

2021 Annual Report

Cornell Cooperative Extension
Tompkins County



Celebrating 15 Years of Healthy Food for All

HEALTHY FOOD FOR ALL PROGRAM CELEBRATES 15TH ANNIVERSARY

By Sharon Tregaskis. In 2021, Healthy Food for All celebrated 15 years of providing sustenance and stability for community members struggling with hunger while fairly compensating local farmers producing the diversity of fruits and veggies that provide a cornerstone to good health. This past growing season, HFFA invested \$200,000 in family-owned organic farms in our area and helped 1,500 food-insecure youth and adults gain reliable, dignified and affordable access to fresh produce through community supported agriculture (CSA) and an assortment of newer programs conceived with our community partners.

HFFA traces its roots to the 2006 vision of the Full Plate Farm Collective founders. While the farmers had priced their CSA shares as affordably as possible, they lamented that their harvest was still out of reach for many neighbors struggling to make ends meet. The challenge was greatest among those trying to stretch a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or Women, Infants and Children (WIC) budget to feed their households.

Healthy Food For All aims to bridge that gap through a partnership of local farms with CCE-Tompkins. In its first year, HFFA received seed funding from United Way of Tompkins County and GreenStar Co-op, and invited CSA members to pitch

storage crops of autumn—HFFA made the rainbow of beautiful, nutritious local fare a certainty for participating households. HFFA members also received the same standing invitation as their fellow CSA members to enjoy visiting the farm to meet their farmers, and help themselves to you-pick berries, flowers, herbs and more.

Every year since, HFFA has expanded to include more local farms, more members and ever deeper relationships with community partners. In 2021, 12 farms provided subsidized CSA shares to over 1,000 HFFA members who resided in every town in Tompkins County. To reach the diversity of community members who have historically been disenfranchised from our vibrant local food system, and more effectively reduce barriers to accessing farm-fresh produce, HFFA collaborates with partners spanning the human service, private and public sectors.

Those long standing—and continually budding—partnerships have informed HFFA’s growth and the array of tactics used to simultaneously promote nutritional food security and farm viability. In addition to the half-price CSA shares launched in 2006, HFFA now offers free and sliding-scale models. With the continued support of United Way of Tompkins County, HFFA broadened eligibility guidelines to accommodate food-insecure

households whose income exceeds the threshold for public programs like SNAP and WIC, but still leaves them struggling to afford basic necessities.

HFFA CSA members can choose on-farm, free home delivery or centralized pickup options every day of the week during peak season to fit their household schedules and priorities, and can opt to extend their share through winter months with some farms. Members also receive seasonal recipes, cooking classes, food preservation workshops and more to help them take full advantage of the large variety and quantity of local produce.

Over the years HFFA also has become attuned to ways it can address the pressing needs of the community. In 2017, Ithaca became the first city in the United States to guarantee access to local produce via free CSA shares for single parents living in poverty and raising young children—a milestone made possible by HFFA with support

from the Community Foundation’s Women’s Fund, Ithaca Garden Club and private donors. In 2018, HFFA launched Food as Medicine to enable households coping with diet-related illnesses to improve their health through produce prescriptions

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CSA members u-picking flowers at West Haven Farm. (Photo: [Jamie Love Photography](#)).

in what they could to collectively subsidize half the cost of 18 shares for households who couldn’t afford the full price. For 24 weeks—from the baby lettuce and snow peas of early spring to the hearty

written by participating healthcare providers. To date, more than 150 people with diabetes, cardiovascular disease and other chronic conditions have received free CSA shares and nutrition education as part of their clinical care. In 2020, as COVID-19 exacerbated disparities in access to fresh food, nutrition and health, HFFA tapped its relationships with farmers, distributors, chefs and community partners to address pandemic-related disruptions in the food system and meet an upsurge in need.

In 2021, HFFA got off to a strong start with an award from the national No Kid Hungry campaign run by Share Our Strength which selected Healthy Food For All from among thousands of programs across the U.S. as a winning, innovative approach to improve early childhood nutrition.

After a bustling season distributing over 200,000 pounds of beautiful farm-fresh produce, 2021 culminated with its most successful annual appeal in HFFA's history. Thanks to the generosity of more than 370 donors, HFFA raised over \$150,000 to sustain and continue growing the program to keep pace with demand.

HFFA isn't resting on those laurels. 2022 plans include supporting emerging farmers to expand access to local produce for Gayogohónó and other BIPOC households as well as people transitioning from the carceral system and highly vulnerable youth through the Farm-to-Pantry, Farm-to-Prison and Farm-to-Plate projects in collaboration with community partners. HFFA is honored to work with Calvary Baptist Church, Enfield Food Pantry, No Mas Lagrimas, Traditional Center for Indigenous Knowledge

and Healing, The Learning Farm, Ultimate Re-Entry Opportunity and Village at Ithaca.

To learn more about Healthy Food for All and to support their efforts to build a community where everyone has reliable and dignified access to quality, locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables, and farmers thrive as responsible stewards of our land, visit their website at: <https://www.healthyfoodforall.org/>.

Acknowledgements: 2021 Farmer Advisory Board: Buried Treasures Farm, Fort Baptist Farm, Full Plate Farm Collective, Here We Are Farm, Kestrel Perch Berry Farm, Main Street Farms, Nook and Cranny Farm, Plowbreak Farm, Remembrance Farm, Six Circles Farm, Stick and Stone Farm, Sweet Land Farm, TC3 Farm, Tree Gate Farm and West Haven Farm. Many thanks also to Blue Heron Farm, Jackman Vineyards and Youth Farm for supporting HFFA's Farm-to-Pantry and Farm-to-Plate special projects. Our heartfelt appreciation to HFFA's staff and more than 35 volunteers.

2021 Funders: Care Compass Network and Rural Health Network of South Central New York (Food As Medicine-Produce Prescription Program), Community Foundation of Tompkins County, FEMA Emergency Food and Shelter Program, Flerlage Foundation, Legacy Foundation, NY State Department of Agriculture and Markets, No Kid Hungry-Share Our Strength, United Way of Tompkins County and 370+ private donors. HFFA wishes to also thank the Park Foundation for their tremendous support from 2010 through 2019; without their partnership and investment over the years, HFFA would not be successful today. ☀

2021 Annual Report Cover Credit Healthy Food For All's Equity Program Coordinator shows her daughter purple kohlrabi in the fields of West Haven Farm at a Healthy Food for All event in September 2021 (Photo: [Jamie Love Photography](#)).