

THE COMMUNITY KITCHEN, INC.

Gleaning Project End of Season Report, 2015

OVERVIEW

The year 2015 marked the third season of the Gleaning Project at The Community Kitchen, Inc. The charitable gardening work in the local community expanded significantly this year, which prompted the hiring of a seasonal Garden Harvest Coordinator to help support these projects. The Community Kitchen continued to do community outreach and education and participate in community awareness efforts around issues of food and hunger. The Gleaning Coordinator sought new ideas for improving the program by working with a graduate student from Antioch University New England on a program evaluation project, as well as by attending various workshops and meetings on food systems and gleaning.



OUTREACH

The Gleaning Project participated in various community outreach and education efforts. During 2015, the Gleaning Coordinator sat on the Education Committee of the Monadnock Farm and Community Coalition and helped coordinate some of their community education events, including their Urban Agriculture workshop and fair in the summer. The Community Kitchen participated in Monadnock Farm and Community Coalition's Feast on This Film Festival in the fall. Additionally, the Gleaning Project organized two cooking/food preservation workshops at The Community Kitchen, focused on sharing thrifty food skills with the guests of The Community Kitchen and the wider community. The Gleaning Project also collaborated with Community Garden Connections, the Keene Recreation Center, and Monadnock Family Service's In Shape program to support two guests of The Community Kitchen in growing their own food in raised beds at the Keene Recreation Center.



The following is a calendar of the Gleaning Project's engagements in the community.

| Date | Type | Description |
|------|------------|--|
| 1/17 | Education | Whole Chicken Workshop – Local farmer and food entrepreneur Bill Fosher taught a group of six people how to butcher a whole chicken and use it in a variety of recipes |
| 1/20 | Evaluation | Focus group of gleaning volunteers as part of Peter Jenkins' master's project doing program evaluation of the Gleaning Project |

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| 1/28 | Evaluation | Focus group of farmers as part of the program evaluation project |
| 1/31 | Outreach | Co-led a workshop on gleaning as part of the NOFA-NH annual conference |
| 4/7 | Partnership | Attended a ceremony of the President's Community Partner Award in Bedford, receiving the award from Antioch University New England |
| 4/8 | Education | Spoke to Fourth Graders at Chesterfield Elementary School about gleaning |
| 4/23 | Outreach | Gleaning Coordinator interview on The Peak radio show with John Oliphant about the upcoming gleaning season, need for volunteers and for farmers to donate produce |
| 6/3-5 | Learning & Networking | The Gleaning Coordinator attended the Slow Living Conference, which focused on food, agriculture, and food systems |
| 7/10 | Outreach | Gleaning Coordinator and Garden Harvest Coordinator interview on The Peak radio show about Community Giving Gardens and volunteer opportunities. |
| 7/15 | Outreach | Tabling at Monadnock Farm and Community Coalition's Urban Agriculture workshop and fair held at Keene Recreation Center |
| 8/29 | Outreach & Fundraiser | The Community Kitchen presented its first annual Harvest Dinner fundraiser, featuring gleaned and local products, and showing a debut of our 12-minute film on gleaning, produced by Galen Trinkle. |
| 9/1 | Learning & Networking | Gleaning Coordinator attended quarterly meeting of Vermont Gleaning Collective and met with Theresa Snow to discuss how NH might be able to adapt VGC's online database. |
| 9/9 | Learning & Networking | Gleaning Coordinator participated in a focus group by Healthy New Hampshire Foundation to exchange insights about programs addressing childhood hunger & obesity in NH. |
| 9/10 | Outreach | Tabling at Keene State College's campus activities and community engagement fair with Andrea Halfspring, a TCK volunteer coordinator. |
| 10/3 | Education | Applesauce Canning Workshop – Local homesteader Pamela Parrish taught a group of eight people how to prepare and can applesauce using the hot water bath method. |
| 10/3 | Education | Gleaning Coordinator attended Students for Zero Waste conference at University of New Hampshire and presented on how & why to run gleaning projects to the "lifestyles" panel. |
| 10/19 | Learning & Networking | Gleaning Coordinator attended BioCycle Refor workshop on "Food For People, Food for Soil," which addressed various projects to "close the loop" on food system efficiency and addressing hunger and agricultural issues simultaneously. |
| 10/20 | Education | Gleaning Coordinator spoke to Fred Taylor's Environmental Advocacy class about gleaning. |
| 10/23 | Outreach | Tabling at Monadnock Food Coop as a part of their International Food Day celebration. |
| 11/7 | Education | Gleaning Coordinator participated in a panel presentation, with Keene State College Community Service Coordinator Jessica Gagne-Cloutier and KSC student Kya Roumimper. The presentation was on food justice and the event was a gathering of Campus Compact representatives from across NH. |
| 11/11 | Outreach | TCK's Director, Gleaning Coordinator, and Garden Harvest Coordinator spoke to community members who came to view the movie The Starfish Throwers as part of Monadnock Farm and Community Coalition's Feast on This Film Festival. |

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| 11/12-11/14 | Learning & Networking | Gleaning Coordinator attended New England Sustainable Agriculture Working Group's annual meeting. Met gleaners from VT, NY, & PA, and learned of an online gleaning database system. |
| 11/15 | Learning & Networking | Gleaning Coordinator and Garden Harvest Coordinator attended the showing of In Defense of Food, as part of MFCC's Feast on This Film Festival. |
| 11/17 | Learning & Networking | Gleaning Coordinator attended New Hampshire Food Alliance's Statewide Gathering to celebrate the launch of the New England Food Vision. |
| 11/30 | Learning & Networking | TCK's Director and Gleaning Coordinator attend Healthy New Hampshire Foundation's Healthy Food Access project launch breakfast in which they announce funding priorities for their new initiative to fight childhood obesity and hunger. |
| 12/1 | Learning & Networking | Gleaning Coordinator attended a quarterly meeting of the Vermont Gleaning Collective. |
| 12/8 | Outreach | Gleaning Coordinator is the featured speaker at the Retired Educator's Luncheon. |

GLEANINGS

A total of 52,471.8 pounds of fresh local produce was collected through the Gleaning Project in 2015. The sources of the produce included 15 commercial farms (2 of which were not operating for public production this year), 7 charitable giving gardens (producing exclusively for charitable donation), the Keene Farmer's Market, and a wide variety of home and community gardens.



The following table shows the crop varieties that were collected in 2015. Crops are listed in descending order according to how many pounds were collected of each crop. For crops that yielded over a thousand pounds, the table lists the specific weight collected, while the remaining crops are listed in their weight categories.

| Crop | Pounds |
|--|--------|
| Sweet Potatoes | 8,567 |
| Summer Squash (zucchini, yellow squash, pattypan squash) | 5,529 |
| Cucumbers | 4,805 |
| Apples | 4,352 |
| Lettuce | 3,243 |
| Winter Squash (pumpkins, butternut squash, acorn squash, | 3,242 |

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| etc.) | |
| Tomatoes | 2,508 |
| Potatoes | 2,393 |
| Corn | 1,956 |
| Carrots | 1,811 |
| Kale | 1,212 |
| Peppers | 1,017 |
| Beets, Swiss Chard, Cabbage, Collard Greens, Eggplants, Green Beans, Turnips, | 1000-500 pounds (listed from most to |

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| Radishes, Cantaloupe | least weight) |
| Bok Choy, Cherry Tomatoes, Parsnips, Rutabagas, Onions, Asian Pears, Asian Greens, Broccoli, Bread, Pears, Herbs, Watermelon, Salad Mix, Spinach, Arugula, Sausage, Cauliflower, Garlic | 500-100 pounds (listed from most to least weight) |

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| Mustard Greens, Daikons, Sunchokes, Eggs, Fennel, Brussels Sprouts, Chicken Stock, Mixed Veggies, Peas, Scallions, Strawberries, Mesclun Mix, Pork, Blueberries, Celery, Celeriac, Shallots, Rhubarb, Leeks, Napa Cabbage, Escarole, Radicchio, Tomatillos, Raspberries, Endive, Melons, Kohlrabi, Edamame | 100-2 pounds (listed from most to least weight) |
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The following table shows the sources, quantities, and types of products that were collected through the Gleaning Project. The term “variety” is used in the table to indicate sites that donated a wide variety of products and included a range of categories (such as root vegetables, herbs, greens, night shades, squashes, legumes, and fruits).



| Name of Site | Farm/ Charitable Garden/ Other | Types of Produce | # of Pounds Donated |
|---|--------------------------------|--|---------------------|
| Picadilly Farm | Farm | Variety, especially sweet potatoes and Asian greens | 16,917.8 |
| Cheshire Fair Farm | Charitable | Variety, especially lettuce & cooking greens | 12,012.6 |
| Green Wagon Farm | Farm | Corn, squash, cucumbers, green beans, potatoes, tomatoes, peppers, lettuce | 6,051.2 |
| Community Garden Connections Westmoreland Project | Charitable | Variety, especially apples, Asian pears, sweet potatoes | 3,899.9 |
| Stonewall Farm | Farm | Variety | 2,616.7 |
| Home Gardeners | Other | Variety | 2,384.5 |
| Nye Hill Farm | Farm | Variety, especially blueberries and raspberries | 1,429.9 |
| Keene Farmer’s Market | Other | Variety, including bread and soap | 1,242.1 |
| Orchard Hill Farm | Farm | Apples | 1,220 |
| Maple Lane Farm | Farm | Apples and some squash | 1,153.8 |

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|---------------------------------------|------------------------|--|-------|
| C & S Wholesale Grocers (Summit Rd) | Charitable | Variety | 784.2 |
| C & S Wholesale Grocers (Optical Ave) | Charitable | Variety | 693.8 |
| Liberty Mutual | Charitable | Variety, especially potatoes, green beans, winter squash | 529.4 |
| UPS | Charitable | Variety, especially cucumbers | 331.1 |
| Mayfair Farm | Farm | Frozen pork, sausages, & chicken stock; winter squash | 284 |
| High Hopes Farm | Farm (non-operational) | Apples | 272.6 |
| My Friends Farm | Other | Variety | 180.1 |
| Cheshire Garden | Farm | Pears | 140 |
| Monadnock Humane Society | Charitable | Variety | 111.3 |
| Tracie's Community Farm | Farm | Salad greens | 104.6 |
| Wingate Farm | Farm | Eggs | 60 |
| New Dawn Farm | Farm | Greens, herbs | 44 |
| 1780 Farm | Farm (non-operational) | Blueberries | 8.2 |

The Community Kitchen's Gleaning Project has facilitated a number of different avenues for making fresh local produce available to our guests through our programs. The original model for gleaning is that farmers will alert us about crops that could go to waste, and we will harvest them with volunteer support. In addition to this model, the project accesses produce that is pre-harvested. This occurs when farmers arrange for The Community Kitchen staff to pick up excess products from farm storage, stands, or the Keene Farmer's Market, and when farmers and other producers, including home gardeners, deliver produce directly to The Community Kitchen.

Another important source of produce for the Gleaning Project is food grown specifically for charitable donation. In 2015, charitable gardening for The Community Kitchen was taking place at seven locations in and around Keene. The largest of these projects was a ¾ acre space at the Cheshire Fairgrounds that had previously operated as a small Community Supported Agriculture farm. The Community Kitchen provided some funding for this project, and also hired a seasonal, part-time Garden Harvest Coordinator, Heidi Bukoski, to help manage the expanded tasks around harvesting and packing produce coming in from charitable gardening projects.



The following table gives an interesting break-down of the distribution of produce between that which was grown for commercial or personal consumption, and otherwise would have gone to waste, and that which was grown for charitable donation; along with that which was harvested by the producers, and that which was harvested by the gleaning project (its' staff and volunteers).

| | Farms, Home Gardeners, Others (Not grown for charity) | Charitable Gardens |
|---|--|--------------------|
| # Pounds pre-harvested | 27,691.9 | 3,849.5 |
| # Pounds harvested by gleaning staff and/or volunteers (sometimes with grower's help) | 6,409.4 | 14,512.8 |

Only 12% of the produce collected through the Gleaning Project followed the “original model” of gleaning in 2015 (produce that would otherwise go to waste, harvested by project staff and volunteers). On the other hand, 60% of the produce collected was harvested by the food growers, their staff, friends, and volunteers. A full 35% of the produce collected in 2015 was grown with the original purpose of being donated to charity. These numbers illustrate both the importance of maintaining a flexible definition of gleaning and the capacity to support diverse models; and the large, as yet not fully tapped, potential for expanding traditional gleaning in our region.



Once produce was delivered to The Community Kitchen, most of it was distributed directly to guests enrolled in the food pantry program. Produce was also used in The Community Kitchen’s hot meals program. An expanded quantity of gleaned produce was made available to partner food pantry agencies in 2015, especially the Fall Mountain food pantry, which made weekly pick-ups from The Community Kitchen. We did not connect with School Administrative Unit 29 as we have in the past, in order to donate produce, but will make more timely arrangements with them in 2016.

VOLUNTEERS

Record keeping on volunteers and their hours of service was unsatisfactory in 2015, but a reasonable estimate is that approximately 90 individuals provided approximately 560 hours of volunteer service to the Gleaning Project. Over 60% of these volunteer hours were dedicated to the support of the Cheshire Fair Farm project between weekly harvesting activities, weekly sorting and packing (taking place at The Community Kitchen immediately after the garden gleans), and a large mid-summer project with in-coming Keene State College students.

The “Gleaning Alerts” list reached over 190 names by the end of the 2015 season, though the great majority of these individuals did not attend any gleans during any of the seasons. Many requested to be removed from the list due to having moved out of the area. A few new volunteers proved to be loyal and repetitive volunteers, and a few volunteers continued their steady support that began in the first season of gleaning. Some volunteers engaged in gleaning almost weekly throughout the season.



On five occasions, the Gleaning Project received support from larger groups. Three groups came from Keene State College and they engaged in garden weeding, food preparation, and apple harvesting. The

other two groups were associated with local businesses. Badger Company sent a group of 5 employees to an apple harvest as part of their routine community engagement efforts as a “B Corporation” company. Electronic Imaging Materials, Inc. sent a group of 7 employees to an apple and pear harvest as part of their United Way Day of Caring project. While working with larger groups has presented some logistical challenges, the Gleaning Project finds that these are worthwhile events that further support the Project, so we continue to seek opportunities to engage in these group volunteer activities.

STORIES

Every gleaning season brings special stories and new developments. One of the season’s stories begins with a chance encounter in a 7-11 convenience store. The Gleaning Coordinator was standing in line when a man standing behind her noticed The Community Kitchen logo on her sweatshirt. A conversation ensued, as the man was interested in finding a community engagement activity for his two middle school aged grandchildren over the summer. As a result, this man and his two grandchildren spent at least two mornings a week volunteering at The Community Kitchen throughout the summer, one in the warehouse, and one harvesting produce at Cheshire Fair Farm. The fact that gleanings were taking place on regular Tuesday mornings also attracted several other folks looking for engagements for their children, so on several occasions, gleaning became a social occasion for up to five middle-school aged children. The Gleaning Coordinator has taken note and plans to “sell” the gleaning program in the community as an excellent family activity, especially for middle school aged kids.

Another developing story is The Community Kitchen’s relationship with the raised bed gardens at the Keene Recreation Center. The raised bed gardens were installed at the Rec Center about four years ago, out of a project partnership between the Rec Center and Community Garden Connections. In 2014, The Community Kitchen was invited to use several of the beds to grow food for and with our program guests. In the first season, due to getting a late start, we grew food for direct harvest and use at The Community Kitchen. In 2015, we were offered three raised beds to use from the beginning of the summer. We identified two guests of The Community Kitchen who were interested in growing food, one of whom receives support from Jen Ireland through Monadnock Family Service’s In Shape program. Jen has been working with Community Garden Connections, raising food at the YMCA with some of her clients. Jen and her client raised produce in two of the three beds, and another client raised produce in a third bed, with some technical assistance from Community Garden Connections and shared resources from the Rec Center (such as tools, irrigation, and start-up money). After the growing season finished, The Community Kitchen was contacted by a Keene State College student who represents a number of students interested in engaging with community members in need and helping them raise vegetables. We see a growing interest in the community in supporting people to grow fresh produce for their own use. This is an area that staff working on the gleaning project are contemplating to decide the best extent of our organization’s role in this work, how to support these partnerships, and help community members who are ready to do this work. With enough support, we can imagine including many more of the families who access food through The Community Kitchen, providing them with a much more comprehensive and satisfying educational experience, and possibly expanding the efforts beyond the Rec Center site in future years.



The Gleaning Project was chosen as the subject of an Antioch University New England student's master's degree project in 2015. Peter Jenkins worked with his thesis advisor to undertake a "program evaluation" of The Community Kitchen's Gleaning Project. Speaking with the Gleaning Coordinator, he decided to evaluate the effectiveness of the Gleaning Project in providing a satisfactory experience for volunteers and for farmers and food producers. He carried out his research by engaging separate focus groups for the volunteers and for the food producers. He also conducted a survey of volunteers and food producers who did not attend the focus groups. His final report will include a literature review and recommendations for improving volunteer and food producer's experiences in working with the Gleaning Project.

LESSONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Each season of experience in the Gleaning Project continues to offer new experiences, insights, dilemmas, and ideas. Following the 2015 season, we have the following recommendations for the 2016 season in the Gleaning Project:

- Seek grant funding and establish a year-round, 20-hour per week position for a Gardening Partnership Coordinator. This person will continue and expand upon the work accomplished by Heidi Bukoski in 2015, coordinating all aspects of consulting with charitable gardening partners on recommended crops to grow, organizing volunteers to harvest and transport produce, organizing volunteers around packing, labelling, logging, and storing produce, and moving forward efforts to support guests of The Community Kitchen in growing their own food in community garden settings.
- Adopt a new database system, Gleanweb, to organize gleaning events, volunteers, and data tracking related to crops harvested.
- Revamp community outreach materials, increase outreach efforts, especially during the winter and spring. Take updated materials to farmer's markets other than the one in Keene and make contacts with vendors at those markets in 2016.
- Reach out to at least one farmer located outside of Keene and discuss what it would be like to set up gleaning on a regular basis with a local volunteer organization and keeping the produce in the very local community (experimenting with whether regular, and hyper-local gleaning relationships would increase gleaning efficiency).
- Reach out to at least 3 businesses and/or organizations to discuss whether their constituents could commit to regular volunteer work in gleaning throughout the season at a local farm. Develop some regular gleaning relationships.
- Start an "advisory committee" of some volunteers (probably including at least one Board member of The Community Kitchen) and other community members, which will be tasked with helping to develop relationships with individuals and organizations in the community, scouting opportunities to do outreach and education in the community, helping to assess priorities, helping to understand issues of poverty, health, and hunger, and making The Community Kitchen aware of any opportunities to better accomplish our mission.