distribution teams that continue to make these extra efforts to meet the needs *continued on page 22*



Tompkins Farm to School Coordinator Chloe Boutelle sorts produce and pantry items for delivery to local families at a Tompkins Food Task Force working event. (Photo: Matt Hayes, Cornell CALS).

Brightly colored posters were displayed on lunch lines to promote each dish and to share facts about the produce being served. At least 12 new Harvest of the Month dishes were served in Tompkins County public and charter schools during the program's first year, giving students a chance to taste in-season vegetables that were new to many of them, including winter squash, cauliflower, kale, root vegetables, several varieties of cabbage, and sweet potatoes.

SOURCING LOCAL MEAT SUPPLIES

CONSUMERS TURN TO MEAT SUITE & ITHACA MEAT LOCKER

When media reports at the start of the pandemic projected higher meat prices and reduced supermarket supplies, our Agriculture staff was able to direct consumers to the Finger Lakes Meat Project to meet their needs and allay concerns. Created in 2013 as a regional effort to benefit livestock producers and consumers by increasing the “freezer trade” (sales of local meat in bulk quantities), the Project included The Meat Suite, an online listing of farms across NY State that sell directly to consumers, and the Ithaca Meat Locker, a community freezer where consumers can rent space to store their local meat direct purchases. Details on both can be found at <http://ccetompkins.org/local-meats>.

Over the years, The Meat Locker has helped build strong connections between consumers and farmers, making the direct market accessible to consumers who did not have a way to freeze large quantities of local meat. As the pandemic wore on, The Meat Locker also became an unexpected source of support for area farmworkers and others experiencing food insecurity. Sudden closures of businesses had devastating effects on farmworkers, who already live in or on the edge of poverty. The Meat Locker partnered with local free meal provider Loaves & Fishes, local beef producer Ken Jaffe, and the Cornell Farmworker Program to



More information on The Meat Suite and the Ithaca Meat Locker can be found at: <http://ccetompkins.org/local-meats>.

get hearty meals to farmworkers facing food insecurity. Together, they turned 600+ pounds of meat into more than 2000 meals that were delivered to food insecure farmworkers and other food insecure residents over many weeks.

For more information on these and other local foods initiatives, contact Mila Fournier, Agriculture Educator at ymf5@cornell.edu or call (607) 272-2292 ext. 194. ☼

WEBINARS HELP FARMERS & FOOD PRODUCERS START SELLING ONLINE

For farmers and food producers, having a way to sell directly to the public became more important than ever with the arrival of COVID-19, but the benefits of moving to an online sales platform will last long after the pandemic ends. Three interactive webinars for farmers and value added producers covered the steps needed to move from selling through stores or markets to direct-to-consumer online sales.

The initial workshop, *“Start Selling Online for Farm & Food Producers”* covered how to pick an online sales platform; decide on delivery, pickup, and shipping options; get your online store set up quickly; and provided some alternate methods for selling online. *“COVID-19 Customer Service”* included how to create processes that build strong relationships that lead to

repeat customers and touched on safety considerations related to the coronavirus. The third workshop, *“Online Marketing 101”* covered social media, email marketing, cross-promotions, and marketing plans. Each workshop cost \$20 per household and free coronavirus solidarity pricing was available for those who could not afford to attend.

The series was created and led by Amina Omari, Food Business Incubation Program (FoodBIP) Director with guest presenters. Begun in 2019, FoodBIP is a joint project of CCE-Tompkins and the Finger Lakes Regional Prosperity Network that connects Finger Lakes food and beverage manufacturing entrepreneurs with the resources they need to succeed. For more information, contact amina.omari@foodbip.org or call (607) 444-5520. ☼

TRANSPORT TO COVID TESTS

WAY2GO SWITCHES GEARS TO MEET NEW NEEDS

When the CCE-Tompkins Education Center locked down in mid-March 2020, its staff continued to work remotely from their homes, staying in touch with CCE colleagues and with their own local networks as each program flexed to meet new needs emerging from the pandemic. For several years, Way2Go team members had gathered weekly with a group of local transportation service providers to share information

who normally would fill gaps in the transportation network.

Transportation to Testing. Taking samples for COVID-19 tests in Tompkins County is done with limited contact at a special outdoor drive-through site. A priority concern among local officials was how to ensure that people with possible symptoms could get to the sampling site if they did not have or could not afford transportation.

Traveling there on buses was not possible as tests were not available to those who “walked in”.

Representatives from Tompkins County Health Department and Department of Social Services, Human Services Coalition of Tompkins County, the Center for Community Transportation¹ and Way2Go took part in problem solving discussions to address this dilemma. Their solution was to contract with a local cab company to transport individuals to the sampling site who had made a testing appointment and requested a ride through 2-1-1.

Together the group developed safety protocols, secured the necessary PPE, put together public communications, and identified a funding source. Way2Go distributed information that directed people to call 2-1-1 for the new service through existing networks, to local media outlets and medical facilities, and to Health Department staff. They also shared information with the Mutual Aid Tompkins group and with the newly formed Tompkins Food Task Force (TFT).

Providing timely and accurate information. To ensure that local residents would receive consistent and up-to-date information from one central source, Way2Go and its nonprofit partners agreed early on to direct people with transportation and service needs to the 2-1-1 call center where trained operators could refer them to the appropriate local resources. Way2Go staff wrote the script and FAQ answers for 2-1-1 operators to use when responding to calls about emergency food resources and delivery, and rides to the Cayuga Health Sampling site.

Way2Go took a collaborative approach to communications and outreach by sharing information via partner networks, social media, media outlets, and 2-1-1’s call center. To enable all partners to respond quickly, Way2Go coordinated a process for tracking transportation service changes. Way2Go team members participated in weekly calls with transportation service providers, county health and economic development officials and a representative *continued on page 23*



Photo by Tim Samuel from Pexels

and consider ways to improve travel options for residents, especially those with limited transportation choices. This group’s discussions quickly turned to two main concerns: identifying and addressing transportation gaps resulting from the pandemic, and finding ways to effectively share constantly changing transportation information with the public, including safety tips, local service interruptions, and service adjustments that would occur as New York State reached each reopening stage.

Very quickly, Way2Go saw a huge change in focus among its primary audiences of older adults, rural populations, newcomers, people with limited income or disabilities, and new English speakers – all groups that face significant transportation barriers. Instead of asking about upcoming programs or how to navigate local transit offerings, questions now concerned urgent needs such as getting rides to the Cayuga Health Sampling Site, accessing emergency food resources, and finding ride alternatives to replace volunteer drivers

1. The Center for Community Transportation is the new umbrella organization for Bike Walk Tompkins and Ithaca CarShare.

CCE DELIVERS SAFETY SUPPLIES

HELPING FARMS & FARMWORKERS STAY SAFE

The NY State Department of Agriculture & Markets worked with Cornell Cooperative Extension county offices across the state to distribute hand sanitizer and face masks to farms and farmworkers to help ensure their safety during the COVID-19 outbreak. In Tompkins County, a partnership of several local agriculture groups, community organizations and government agencies collaborated to distribute these materials to local producers.

On May 9th, Tompkins County received a delivery of 10,000 masks, 600 gallons of sanitizer and 1,000 2-oz bottles of sanitizer from NY State Department of Ag & Markets. These materials were delivered to the former Space at Greenstar building in Ithaca, where staff from CCE-Tompkins and volunteers from multiple agencies and municipalities unloaded the truck and organized and stacked the boxes inside the building.

Supplies then were divided up and transported by volunteers to six rural pickup locations across Tompkins County where they could more easily be picked up by local producers. Locations included Eddydale Farm Market, the Enfield Community Building Code Office, Lansing Town Hall, Howard Farms in Groton, Rosebarb Farm in Caroline, and the TC3 Farm Big Red Barn in Dryden.

During the initial distribution, each farm was allowed to pick up one gallon bottle of sanitizer for every two farm employees, five masks per employee, and one 2-oz bottle of sanitizer per employee. Producers were asked to provide their farm name, and to fill out a state-mandated reporting form indicating the amounts of each item claimed by their farm. Producers also could scan a QR code with their phone to enter the reporting information touch-free on their own device, or could choose to fill out a paper copy on-site when they picked up the supplies. Producers who were unable to make it to the distribution sites during the scheduled times could arrange to pick up supplies by appointment at the CCE-Tompkins Education Center in Ithaca.

During the first pickup period, CCE-Tompkins staff and volunteers distributed 3,070 masks, 292 gallons and 629 2-oz bottles of sanitizer to Tompkins County farmers. An additional 4,500 masks were made available to the Cornell Farmworker Program and another 2,500 masks were sent to locations in the Hudson Valley where there was a critical need for them.

Agriculture program staff at CCE-Tompkins made special efforts to contact Tompkins County producers who were unable to take part in the rural distribution effort, to ensure that they received needed supplies and that their farms would be contacted for any subsequent distributions.

In late June, a second shipment of supplies was delivered to the CCE-Tompkins Education Center in Ithaca. This shipment included 6,000 masks, 900 gallons and 1,500 2-oz bottles of sanitizer. Tompkins County producers could arrange to pick up supplies curbside at CCE-Tompkins on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from June into the autumn months. Although the Education Center was closed to the public at this time, producers could call the office when they arrived and a staff member would bring supplies out to their vehicle. The recommended distribution was increased from 0.5 gallons to 1 gallon per farm employee from this second distribution going forward.

Collaborators in this effort were: Tompkins County Farm Bureau, Tompkins County Soil & Water Conservation District, the Tompkins Food Task Force, the CCE South Central NY Dairy Team and the Cornell Farmworkers Program. CCE staff on site were: Graham Savio, Mila Fournier and Monika Roth, volunteers



Graham Savio, Agriculture Team Leader (right) instructs volunteers on safety precautions before unloading a truck of supplies from NY State Agriculture & Markets. (Photo: RJ Anderson, CCE).

included Emily Baker, Amy Frith, Paul Gier and his daughter, Peter Hoyt, Carmen Bezner Kerr, Wayne Bezner Kerr, Jon Negley and Matt Soucy. ☀

COMMUNITY SEED SHARING

MORE THAN 4,000 PACKS OF SEEDS WERE GIVEN AWAY

As many as 400 local gardeners visit CCE-Tompkins' Free Seed Cabinets each year to choose packets of vegetable and flower seeds donated by companies we solicit from across the country.

When our Education Center closed in March following the arrival of the coronavirus, Horticulture Program staff were challenged to find new ways to get these free seeds out to the public at a time when interest in home gardening and the need for seeds were at an all-time high.

More than 4,000 packs of free seeds and instructions on how to grow them were shared with the community by the CCE-Tompkins' Horticulture program in 2020 through self-serve and staffed outreach events. In each instance, the seed bundles were handled in ways designed to minimize spread of coronavirus. In March, a self-serve seed giveaway at the Education Center distributed the bulk of donated seeds that would normally be given to the public through the agency's free seed cabinet program.

Additional generous donations from Seedway of New York and Fedco Seed of Maine made it possible to share more seeds with vulnerable populations through the Tompkins Mutual Aid Free Food Cabinets, during Southside Community Center Food

All and the Produce Prescription Program by request.

On May 22nd and June 1st, Master Gardener volunteers and staff from CCE-Tompkins placed packets of seeds alongside food pantry items in the Tompkins Mutual Aid Free Food Cabinets now at 34 sites in Ithaca and surrounding rural communities.

Seed collections offered on May 22nd included a root vegetable (radish or beet), mild and bitter salad greens, a cooking green and an Asian green. Seeds placed in the boxes on June 1 included summer and winter squash, turnip or beets, beans, dill, salad greens, and a flowering annual, all of which could be planted immediately.

Horticulture staff also distributed free seeds during the Southside Community Center Food Pantry hours on Saturday, May 9th & 23rd. On the first date, seeds that could be grown on a windowsill for fresh leafy greens or micro-greens were distributed.

On the second date, seeds that could be planted immediately were shared. Robin Bem dropped off a selection of vegetable starts she had grown, and Mathew Spano provided a box of seed potatoes and instructions on how to grow them. A limited number of containers donated by Ithaca Agway were given to residents who

wanted to grow their own food but needed to grow it in containers or on a patio or porch. Horticulture Program staff members were on hand to answer questions (from an appropriate distance).

To support community members with limited resources, a special "coronavirus solidarity rate" of \$0 was added to the existing sliding scale rates of \$1-\$30 for online horticulture classes so that all could attend without regard to ability to pay.

In a "Master Gardener Grow-along," the same volunteers who sorted, packed and delivered the seeds to the Mutual Aid free food cabinets planted some of the same vegetables at home, so that they could chart their progress and troubleshoot possible growing issues for new gardeners who contact them at CCE-Tompkins' GrowLine. This popular free call-in service continues to take gardener questions online at growline1@gmail.com while our Education Center is closed to the public.

For more information about this seed donation effort, please contact Mila Fournier, Agriculture Educator, at ymf5@cornell.edu or call (607) 272-2292 ext. 194. ☀



Master Gardener volunteers and CCE-Tompkins staff placed garden seeds alongside food pantry items in the Tompkins Mutual Aid Food Cabinets at 34 locations across Tompkins County.

Pantry hours in May, at Ithaca Community Gardens, through school lunch deliveries to free and reduced lunch recipients in some districts, and through CCCE-Tompkins' Healthy Food For

SPRING PLANT SALE GOES ON

MOVES TO ITHACA FARMERS' MARKET LOCATION

As many local garden fairs and plant sales across New York State were being postponed or cancelled due to the coronavirus outbreak, Master Gardener volunteers and Horticulture Program staff members at Cornell Cooperative Extension Tompkins County (CCE-Tompkins) managed to adapt their long-running Annual Spring Garden Fair & Plant Sale to meet new social distancing requirements, in consultation with local Health Department officials.

Organized since 1982 by Master Gardener volunteers, the Spring Garden Fair & Plant Sale is one of the largest and most complete events of this kind in the Finger Lakes and is highly anticipated by both gardening enthusiasts and specialty plant vendors across the region. In most years, the sale is held at Ithaca High School, where it attracts a crowd of 3,500 or more gardeners who choose from an extensive array of edible and ornamental plants offered for sale by at least 40 different small growers and gardening groups. Sales often tally more than \$60,000 during the 5-hour period the event is open. The sale consistently generates important early season sales for local garden centers and small growers, as well as for the Master Gardener volunteers, who fund many of their annual activities with proceeds from the sale of plants they donate from their own gardens.

Scaling back this large and successful event was a challenge. In consultation with Tompkins County Health Department officials, Agriculture Program staff members Graham Savio, Mila Fournier and Monika Roth devised a plan to move the sale to a location more conducive to social distancing (the Ithaca Farmers' Market Pavilion at Steamboat Landing) where vendor spaces more easily could be spread out. They also implemented timed entry admissions on the hour that would allow only 100 shoppers into the sale at a time. The Market Pavilion would be cleared of all shoppers shortly before each hour to allow vendors time to sanitize their areas and prepare for the next group to arrive. Staff and volunteers would handle admissions on-site during the event.

"We felt it was important to hold the sale for multiple reasons" says Mila Fournier, Agriculture Educator at CCE-Tompkins. "The interest in gardening and especially in food growing has grown exponentially during the pandemic with people having a new awareness of issues

of food insecurity so we wanted to make sure people had access to healthy, locally grown starts. In addition, many of our small local nursery businesses count on the Spring Plant Sale for needed revenue. During this crisis, it is all the more important that we continue to support our local businesses," she concluded.



Customers select locally grown plants for purchase at the 2020 Spring Garden Fair & Plant Sale, moved to the Ithaca Farmers' Market to ensure appropriate social distancing (Photo: Sandy Repp).

A limited number of entry tickets were available at the door each hour but attendees were encouraged to preregister online for specific time slots to be certain they'd get in. When 500 free tickets for the first date of Sunday, May 17th quickly "sold out" online, a second date of Monday, May 25th (Memorial Day) was added. For the first sale, only growers selling primarily food-producing plants could participate, due to NY State limits on businesses that could operate during the coronavirus outbreak. By the second date, those limits had been lifted and growers of ornamental plants also could participate in the sale.

The organizers experienced some potential glitches along the way. A week before the first sale date, an employee at Ithaca's popular GreenStar Cooperative Market tested positive for COVID-19, and shoppers in the store on certain dates were tested and asked to self-quarantine until their test results were returned. This group included two of the sale's main organizers. Luckily Margaret Royall, a newly hired part-time staff member in the Horticulture Program was able to

continued on page 22

PARENTING EDUCATION

STAFF RESPONDS TO IMMEDIATE FAMILY NEEDS

Finding new ways to provide parenting education and support when programs were abruptly shut down due to the pandemic was a challenge faced by Family & Community Development (F&CD) program educators. They responded by successfully

food insecurity, being at home with children unable to play outside, providing home schooling, and other issues. The survey then was distributed more broadly across Tompkins County, and later was shared with other CCE associations in New York State to adapt and use.

After surveying families and hearing that they were feeling overwhelmed, the F&CD team began formulating ways to adapt parenting workshops to virtual instruction. The initial pilot program provided an opportunity for those who had enrolled in the workshops that stopped abruptly in March to complete their class series. This turned out to be a positive experience for participants and staff alike, and the team decided to move forward to offer further workshops to new participants. Since remote delivery eliminated transportation and geographic barriers, educators found that the classes also attracted some parents from other counties, in communities where there are no programs of this kind offered for them.

Another response to meet the needs and concerns expressed by parents was coordination of new Parent Resource Zoom Chats, offered in

partnership with Tompkins County Health Department and members of the Early Childhood Development Collaborative (ECDC). At these regular gatherings, speakers shared the latest information about community and agency responses to the pandemic, and ways to access food pantries, infant/toddler supplies, childcare, and other services, with an opportunity for open discussion and Q&A between the speakers and participants. These Chats were attended on average by more than 30 people.

Since the pandemic began, F&CD staff members have continued to listen to family needs and concerns, and have focused the content of their posts on the Tompkins Families! Facebook page on ways families can connect to resources, information, activities, home schooling, and more. With Community Foundation COVID Response Funding, the staff was able to develop activity kits that were safely delivered to families in collaboration with food distribution providers.

Throughout 2020, the F&CD Program staff successfully led virtual parenting education workshops that respond to and meet the needs of the participants. *continued on page 24*



Family & Community Development staff meeting pre-Covid; from left: Megan Tiff, 4-H and F&CD Issue Leader; Jennifer Gray, Elizabeth Wolff, Anna Steinkraus and Juliana Garcia (Photo: Sandy Repp).

adapting their popular workshops to virtual delivery, choosing safer alternatives to home visits (by phone, zoom, and in-person following COVID safety protocols) and basing all their efforts on a community wide survey of participating families that guided the program's ongoing work.

With the arrival of the pandemic in March 2020, our Education Center building and classrooms were closed to the public and our staff began working remotely from their homes. Three in-person parenting education workshops that were underway were abruptly halted. To help guide next steps for these unfinished workshops, and to assess the current needs of families, F&CD staff developed and shared an online check-in survey with participants who had attended parenting programs during the past couple of years.

An ongoing challenge is that some families have no access to technology or live in locations in Tompkins County where internet service is not available. To gather input from those with limited or no internet access, parenting educators made phone calls to those who didn't respond online. They heard that many families were struggling with social distancing, transportation,

ZOOMING WITHOUT VIDEO WORKS!

PROGRAM DELIVERY METHODS ADAPT TO COVID-19

A parent shares “I need skills to help me redirect my son when he gets into mischief.” That said, she’s frustrated, embarrassed, and out of patience with the same old fights. She states he doesn’t listen, he’s always late, always destroying everything, the other day, he took apart their toaster. He doesn’t break them out of anger, but he rips them apart and plays around with all the parts and then they’re broken. He’s late for all his online classes. Yelling and taking away his things doesn’t work. She needs time to do her own schoolwork and can’t deal with him begging for his phone back after she takes it.

Of 10 participants in one of the “PS: It Works” classes offered on Zoom, this parent is one of the four who are on track to earn a Gold Seal on their certificate of completion with perfect attendance. She is the only one who’s Zooming over the phone only. She doesn’t have a data plan big enough to zoom for an hour and half each week, and with everything that’s going on, she doesn’t have enough supports to join the call from the library or anywhere else. It doesn’t help that she had moved right before the pandemic closed schools in March and she still doesn’t really know any of her neighbors.

Since our Parenting Education program switched to virtual delivery due to the pandemic, Family & Community Development staff members have been challenged to find meaningful ways to engage participants while facilitating parenting skills workshops. While there is a growing list of platforms and features to use for presentations, many of the family participants struggle, having limited technology skills.

Using simplified programs like Google Meet may make it easier to get everyone active and involved, but that change would sacrifice features like break out rooms and polling which help many participants share and stay engaged. Using anything beyond the most basic features of Zoom often leaves participants struggling and may require additional side training to get them up to speed.

This parent knew that Cornell Cooperative Extension Tompkins County was offering parenting classes from when she lived in Ithaca, so she signed up. During the weekly sessions, after initially being skipped over a few times as a “non-video” participant, she started speaking up and her voice has become instrumental to the class. She always has situations to share, with palpable frustration, exhaustion, and love.

With the support of the group, and the lens of “PS: It Works”, her ‘tween aged son now has a container of approved objects and a

designated location for his “experiments.” Sometimes this mother sends him outside to dig or smash stuff with rocks. She’s opened a new dialog with him about school attendance and the solution that he came up with, which is actually working, involves fewer inputs from Mom.

On the facilitation side, it is still challenging to facilitate organic conversation and participation, while ensuring everyone has a chance to speak. This parent experience is a good example of how it may be difficult to engage with a “phone only” caller in the first few weeks of a zoom workshop series. After several repetitions of the opening circle, the situation sharing, role plays, and closing circle, all of the participants -- whether joining by Zoom or phone only -- understand and are used to the expectation of contributing to the conversation. Still, there may be lulls after facilitators ask for comments when no one speaks. Being on the phone, this parent seemed to start to listen for these pauses in conversation and is now able to time her comments for the moment when a facilitator is leaving space for someone to speak up. It has become apparent that phone-only participants and out-of-county participants can make valuable contributions to virtual classes and should be included



Photo by Andrea Piacquadio from Pexels

when and where possible.

Role plays with a partner, which are an integral part of “PS: It Works,” are easier and less intense over Zoom than when done in a live group. It’s more like watching TV, and just doesn’t hold the same social charge that performance *continued on page 24*

SOLIDARITY GARDENS

BUILDING GARDENS AND A MOVEMENT

The COVID-19 pandemic has been an emotional and economic challenge for most of us. The ongoing feeling of uncertainty about

building garden infrastructure in marginalized communities; “Seeding Hope” in the community by introducing easy projects to first-time gardeners; providing youth with mentoring and job skill training in urban agriculture and community engagement; and strengthening alliances with local organizations that share a commitment to removing barriers that prevent full participation in our food system by all.



LACS student volunteers Graham and Ethan build raised beds in the parking lot of CCE-Tompkins for garden sites at Ithaca City Schools (Photo: Josh Dolan).

what the future holds is extremely stressful, particularly for individuals who already experience food insecurity, poverty, and chronic health conditions.

The Solidarity Gardens Project began in April 2020 as a direct response to the widespread impact of the pandemic on our community, particularly in the area of food access. The Project sought to support community members who traditionally have been excluded from agriculture and to connect them with the training, resources and garden infrastructure needed to become successful gardeners.

Gardening not only can provide an economic boost by enabling individuals to grow a portion of their own food but offers other benefits that include physical activity, time in nature, time with friends, healthier eating habits, relaxation and a creative outlet. Project organizers believe that gardens are healing spaces that uplift the spirit as well as the body and could be a central strategy for overcoming the ongoing stressors of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Solidarity Gardens Project employed four strategic efforts:

110 new raised garden beds were established at 17 sites, many serving low-income and SNAP-eligible families.

Garden Infrastructure. By providing materials, training and support to local individuals and families in need, the Solidarity Gardens Project aims to foster a more resilient, interdependent and self-reliant community. Efforts to develop permanent garden sites – by building raised beds, and providing soil, seeds, vegetable plants and instruction – focused on neighborhoods with residents who have limited incomes, identify as BIPOC or who belonged to marginalized groups. Across Tompkins County, 110 new raised garden beds were established at seventeen sites, many serving low-income and SNAP-eligible families. A volunteer “Garden Champion” was identified at each site to provide oversight and fifteen new community champions were recruited including formal and informal leaders in the BIPOC community.

Garden sites include: the Ithaca Permaculture Project Garden at Conley Park; Beverly J. Martin Elementary school garden; Dig’Nity Garden on at Chestnut Street; Ithaca City School District elementary schools at Caroline, Fall Creek, Northeast, and South Hill; The Learning Farm; Multicultural Resource Center; Mutual Aid Tompkins blue food pantry box sites in Enfield, Varna and Ithaca; West Village Apartments; Press Bay Food Hub/Urban Core; Southside Community Center; and Titus Towers senior housing complex.

Seeding Hope. Starting in May, Josh Dolan, Food Gardening Outreach Educator for the Solidarity Gardens Project, offered twelve on-line cooking classes to help new gardeners learn to prepare the vegetables they would harvest. One set of classes was offered in partnership with the Open Doors English ESL program, another set was open to the public, free for SNAP-eligible participants. The classes reached between 80-100 participants. *continued on page 25*

20TH ANNUAL 4-H DUCK RACE GOES ONLINE

COMPOST FAIR LIVESTREAMS ON YOUTUBE

As organizers were making plans to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the 4-H Rubber Duck Race -- Tompkins County 4-H's most important annual fundraiser -- the COVID-19 outbreak put all public events on hold. After crossing their fingers in April and May and hoping that conditions might change to allow for a summer event, a "virtual" duck race was scheduled for Sunday, September 13th, and held in conjunction with Annual Compost Fair as in years past.

"The 4-H Duck Race has become one of the signs that spring has arrived in Tompkins County," says Megan Tifft, 4-H Team Leader at CCE-Tompkins. "Although we couldn't put on this family-friendly event in its usual time or format due to safety concerns, we came up with some fun ways for people to participate virtually and still help support our 4-H Youth Programs," she added.

Traditionally held on a Sunday afternoon in late April, the 4-H Rubber Duck Race attracts hundreds of people who gather to watch 3,000 rubber ducks drop into Cascadilla Falls and race down the creek to the finish line at CCE-Tompkins where music, games, food and the annual Compost Fair await them. When the race ends, all ducks are collected in the order that they cross the finish line, and winning numbers are announced. Grand prize for the #1 duck is a \$750 cash "Nest Egg," and additional prizes donated by local businesses are awarded to individuals whose ducks next cross the finish line.

The annual Compost Fair also is timed to celebrate the arrival of spring, and for many years 4-H and our Compost Education Program have held their events on the same date. While Master Composter (MC) volunteers share information at many local festivals and events, the Compost Fair is one of the best known and can reach from 300 to 1,000 residents in any given year.

Partnering with the 4-H Duck Race enables MC volunteers to engage entire families in learning about the composting process, through entertainment and with fun interactive educational displays that show how compost can be made at home. Visitors can compare compost bin styles at the nearby compost demonstration site, win compost related items in hourly giveaways, and stroll among pop-up tents in the parking lot and garden to learn more about composting, 4-H and many other Cooperative Extension and community programs.

Taking this diverse array of activities online was no easy task for the two programs. The events began on CCE-Tompkins'

YouTube Channel with pre-recorded segments created by MC volunteers. First, the "Rot 'N Roll" compost cover band performed



Shelley Lester, 4-H Rural Youth Services Coordinator, drops rubber ducks into a backyard pool in Dryden, NY during the 20th Anniversary 4-H Rubber Duck Race (Photo: Megan Tifft).

"Rot Me Mamma," followed by Daniel Baruch who shared outdoor composting basics at the CCE-Tompkins Compost Demonstration site. Next, Romina Capelli and her children explained their home "vermiculture" (worm composting) system, and Compost Educator Adam Michaelides closed this part of the program by giving away compost prizes and sharing where more information on composting could be found.

Instead of racing in Cascadilla Creek, rubber ducks representing the chances that had been sold were dropped into a backyard swimming pool in Dryden, NY which was streamed live. Prize winners were picked randomly from the pool by longtime costumed 4-H mascot "Mama Duck." Numbers were announced on camera and later posted with the associated prizes on cctompkins.org.

Sharing the two events online gave regular participants a way to enjoy them from the safety of their homes but couldn't quite achieve the usual results. The 4-H Rubber Duck Race typically raises \$12,000 each year to support local 4-H youth programs, with individual 4-H Clubs responsible for most of the chances sold. "Due to COVID-19, sales were online only and were much lower than in prior years," says Tifft. "Our 4-H Program very much depends upon these funds to provide the same quality programs to youth across Tompkins County during *continued on page 24*

PRIMITIVE PURSUITS

KIDS THRIVE AT CAMP DURING PANDEMIC

During the summer of 2020, Primitive Pursuits Camp was one of the limited local camp options for youth in Tompkins County, in addition to being one of the few 4-H camps open in New York State. Despite challenges that required ongoing adjustments, the camp successfully delivered eleven weeks of outdoor youth programs with no significant health emergencies, from either COVID-19 or other health or safety issues.

In the preceding winter months, youth everywhere had experienced dramatic changes in their home and school routines and an overwhelming number of our local youth had been without access to peer-based environments, healthy outdoor activities, and positive youth development. The 4-H Primitive Pursuits Camp was able to offer a wide range of 27 different camp offerings at more than four locations to these young people. Initially planned for 10 weeks, the camp added an 11th week when the Ithaca City School District decided midway through summer to delay the start of the 2020-2021 school year.

The camps were divided into 7 age groups spanning the ages of 3-16 and included a teen Counselor-in-Training leadership program. 380 individual youth filled 935 camp week slots. Although the camp enrolled fewer families in 2020 than it had the previous year, total enrollments remained steady and Primitive Pursuits was able to continue to make the camp experience available to youth who represent the diversity of our communities as a whole. Camp enrollment is based

on diversity efforts. 21% of campers this summer identified as either Hispanic or non-white, which is a greater percentage than represented by our county resident population.

Activities, policies, and protocols were adapted again and again as the social impacts of the virus and government responses evolved over the four months preceding the summer camp season. Throughout these many changes, Primitive Pursuits prioritized access for low-income youth and youth identifying as Hispanic and/or non-white. Recent statistics also show that COVID-19 related health disparities impact people with limited incomes and non-whites at greater rates.

When camp began, strict safety protocols were in place for staff and campers alike and were described in the parent handbook and in a video posted to YouTube. Arrival and pick-up times were staggered and drop offs were contact-free with caregivers required to wear a mask and stay in their cars at all times. All campers and staff received daily health screenings, which included questions about possible COVID-19 symptoms, tests, results or personal exposures. Each camper's temperature was taken daily upon arrival through the car window by a designated Staff Health Screener using a non-contact thermometer. Any person with a temperature above 100F would be sent home for the day.

All campers were to maintain 6' distance as much as possible throughout the day. Staff wore face coverings, campers were required to wear a face covering to camp that they could put on by themselves (and to bring an extra). Campers wore masks unless a staff person determined that social distancing could be maintained during small group activity times, such as during meals. Program supplies, bathrooms and touched surfaces were sanitized regularly according to Health Department standards.

Many camp activities were created or modified to support social distancing. Significantly, the size of camp groups, interactions between those groups, and range of activities allowed all were limited. Campers stayed with their assigned group for the entire week and intergroup mingling was extremely limited.

In spite of these restrictions, Primitive Pursuits' access to vast natural spaces in our area enabled the camp to continue to provide the same meaningful, engaging and fun youth programming in a beautiful and spacious natural environment as it had done in years past. Special thanks to Cornell Botanic Gardens, EcoVillage and Dr.

Elline Weiner for providing access to natural areas outside of 4-H Acres.

For information about Primitive Pursuits, visit primitivepursuits.com or call them at CCE-Tompkins, 607-272-2292 ext. 195. ☼



Girls catch frogs in a vernal pool at 4-H Acres, 2020 Primitive Pursuits camp (Photo: Ash Bailot).

on a fee-for-service program model, with scholarships provided through a sliding-scale program fee and private donations. 42 campers (over 10%) received \$13,580 in scholarship funds, contributing to our

4-H FAIR ADAPTS FOR COVID-19

50TH ANNUAL YOUTH-RUN EVENT

For the past 50 years, the Tompkins County 4-H program has hosted an entirely youth-run week-long fair in July that gives local 4-H members a chance to display or demonstrate projects they've worked on throughout the year, receive feedback and evaluation, and potentially be chosen to move on and compete at the next level, the Great New York State Fair in Syracuse.

This year's fair was originally intended to include a special 50th Anniversary celebration, however the arrival of COVID-19 in March made it clear that state and local fairs were likely to be cancelled. The teen 4-H members who make up the Fair Board were determined to come up with a plan for the fair that could combine virtual, at-home and in-person events (at a safe distance) to create the atmosphere of camaraderie and support that would make the best of a bad situation. With support from 4-H Educator Brenda Carpenter, and many conversations with teens, parents, volunteers, staff and other county 4-H programs, they planned a week of fair activities that was as close to normal as possible given the unusual circumstances.

The 2020 Tompkins County 4-H Youth Fair was not open to the public, only 4-H members and their families could be present at the 4-H Acres Nature site where the fair traditionally is held. To help manage and reduce the density of people on the grounds, each 4-H'er was assigned a time for their interview and was asked to leave as soon as they completed the evaluation. Each person completed a health screening and temperature check upon arrival.

In-person project evaluations were moved to the open barn where social distancing could be ensured. Tables were spaced at least 6 feet apart, and the evaluator and 4-H member sat on opposite ends of a 6' table for the interview. Everyone was required to wear a mask at all times and volunteers and Fair Board teens were on hand to sanitize the tables and chairs after each interview.

Exhibitors could request a virtual evaluation if they were unable to attend in-person, and one member chose this option. Twenty-nine 4-H'ers brought out 175 projects for evaluation, down from 223 exhibits in 2019. Since the projects would not be placed on display at 4-H Acres as usual, each member had their picture taken with their exhibit and a Fair Board teen created a gallery of all these photos to share, providing a lasting visual record of the projects and work that were shown. Exhibits that were selected and would have moved on to the New York State Fair this year have the option of

going in 2021. A total of 18 4-H'ers and 49 projects were recognized with this distinction.

Animal shows and evaluations were handled somewhat differently. In-person animal shows were limited to one per each day of the Fair, with only 4-H members and family being present to



4-H goat exhibitors with volunteer judge at Laughing Goat Farm in Ithaca (Photo: Brenda Carpenter).

ensure social distancing for attendees. Forty-nine youth brought out 106 animals for evaluation; the alpaca, sheep and rabbit shows each saw an increase in the number of exhibitors and animals presented over 2019.

Unfortunately, due to a state quarantine that restricted visits to farms during the spring, youth who lease animals (particularly those who work with dairy and goats) were unable to visit farms to select their animals until early June, the time by which they normally would have chosen and worked with their project animal for several months. This late start had a definite negative impact on the numbers of youth who participated, and at least 8 families could not make the necessary number of visits to the farm for their youths to handle and bond with the animals sufficiently to safely bring them to the Fair.

Contests and other social activities play an important role in the annual Tompkins County 4-H Youth Fair, and these also were included in a virtual or at-home format. Challenge contests were held on the Kahoot platform this year with 29 youth participating in the dairy, livestock, plant and consumer and family science challenge contests. Other virtual events included the *continued on page 24*

HEALTHY FOOD FOR ALL

“SOLIDARITY CSA” BOXES MEET URGENT NEEDS

Thirty-five households with limited incomes received weekly boxes of fresh produce known as “Solidarity CSA Shares” during late July and August 2020 to help meet their food needs during the COVID-19 pandemic. The produce boxes were provided through a partnership of Press Bay Alley Food Hub, the Friendship Donations Network (FDN), and the Healthy Food For All (HFFA) program at Cornell Cooperative Extension Tompkins County.

CSA stands for Community Supported Agriculture, a system that connects producers and consumers within the food system by allowing consumers to purchase a “share” of a farm’s harvest before the growing season begins. The farmer uses the funds to buy seeds and pay other expenses, and then provides the subscriber with regular boxes of the crops that are grown for an agreed upon number of weeks.

When COVID-19 first appeared in March, the spring CSA season had not yet begun and food pantries were challenged to provide perishable foods in response to the resulting upsurge in food insecurity. During April and May, HFFA and FDN partnered to distribute sliding scale weekly food boxes featuring fresh, local produce as well

produce through pre-sold CSA subscriptions including nearly 200 shares subsidized by HFFA for qualifying households. But by June 1st, most local CSA farms were fully subscribed and HFFA and its partners looked for additional ways to meet the expanded need for affordable local food options, including increasing the numbers of subsidized CSAs for those in need.

After surveying local partners and the community, HFFA created the new “Solidarity CSA Shares” to fill the gap for families with limited incomes that were seeking a way to afford fresh produce. These CSA subscribers paid a self-determined sliding-scale fee and picked up their weekly box of produce on Sundays at Press Bay Alley (delivery also was possible if needed). The new shares were available as of July 26th and ran through the end of August with the expectation that the program would continue in the fall pending funding.

While traditional CSA shares run from June through November, these shares were offered on a shorter timeline to give participants more flexibility in paying for their subscriptions. “There’s so much people are trying to figure out on a daily basis during the pandemic,” says Liz Karabinakis,

Director of HFFA, “This informed our decision to offer the Solidarity CSA shares with a shorter time commitment.” A grant from the COVID-19 Response Fund of Community Foundation of Tompkins County enabled the partners to purchase produce for the boxes from Six Circles Farm, thus supporting local producers while also assisting people in need.

Solidarity CSA Shares were provided through a partnership of Healthy Food For All at CCE-Tompkins, Six Circles Farm, Friendship Donations Network, PressBay Food Transfer Hub and the Tompkins Food Task Force with support from the Community Foundation of Tompkins County and the United Way of Tompkins County.

Volunteer support was provided by members of the Tompkins Food Task Force and other local groups. For information on the

Solidarity CSA share to be offered in the fall, contact info@HealthyFoodForAll.org or call 607-272-2292 x242. To donate in support of this effort, visit: <http://www.healthyfoodforall.org/donate/> ☀



A young girl holds a Healthy Food For All CSA box of fresh produce (Photo: Liz Karabinakis).

as pantry staples through home delivery across the county and at Press Bay Alley in Ithaca.

When the traditional CSA season began in June, more than a dozen local farms started distributing weekly

ENERGY & CLIMATE CHANGE TEAM

HELPING MUNICIPALITIES REACH THEIR GOALS

Educators on the CCE-Tompkins Energy & Climate Change Team take many approaches to addressing current issues in this important program area. Perhaps best known are the workshops, resources, and events they design to help people in our community learn about individual options for improving home energy efficiency and adopting renewable energy, or making “greener” choices when buying appliances, vehicles or building materials.

CCE educators don’t always stand at the front of a classroom, however, and their work often involves behind-the-scenes efforts that support municipalities, community groups and other organizations through the process of identifying the specific changes they wish to make, and developing the plans and infrastructure needed to achieve their goals. In 2020, two projects related to climate change – in the Town of Caroline and the City of Ithaca -- illustrate how the Energy & Climate Change Team educators helped to move these very different local efforts forward.

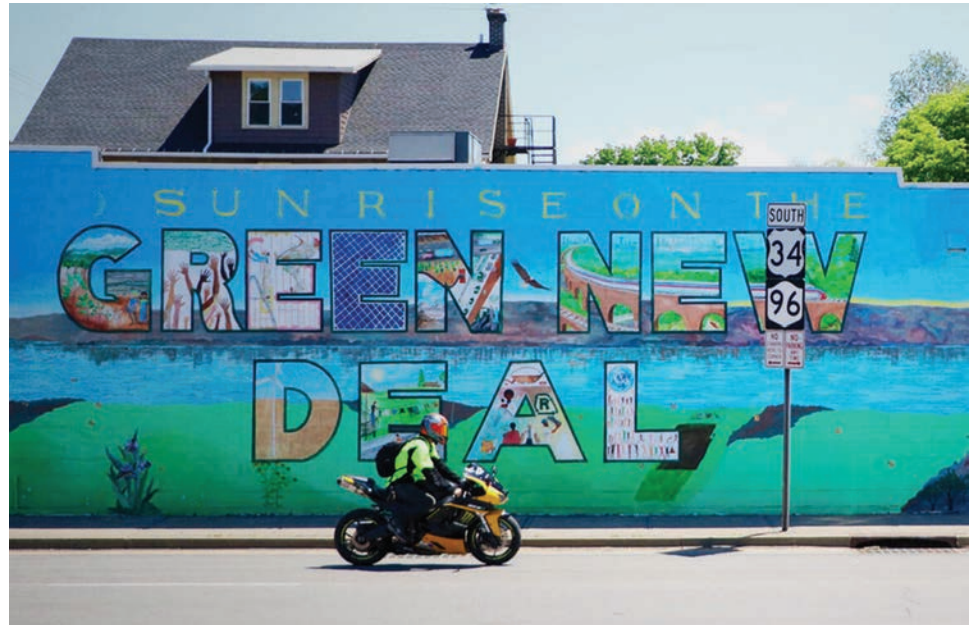
Town of Caroline Climate Vulnerabilities.

Whether manifested as extreme heat, devastating storms, or protracted drought, climate change is creating challenges for municipalities across New York State. Rural communities may be especially vulnerable to a changing climate, yet many lack the resources, knowledge, or capacity to prepare effectively for future climate events.

To meet these challenges, the CCE-Tompkins Energy & Climate Change Team set out to develop a process that communities could use to identify and assess potential climate impacts, local areas of elevated risk, and stakeholder priority concerns. Resulting data would be used for municipal planning purposes. The ideal process also needed to be replicable for use in communities across New York State, as well as by other Extension educators.

In the resulting Climate Vulnerability Assessment process, the educators first compile New York State and local climate projections, which they share through a series of presentations and workshops with local stakeholders. Surveys gather stakeholder impressions of how future scenarios could impact both municipal operations and the lives of community members

and identify and prioritize stakeholder concerns. Educators then use this information to develop recommendations and possible action steps designed to address specific, locally identified climate vulnerabilities.



Dan Burgevan's mural at West Buffalo and North Fulton Streets depicts possible benefits of Ithaca's Green New Deal legislation (Photo: Ithaca Murals, <https://www.ithacamurals.com/greennewdeal.html>).

This process was piloted in the Town of Caroline through the end of 2019 and into 2020. Despite the Covid-19 pandemic, educators were able to offer a series of online programs and gather local stakeholder input to inform a report they presented to the Caroline Town Board. Energy & Climate Change Team members now are working on ways that this process can be utilized effectively by staff from other Extension offices statewide.

City of Ithaca Green New Deal. The City of Ithaca faced a different set of challenges when taking early steps on its landmark proposal, the Ithaca Green New Deal (IGND). In June 2019, the City passed the resolution to address greenhouse gas emissions and other climate-related goals, but staffing issues delayed initial action on the plan. Budget constraints related to COVID-19 caused the City to put a hiring freeze in place, stalling the hiring of its new Director of Sustainability, and months went by with no progress being made toward the IGND goal of reaching community-wide carbon neutrality by 2025.

To move this process along, Energy *continued on page 26*

2020 VIRTUAL OPEN FARM DAYS

POPULAR EVENT GOES ONLINE THIS YEAR

During the second weekend of August each year, our popular “Open Farm Days” event enables 1,200 or more visitors from across our region and beyond to choose from 15-20 farms that are open for public tours for one weekend day only. Due to Covid-19, farm tours were not possible in 2020, so agriculture staff from Cooperative Extensions in Cortland and Tompkins Counties partnered to create online video tours with live Q&A with the farmers during the time their products were in peak season. Video events featured apple orchards and cider makers in September and u-pick pumpkin and squash farms in October. Look for more video tours in winter 2021. We hope to return to our regular Open Farm Days event in August 2021. ☀



Photos clockwise from top left: Graham Savio (left) with Brian Caldwell of Hemlock Grove Farm; Richard Villnave of Villnave Family Farm & Theresa's Pumpkin Patch in Homer; Matt Hollenbeck of Hollenbeck Cider Mill in Virgil with their cider press; Ron Porter of Cayuga Sunrise Farm in Trumansburg; Steve Cummins in the orchard at Indian Creek Farm; and Gordie Gallup with winter squash at Silver Queen Farm in Trumansburg. All still images cropped from virtual video tours of the farms.

TOMPKINS FOOD TASK FORCE

POWER OF COLLABORATION SHINES THROUGH

COVID-19 has upended many aspects of daily life, but since March the Tompkins Food Task Force (FTF) has worked to provide local residents who experience food insecurity with pantry boxes, fresh produce and prepared meals to help meet their needs. In December 2020, continuation grants from the Community Foundation of Tompkins County designated for two programs at Cornell Cooperative Extension Tompkins County ensured that these efforts would be uninterrupted during the holiday season and through the coming winter months.

Even before the pandemic, the non-profit Feeding America (2018) estimated that 10% of all Tompkins County residents (10,400 people) and 17% of all children were food insecure. Food insecurity was projected to impact 14% of all residents and 22% of all children in Tompkins County by the end of 2020. The winter months place an added burden on local families when school food service is suspended during breaks, and fresh produce is in short supply.

The Tompkins Food Task Force is a collaboration of more than 70 representatives of local food relief organizations and other non-profit and government partners formed to leverage existing resources and to coordinate relief efforts across our local food system in response to the pandemic. Partners meet every two weeks to discuss the latest COVID-19 case numbers, share survey results, and to identify new food shortage “hot spots” across the county.

Service gaps are addressed collaboratively, through efforts that include informational outreach, supplementing school food during breaks, coordinating volunteer deliveries, and developing new ways to reach vulnerable populations. The FTF also helps support the informal network of community members who maintain the free outdoor “blue food cabinets,” organized by Mutual Aid Tompkins.

These efforts have been funded in part by support for the FTF and partner agencies provided by the Community Foundation of Tompkins County. An earlier grant to partner Nourish Tompkins supported the purchase of fresh produce that was distributed to families in need. The December continuation funding from the Foundation enabled Nourish Tompkins to supply 260 produce boxes for school families that

were experiencing food insecurity, and to provide 4,300 pounds of fresh local and regional produce for hunger relief partners to distribute to households in need. Produce also will be used by volunteer chefs to prepare 1,950 hot meals for hungry families, and for individuals living unsheltered throughout the county

“The Community Foundation has been able to provide this level of funding because of the generous support to the COVID-19 Response Fund,” reports Janet Cotraccia, Chief Impact Officer. For more information about the Foundation and its work, or



Student volunteer sorts donated baked goods for distribution by Tompkins Food Task Force in July 2020 (Photo: Matt Hays, CALS).

to provide financial support, visit the Community Foundation of Tompkins County online at <https://www.cftompkins.org/giving/give-online/> or contact Nancy Massicci at nmassicci@cftompkins.org.

To learn more about the Tompkins Food Task Force, find community resources, volunteer, or to join a FTF zoom meeting, visit <https://sites.google.com/view/covid-consumer/home> or contact Holly Payne, Coordinator, at hp67@cornell.edu.

The Food Task Force and Nourish Tompkins are housed at Cornell Cooperative Extension Tompkins County. Coordination of the Food Task Force is funded primarily by initial and continuation grants from the Community Foundation of Tompkins County, with some initial support from Engaged Cornell and the SBA’s Paycheck Protection Program. ☀

2020 ANNUAL MEETING

FOCUS IS ON STRATEGIC PLANNING INITIATIVE

Tompkins County residents were asked to share their priorities for local extension programming at the 2020 Annual Meeting & Strategic Planning Session of Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County held online via Zoom on Tuesday, December 15th from 9:00-10:30am. More than 100 individuals including program participants, local government and nonprofit leaders, members of the CCE-Tompkins Board of Directors, Program Committees, staff and other community members attended and provided input.

In past years, the CCE-Tompkins Annual Meeting has featured a breakfast buffet of local foods. 2020 attendees were invited to enjoy a “BYO-Breakfast” with other online guests during Zoom welcoming remarks, a brief vote on board officers, and a short presentation of work accomplished over the past year including our response to the pandemic.

Attendees then joined smaller breakout rooms to share their thoughts on community needs going forward and ways that CCE-Tompkins can structure its work to help address them. Breakout groups were formed around topics of social determinants of health, economic justice, antiracism & racial equity and climate change and were self-selected by participants.

Board and staff members at CCE-Tompkins will work into 2021 to develop the strategic plan that will guide the organization’s work over



the coming 5 years, and needs identified by the community will help to determine the direction its programs will take. There will be other opportunities for residents to share their goals for our communities and to provide feedback on CCE-Tompkins’ work. Those who were unable to attend the December event but who wish to participate at a later date are asked to email tompkins@cornell.edu so that they may be contacted when additional discussions are planned. ☀

MURAL PROPOSED FOR EDUCATION CENTER

Local nonprofit Ithaca Murals has launched a fundraising drive to support the creation of a colorful new mural on the Cornell Cooperative Extension Tompkins County Education Center. Designed by artist Terrance Vann, the mural is planned for 2021 pending funding and will enliven the building’s south facade with imagery that reflects aspects of the work Cooperative Extension does in our community.



Main section of proposed mural on CCE-Tompkins building by artist Terrance Vann.

Vann moved to Ithaca from Delaware in 2020 and his artistic work already can be seen in a new mural at the Finger Lakes ReUse Center at 214 Elmira Road in Ithaca.

A new video at <https://www.ithacamurals.com/terrancevannatcce.html> features the artist and members of our Board and staff sharing their thoughts on the proposed project. Ithaca Murals welcomes support from everyone, but especially from community members who engage with CCE-Tompkins regularly and people whose lives have been touched by the many services our association offers. ☀

2020 COMMUNITY BEAUTIFICATION EFFORTS CONTINUE DESPITE FUNDING CUT

2020 was not a year to take anything for granted. Our Tompkins County Community Beautification Program is funded by Tompkins County Tourism through hotel room tax collection so when visitors here slowed to a trickle, a significant cut to the Beautification budget resulted. Despite losing over 50% of their funding, the retirement of longtime Beautification Manager Martha Gioumousis, and no access to the greenhouse usually rented from Cornell University, the two remaining part-time staff members Janine Willis and Eileen Sheehan made sure that our public spaces showed a spark of life. There were fewer plants in fewer locations than in prior years, yet more than 5000 flowering plants brightened our landscapes from May through October. For photos of previous years' work and more information on the Community Beautification program, please visit: <http://cctompkins.org/CBP-plantings> ☀



Photos clockwise from top left: The work of our Beautification Brigade volunteers was crucial to this year's efforts; planters on the Ithaca Commons; Aurora Street Triangle plantings; Flowers surround benches at the Dryden Road parking garage in Collegetown; West State Street planters, Planters surrounding the Bank Alley Fountain (Photos:Janine Willis).

Farm to School from p. 4

of our students under the current circumstances.”

To provide an educational component to go along with the box deliveries, Boutelle partnered with Ithaca Children’s Garden (ICG) in May to send home 150 garden kits to students at Newfield schools, and 80 seed sprouting science kits to students in Trumansburg schools. Although kits originally were planned only for Ithaca City School District students, Boutelle worked with ICG to expand the offering to other rural, public school districts using Farm to School funds to produce the additional garden kits. Science kits included seeds that were an in-kind donation from CCE-Tompkins.

Beyond meeting the goals of increasing student consumption and awareness for New York grown produce through Harvest of the Month efforts, the Tompkins Farm to School program has provided an income stream for local and regional farmers, with more than \$65,000 being spent on vegetables and fruits from more than 50 local and regional farms during this first year.

A third goal of the Tompkins Farm to School program is to help local school districts include at least 30% NY State farm products on their menus. Meeting this procurement benchmark qualifies a school to receive an additional reimbursement of up to 25 cents per meal under the 2018 NYS No Student Goes Hungry Act. With the standard reimbursement at 5.9 cents per meal, these additional funds can improve school meal budgets and increase a district’s long-term ability to spend more on locally produced ingredients. During the first year of the Tompkins County Farm to School program, the Ithaca City and Trumansburg school districts both exceeded this benchmark, and are ranked in the top ten districts in New York State for spending more than 40% of their school meal budgets on New York State produced foods.

Despite many COVID-related changes, Harvest of the Month continued in various forms across Tompkins County during the 2020-21 school year. New York State products featured in the 2020 fall Harvest of the Month menus included tomatoes and corn in September, bell peppers and Swiss chard in October, broccoli and cauliflower in November, and winter squash in December. Many schools sent meals home to virtual learners, while also serving cafeteria meals to students on-site. “Harvest of the Month” dishes varied by local school district; students and families were encouraged to check their school’s online menu for specific dishes and dates they would be served.

In Fall 2020, the NYS Dept. of Agriculture & Markets decided to move from county level program delivery to a regional coordinator model. CCE-Tompkins will have the support of CCE’s Farm to School experts at Harvest NY during the transition period. For more information about the Tompkins County Farm to School program, contact Baz Perry, Equitable Food Systems Coordinator, at (607) 272-2292 ext. 131 or ebs20@cornell.edu, or visit <http://cctompkins.org/farm-to-school>, Facebook, or Instagram: @TCfarmtoschool.

Collaborators on this project include: school districts in the City of

Ithaca, Dryden, Newfield and Trumansburg, and New Roots Charter School, which helped distribute the Harvest of the Month boxes and garden activities through school buses and pickups; Headwater Food Hub raised funds on their website for the Harvest of the Month boxes and procured, packed, and delivered them; Healthy Food for All, Food Bank of the Southern Tier, Tompkins Food Task Force, and the Ithaca Children’s Garden. Special funding sources include Community Foundation of Tompkins County (Harvest Boxes), NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets (coordinator’s salary) and The Park Foundation (Harvest of the Month). ☀

Spring Plant Sale from p. 9

jump in on her third day of work and take charge of the event. “Margaret did a stellar job, showing an exceptional level of grace and unflappability in the face of such a new and challenging process,” said Fournier.

Perhaps due to increased concerns about Covid-19 following this incident, approximately 1/3 of those with reserved tickets for the first sale did not attend. Before the 2nd sale date, organizers again conferred with Health Department officials to review attendance figures and photos from the first event and were allowed to increase timed admission numbers to permit 200 shoppers in the Market pavilion per hour, resulting in stronger yet still socially distanced attendance on the second sale date. Total figures were 354 attendees on 5/17 and 640 on 5/25, for a total of almost 1,000 shoppers.

Although the crowds were smaller than they are in a normal year, vendors were positive about their experience and sales. Surveys from them were compiled to get a clearer sense of the income this sale was able to generate for them. Master Gardener volunteers, who for the first time in 38 years did not have a booth at the event, held a mini plant sale in the CCE-Tompkins parking lot on June 5th to sell plants they had potted up from their own gardens to raise funds for their programs.

Gardeners who attended the two main plant sale dates were enthusiastic and offered very positive feedback. As one attendee wrote to us, “Thanks so much for a great plant sale today. It went really well, I thought. You all thought creatively to make it happen and were organized, competent, and warm in executing it. I loved it! The waiting line, the check in, the email instructions ahead and verbal instructions this morning, how the sale was organized - all were really well done. I think most of all I appreciated a cheerful yet safe gathering. You all were cheerful, so were the vendors, it all seemed almost normal and was a wonderful entry to spring. Plus I got some great plants!”

For questions about the Annual Spring Garden Fair & Plant Sale, contact Mila Fournier, Agriculture Educator, at [ymf5@cornell.edu](mailto:ywf5@cornell.edu) or (607) 272-2292 ext. 194. ☀

Way2Go from p. 6

from Cornell Transportation and Delivery Services to discuss emerging issues and service changes and to coordinate solutions. This allowed Way2Go to share the most up-to-date transportation information with the public through its website and 2-1-1, and to discuss, anticipate, and plan strategically with its partners for upcoming needs.

Meeting Emergency Food Needs. Early in the pandemic, staff in several programs at CCE-Tompkins began meeting online with the newly formed Tompkins Food Task Force, a collaboration of more than 70 representatives of local nonprofit and government partners formed to leverage existing resources and coordinate emergency food relief efforts in response to COVID-19 (see article, p. 19). Way2Go's role in this group has been to assist with transportation needs related to those efforts.

In this capacity, Way2Go participated in weekly conversations on food distribution issues and partnered with United Way of Tompkins County to connect groups collecting and distributing food with volunteer drivers. This included connecting volunteer drivers with the Healthy Food for All Program and the Produce Prescription Program at CCE-Tompkins to make home deliveries.

Way2Go reached out to local food pantries to learn about their needs during the pandemic, and suggested options to help people access food, such as taking Gadabout paratransit bus to the food pantry in Enfield, or borrowing cars from Ithaca Carshare which

were offered at no cost for a limited time. To support an ongoing effort led by the CCE-Tompkins agriculture program, Way2Go contacted local CSA farmers to learn about their challenges getting products to consumers during the pandemic. They discussed ways to share resources such as trucks with other farmers, options for using Gadabout for deliveries; and shared ideas on mapping to help farms establish new pick-up and delivery routes.

Way2Go effectively pivoted its working model to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, reshaping efforts with existing partners and making new connections in the food and health care sectors, to address needs and share information. Local residents found new options for food delivery and transportation to the Cayuga Health Sampling Site due to actions taken by a group of transportation service providers and partner agencies including United Way of Tompkins County, Food Bank of the Southern Tier, Human Services Coalition, Tompkins County Health Department, TCAT, Center for Community Transportation and Way2Go.

Collaborators on these efforts were Tompkins County Area Transit (TCAT), Gadabout Paratransit, Tompkins County Health Department, Center for Community Transportation, members of Tompkins Food Task Force, Tompkins County Department of Social Services, Ithaca Tompkins County Transportation Council, Produce Prescription Program, Healthy Food For All, and United Way of Tompkins County. Way2Go efforts were funded through Federal Transit Agency and Tompkins County grants.

For more information about Way2Go and its programs, visit <http://ccetompkins.org/way2go> or contact Dawn Montanye, Way2Go Team Leader at dm773@cornell.edu.



Horticulture Program Assistant Margaret Royall, left, directs a shopper to the socially distanced queue for entry to the 2020 Spring Plant Sale (Photo: Sandy Repp).

Parenting from p. 10

One of the primary parenting educators Mary Hicks and MSW interns Zach Simms and Nina Drake have been instrumental in adapting curriculum for effective and engaging virtual delivery. By shifting to virtual delivery, the team has worked through many challenges and now offer regular series of several parenting workshops: “Thriving with your Spirited Child,” “Parenting: The Hardest Job in the World” and “Parents Apart.” The team expects to continue offering these workshop series via Zoom into 2021 for as long as remote delivery is needed.

While one-on-one home visits were set back briefly, the F&CD Team did manage to get them up and running mostly via phone and once safety plans were approved they shifted to in-person outside meetings following protocols (screening, distancing, wearing masks, etc.)

Parenting Workshops and Home Visits have been supported for over 20 years by our local Department of Social Services. Collaborators on this effort include caseworkers and families associated with Tompkins County DSS; Francesca Vescia / W. T. Grant Institutional Challenge Grant; the Community Foundation of Tompkins County; Early Childhood Development Collaborative; Louisiana State University MSW intern Zach Sims; Binghamton University MSW intern Nina Drake; and Debbie Thomas, Tompkins County Health Department. Additional financial support was provided by the Community Foundation of Tompkins County’s COVID Response Fund, Legacy Foundation and the W. T. Grant Institutional Challenge Grant.

For more information, contact Anna Steinkraus, Family & Community Development Program Coordinator, at ams69@cornell.edu or (607) 272-2292 ext. 145.☀

4-H Fair from p. 15

Opening Ceremony, Cloverbud Stuffed Animal Show, 4-H Game Night and a Talent Show. Traditional favorite social activities that many families held at-home this year included the Walking Taco Dinner, Bonfire with S’mores, and Cardboard Car Drive-in Movie. Many 4-H families posted pictures of themselves participating in these events.

According to Carpenter, “Several parents who attended the Evaluation Meeting said that they really didn’t think there was any way we could pull this off and they really appreciated the amount of effort and planning that went into making this such a successful event.”☀

Zoom Call from p. 11

or public speaking triggers. Participants seem to sweat less, slip out of first-person and use more narration than they do in the role plays during in-person classes. With the ease of doing role plays comes the chance to practice situations multiple times but always with fewer of the genuine feelings involved.

In switching to virtual presentation, our educators have been able to retain much of the structure of how the in-person classes flow. We use the virtual best practice of 90 minute meetings and make time adjustments as needed. Since there is no set up, break down, break time, or side talk, there are minimal adjustments to programming.

Program funding was provided in part by the Tompkins County Department of Social Services. Story contributed by William Zachary Sims, MSW student intern from Louisiana State University.

For more information, contact Anna Steinkraus, Family & Community Development Program Coordinator, at ams69@cornell.edu or (607) 272-2292 ext. 145.☀

Duck Race from p. 13

the coming year.” Contributions to the program can be made at: <http://cctompkins.org/4-h-youth>.

The Compost Fair normally brings together dozens of MC volunteers from different years to meet and learn from one another, and to share information with the crowd. Ten volunteers planned and executed the prerecorded segments for this year’s event, which have been viewed a total of 135 times to date. “Outreach events such as the Compost Fair, the Grassroots Festival of Music & Dance and other local events that were cancelled in 2020, offer our Master Composter volunteers a chance to sharpen their teaching skills while reaching many thousands of people with information about composting during the year,” says Michaelides. “While we didn’t suffer any financial losses, we’re all looking forward to a time when it will be safe to offer events in-person again,” he concludes.

To view the Compost Fair and 4-H Duck Race recorded stream, visit: <http://bit.ly/2020CompostFair> and <http://bit.ly/2020DuckRace>. For information on the 4-H Rubber Duck Race, to buy chances on the 2021 race or donate a prize, visit: <http://cctompkins.org/4hduckrace> or contact Megan Tiff, 4-H Team Leader, at met38@cornell.edu. For information on the Compost Fair, visit: <http://cctompkins.org/compostfair>. Fact sheets and videos on home composting can be found at: <http://cctompkins.org/compost-resources> or contact Adam Michaelides, Compost Educator, at acm1@cornell.edu.☀

Solidarity Gardens from p. 12

Beginning in July 2020, WorkforceNY assigned four youth trainees to the Solidarity Gardens Project who were supervised by Dolan. The trainees first worked on the Seeds of Hope Microgreens project. After researching the process of microgreen production, the trainees packed seeds and soil, created instructions, and grew some sprouts as a demonstration. They assembled kits (with help from our Master Gardener volunteers) and distributed them in Section-8 housing at West Village Apartments in Ithaca enabling 120 families to grow microgreens in their homes; and at a new food pantry offered in partnership with No Mas Lagrimas a local advocacy group.

The trainees also worked extensively in the community at the Permaculture Park, Beverly J. Martin Elementary, Southside Community Center, and other garden sites. With Dolan's supervision, they constructed wooden raised garden beds, built pathways, maintained gardens, harvested and distributed produce, and conducted neighborhood surveys. These experiences provided the youth with mentoring and helped them gain potential job skills that are relevant to urban agriculture, horticulture, landscaping, and community engagement. Together, the four youth workers contributed ~500 hours to the project from July to September.

New gardeners often feel that the season is over when October rolls around. A fall "Garlic and Flower Bulb Giveaway" aimed to demonstrate that growing can occur in the colder months and to encourage participants to spend time outdoors in the fall and again in spring when their flowers bloom. Growing from bulbs and cloves is an easy entry point for new gardeners

since all the nutrition a plant needs to grow to maturity is pre-packaged in the bulb. Looking forward to spring blooms gives a point of hope and anticipation during our long upstate winter. Josh Dolan, Agriculture Educator Mila Fournier and Master Gardener volunteers joined together to package bulb kits for Solidarity Gardens participants, distributing enough garlic to grow 300 plants and 1,100 flowering bulbs.

Strengthening Alliances. To support and amplify the work of local groups committed to this work, the Solidarity Gardens Project awarded a microgrant to the Traditional Center for Indigenous Knowledge and Healing (TCIKH) to support rural outreach efforts, seed saving education, and a 2-part online community conversation on equitable food access with a panel of local and regional food system advocates.

Lead by Alexas Esposito, Joe Soto and Maya Soto, the conversations featured representatives from The Learning Farm, Ultimate Reentry Opportunity (URO), Groundswell Center for Food and Farming, Mutual Aid Tompkins and Brown Mujeres Media. Part One focused on the importance of seed saving and land access in achieving a more just and resilient food system. Part Two focused on historical trauma and healing in the context of transforming the food system. The Solidarity Gardens Project hopes to use this microgrant model to strengthen partnerships with allied organizations in the community in future years.

Community partners on the Solidarity Gardens Project include: Traditional Center for Indigenous Knowledge and Healing, The Learning Farm, Multicultural Resource Center, No Mas Lagrimas, Youth Farm Project, Cornell University Master of Public Health program, Greenstar Community Projects, Ithaca Children's Garden, Ithaca Community Gardens, Ithaca City School District, Ithaca Housing Authority, Open Doors English ESL Program, Urban Core/Press Bay Food Hub, and WorkforceNY.

Thanks are due to Garden Champions Katie Church, Juliana Garcia, Rose Fleurent, Anthony Halton, Melissa Madden, Christa Nunez, Nia Nunn, Ana Ortiz, Ithaca Housing Authority staff Molly Birecree, and volunteers from Mutual Aid Tompkins; to Alexas Esposito, Joe Soto and Maya Soto at TCIKH; and to GreenTree Garden Supply for their donation of soils for the raised beds.

The Solidarity Gardens Project was funded by a grant from the New York State Department of Agriculture & Markets. For the Project's 2020 Final Report, to learn about what is planned for 2021, or find out how you can get involved or support this work, please visit: <http://ccetompkins.org/solidarity-gardens> or contact Josh Dolan, Food Gardening Outreach Educator at jd285@cornell.edu or (607) 272-2292 ext. 190. ✨



From left, Say Nay, Will and Galen work on a new walkway at Conley Park as part of their summer experience through Workforce NY (Photo: Josh Dolan).

Climate Change from p. 17

Climate Change educators Anne Rhodes and Guillermo Metz worked with JoAnn Cornish, the Director of Planning, whose office oversees sustainability efforts to pull together an Interim Advisory Board comprised of community experts and activists and facilitated its twice monthly meetings.

This Board worked to develop the job description and hiring process for the new Director of Sustainability, to identify and share information that Senior Staff and City Council members would need to move forward, and to shape critical connections within the community to make IGND decisions be more inclusive. A strong and trusting relationship developed between the educators, the Director of Planning and other senior City staff, and members of the Interim Advisory Board, leading to an active exchange of thinking, clarification of values, and identification of needs that have helped shape the City's approach to their activation of the IGND.

As a result of these efforts, community groups including Sustainable Tompkins, Fossil Free Tompkins, HeatSmart, Mothers Out Front, Sunrise, Get Your GreenBack Tompkins, Building Bridges, and others now have stronger connections to each other as well as a venue to get information to the City. These efforts also strengthened a network of individuals, organizations, and non-profits that all work on sustainability issues.

Our educators acted as liaisons between this network and the City in order to broaden the input and perspectives that the

City can access, including making the process more inclusive by engaging with groups of people traditionally underrepresented in these conversations. The educators identified individuals who are well-placed in diverse organizations and groups in the community and helped to strengthen relationships with them and connections between them. Along with some of these groups, they helped organize neighborhood meetings to gather input from a broad array of community members on their priority areas and began communications about how those could align with, influence, or be influenced by IGND goals.

Collaborators on the Climate Vulnerability Assessments included the New York Water Resources Institute and the Town of Caroline local government, with funding for staff time provided through NYSEERDA's Clean Energy Communities program. Staff educators Osamu Jordi Tsuda, Amy Alexis Gonzalez, Terrance Carroll, and Theodora Greene Weatherby worked on this effort.

Partners on the IGND effort included the City of Ithaca Planning Department, Chief of Staff to the Mayor, members of Common Council, Building Bridges, Sunrise, Sustainable Tompkins, and other community groups. The work was supported in part by core funding through the Park Foundation with some outreach and engagement work for the IGND funded by local foundations (Community Foundation, Park Foundation) and granted to Building Bridges. Staff educators Anne Rhodes and Guillermo Metz worked on this effort.

For more information about the Energy & Climate Change Team and these projects, please contact Guillermo Metz, Energy & Climate Change Team Leader at CCE-Tompkins, at gm52@cornell.edu. ☀



The Al Wurster Memorial Rock Garden behind the CCE-Tompkins Education Center (seen here in May 2020) offers a quiet place for reflection and socially distanced outings. The garden was created in memory of longtime Master Gardener Al Wurster and is maintained by current Master Gardener volunteers (Photo: Sandy Repp).

Cornell Cooperative Extension
of Tompkins County
615 Willow Avenue, Ithaca, NY 14850-3555

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 332
Ithaca, New York

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

