

FY 2014

\$83,856 to the Southside Community Land Trust, Providence, RI, to recruit and train urban farmers in direct-to-consumer markets, and educate consumers on choosing healthy and local food options.

Final Report

**Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP)
Final Performance Report**

The final performance report summarizes the outcome of your FMPP award objectives. As stated in the FMPP Terms and Conditions, you will not be eligible for future FMPP or Local Food Promotion Program grant funding unless all close-out procedures are completed, including satisfactory submission of this final performance report.

This final report will be made available to the public once it is approved by FMPP staff. Write the report in a way that promotes your project's accomplishments, as this document will serve as not only a learning tool, but a promotional tool to support local and regional food programs. Particularly, recipients are expected to provide both qualitative and quantitative results to convey the activities and accomplishments of the work.

The report is limited to 10 pages and is due **within 90 days** of the project's performance period end date, or sooner if the project is complete. Provide answers to each question, or answer "not applicable" where necessary. It is recommended that you email or fax your completed performance report to FMPP staff to avoid delays:

FMPP Phone: 202-690-4152; Email: USDAFMPPQuestions@ams.usda.gov; Fax: 202-690-4152

Should you need to mail your documents via hard copy, contact FMPP staff to obtain mailing instructions.

Report Date Range: <i>(e.g. September 30, 20XX-September 29, 20XX)</i>	September 30, 2014 – September 29, 2016
Authorized Representative Name:	Jenny Boone
Authorized Representative Phone:	401-273-9419
Authorized Representative Email:	jenny@southsideclt.org
Recipient Organization Name:	Southside Community Land Trust
Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:	<i>Healthy Providence: Expanding Fresh Food Access and Awareness in the Ocean State</i>
Grant Agreement Number: <i>(e.g. 14-FMPPX-XX-XXXX)</i>	14-FMPPX-RI-0152
Year Grant was Awarded:	2014
Project City/State:	Providence, RI
Total Awarded Budget:	\$88,256

FMPP staff may contact you to follow up for long-term success stories. Who may we contact?

Same Authorized Representative listed above (check if applicable).

Different individual: Name: _____; Email: _____; Phone: _____

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0581-0287. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 4 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable sex, marital status, or familial status, parental status religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program (not all prohibited bases apply to all programs). Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

1. **State the goals/objectives of your project as outlined in the grant narrative and/or approved by FMPP staff. If the goals/objectives from the narrative have changed from the grant narrative, please highlight those changes (e.g. “new objective”, “new contact”, “new consultant”, etc.). You may add additional goals/objectives if necessary. For each item below, qualitatively discuss the progress made and indicate the impact on the community, if any.**

Goal/Objective 1: Increase the capacity of farmers in the Providence Urban Farmers Network (PUFN)

Activity #1: Facilitate Meetings of the Providence Urban Farmers Network

Activity #2: Work with Farmers to Increase Productivity and Enhance Farm Sustainability

Activity #3: Work together to identify and access new markets and influence the regulatory environment

Activity #4: Work together to understand the changing regulatory environment

Progress Made:

Since the inception of this grant, SCLT facilitated seven meetings of the Providence Urban Farmers Network. The meetings were attended by 11 grower participants. The Network members identified issues of action that would increase their collective farm productivity. Topics included: meeting with an NRCS staff person about EQIP contracts; learning from Farm Credit East and Sidewalk Ends farmers about farm expansion plans – what to consider when expanding your business and where to get information; grassroots marketing strategies to increase customers at their farmers markets; collective strategies to access to greenhouse space for seed starting and to make bulk ordering for supplies; and a review of procedures to accept WIC and SNAP at farmers markets.

Recognizing that some farmers also needed more instruction on production and exposure to alternative practices, SCLT also held a number of on- farm workshops including a Pollinator Habitat workshop in Spring 2015; livestock, vegetable, and culinary herb farm tours in summer 2016; and a Season Extension workshop in October 2016. Approximately 10-12 market growers, urban farmers and aspiring farmers attended these additional workshops.

SCLT identified four new urban farms: Dexter Street Community Garden, Charles Street Community Farm, Somerset Hayward Community Farm, and Galego Court Community Farm; as well as cleared an additional 4- acre field at SCLT’s incubator farm, Urban Edge Farm. To date, this space has allotted five farmers access to land and/or expansion – three new farmers were installed at Dexter Street Community Garden (one had moved to a different site for the 2016 season), and two new farmers were installed at Galego Court. Moreover, during the grant period SCLT worked to develop urban farmland, which will be available in spring 2017: two urban farm plots at Somerset, 1-2 urban farm plots upon securing a lease for Charles Street Community Garden, and three ¼- acre farm plots at Urban Edge Farm. In total, this is an expansion of 10 urban and rural farm plots for growers establishing a farm business. During the grant period, we worked with these farmers to develop business plans and to connect them to markets (particularly the Sankofa farmers market), in order to prepare for their new farm plots.

Impact on Community:

Through progress on this goal, SCLT worked to develop producer capacity in order to increase the agricultural products sold through farmers markets and CSAs in Providence food deserts. We achieved this through sharing information, building a network for peer-to-peer learning and collaboration, and supporting farmers with resources and access to land.

PUFN growers have the resources to make changes to their growing, promotion and selling practices based on lessons learned from off-season grower meetings, collaboration and workshops.

Growers were also able to take advantage of collaborative savings by ordering seeds through NOFA RI and buying seed garlic in Fall 2016 from a SCLT bulk order.

SCLT increased access to land for farm start-up and expansion through the identification of new urban farm sites, including those developed through partnerships with the City of Providence and with community organizations, and through SCLT land acquisition. By securing four parcels of urban land as well as four acres of additional rural growing space, our work over the grant period provides for farming employment for at least thirteen aspiring market farmers. These farmers also were connected to urban farmers markets and trained to process federal nutrition benefits. As a result, our work has increased the amount of fresh, healthy and affordable food available in Providence's urban food deserts.

Goal/Objective 2: Build food production and marketing skills of young farmers

Activity #1: Recruit young farmers for the City Farm Intern Program

Activity #2: Provide training in Urban Agriculture

Progress Made:

SCLT recruited eleven young farmers to participate in the 2015 program and twelve to participate in the 2016 program. Recruitment occurred through channels including: local high schools, the Davey Lopes Recreation Center, youth NAACP chapter, SWAP (a neighborhood affordable housing organization), and through word of mouth. In its second year, 31 high school students applied for the six opening available, with six youth returning from the previous summer. Returning youth took ownership in the hiring of new participants, participating in both group interviews and "work" interviews held at City Farm. Following the summer program, the young farmers were invited to reapply to work during the fall and spring, with shifts after school hours. Four to six youth participated during these seasons. The youth were all paid minimum wage.

Throughout the spring, summer and fall seasons of the program, the young farmers worked with the City Farm Steward to grow and harvest vegetables for sale at farmers markets and to local restaurants through a growers' cooperative. The youth learned farming skills, including composting and soil enrichment, planting, tending, harvesting, and marketing. Their training focused particularly on procedures to ensure a consistent and high-quality product. Those participating in the spring program learned how to propagate seeds in the greenhouse and to open the farm for the year. In the fall program, they participated in closing the farm down for the season. They also learned about bio-intensive practices and crop rotation, as well as the science behind these practices.

In September 2015 the youth began developing plans for the Youth Enterprise Farm, which will utilize much of the space of the Somerset Hayward Community Farm. They held a Farm Design Charrette, at which, about 50 young farmers, community members and representatives of partner agencies engaged in a participatory design and planning process to inform development of the youth farm. In September 2016, cover crop was spread and beds were measured at Somerset Hayward in preparation of an October 2016 planting of garlic.

In addition to their work at City Farm, the young farmers engaged in activities to increase their understanding of the local food system and to learn how to make healthy food decisions for themselves: Each week, they conducted community outreach in South Providence and the West End to promote three urban farmers markets. They assisted in teaching K-8 garden and nutrition classes. Finally, they participated in workshops to discuss food access and economic equity, and learned nutrition and cooking skills through a hands-on workshop with a culinary arts instructor.

Impact on Community:

The youth acquired specific farming skills that will remain with them over the course of their lives, including agricultural entrepreneurial and business training. Moreover, this experience may lead them to pursue college careers in agriculture, sustainability, agro-economy or other fields.

More broadly, they learned about the local food system, urban farming, food insecurity, and nutrition, and they have taken their knowledge back to their families, schools and other organizations they are involved in. They also received salaries (many for the first time), and learned important job skills that will give them a leg-up when they're ready to enter the job market. They also became empowered as young leaders within their peer groups and communities and were invited to lead a conference session about their experiences at the "It Takes a Region" Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group conference in Fall 2016.

Finally, SCLT leveraged the FMPP funds to attract additional funding that supported an outreach campaign to promote three area farmers markets. Through this program, the youth conducted 899 one-on-one conversations and distributed 4,245 fliers over the course of two summers about the South Providence farmers markets and federal food assistance benefits available there.

Goal/Objective 3: Educate and empower families to choose healthy options available for purchase directly from farmers

Activity #1: Offer 6 weeks of classroom training on nutrition, cooking, gardening and healthy local food options.

Activity #2: Expanding SCLT website to include nutrition, cooking, and healthy local food options

Activity #3: Offer healthy cooking demonstrations at SCLT public events and Farmers Markets

Progress Made:

Over the grant period, SCLT hosted eight *Better Health and Garden* 6-week course with both English and Spanish instruction, serving approximately 44 participants who finished the program.

The *Better Health and Garden* curriculum and accompanying recipes have been added to the SCLT website through linking to an extensive PDF document. These are available in both English and Spanish. Nevertheless, efforts are still in progress to more fully integrate nutrition, cooking and healthy local food options into the SCLT website throughout the website's redesign progress.

SCLT staff offered fourteen healthy cooking demonstrations – with both English and Spanish demonstrations – to a total of approximately 170 participants. The demonstrations took place at locations throughout Providence including: SCLT Urban Ag Kickoff, Food on the Move mobile farmers markets, the Sankofa World Market, St. Joseph's Hospital health fair, and the South Providence Community Library.

Impact on Community:

Participants learned to prepare and sampled simple, plant-based recipes. They also learned about ways to access healthy, fresh vegetables: SCLT staff presented information about the nearby farmers markets and the federal nutrition benefits that can be redeemed there. Participants also received encouraging incentives to continue making healthy choices, including a bottle of extra virgin olive oil, tokens to use at SCLT's farm stands, and/or a free SCLT membership, giving them free seeds, organic compost and a discount on plant starts.

Upon finishing the *Better Health and Garden* course, participants were able to access curriculum information to reinforce nutrition practices and recipe instructions shared through the course. Moreover, the website link has expanded access to *Better Health and Garden* resources beyond course participants to anyone in search of nutrition and cooking information, as the link is prominently displayed on the homepage of the SCLT website.

Through the healthy cooking demonstrations, participants received exposure to at least one healthy recipe as well as received recipe cards so that the dish could be duplicated for children, families, neighbors or friends. Many cooking demonstrations also included brief presentations on local farmers markets and federal food assistance programs to help participants identify local healthy food options.

2. Quantify the overall impact of the project on the intended beneficiaries, if applicable, from the baseline date (the start of the award performance period, September 30, 2014). Include further explanation if necessary.

- i. Number of direct jobs created: 5
- ii. Number of jobs retained: 11
- iii. Number of indirect jobs created: Unknown
- iv. Number of markets expanded: 2

SCLT provided land and resources to new farmers who sold at two farmers markets (Pawtucket Slater Park and the Sankofa World Market), thereby expanding the vendors selling there.

- v. Number of new markets established: N/A
- vi. Market sales increased by \$2,466 and increased by N/A%.

This figure represents the revenue for the 4 new farm sites established under Goal/Objective 1. This is lower than what we projected in the grant application. This is because, at that time, we had expected that the Providence Urban Farmer Network participants would lease this new farmland. Instead, we leased to first year farmers. It takes more time for these beginning farmers (who are immigrants and low resource) to scale up to the level of more experienced urban farmers. We anticipate that their revenue will increase in future seasons.

- vii. Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project: 33
 - a. Percent Increase: 300%

3. Did you expand your customer base by reaching new populations such as new ethnic groups, additional low income/low access populations, new businesses, etc.? If so, how?

During the grant period, SCLT worked with farmers that grow specialty crops serving a variety of ethnic groups including Southeast Asian, Caribbean, West African, and Hispanic. By supporting these farmers to expand their businesses, we reached new more customers representing this wide set of ethnic groups. Further, the project bolstered the Sankofa Market, Broad Street Market, and Armory Market, all farmers markets serving low- income neighborhoods in South Providence. At the Sankofa Market, for example, two- thirds of the vegetable stands in 2016 were occupied by farmers who grow on SCLT land, and all of the stands were occupied by farmers who participate in our program and Farmer Network.

The Better Health and Gardens program reached new populations by working through community partners whose clients had not previously shopped at local farmers markets. These participants also generally were from low- income households, and they reflected the ethnic diversity of South Providence.

4. Discuss your community partnerships.

- i. Who are your community partners?**
- ii. How have they contributed to the overall results of the FMPP project?**
- iii. How will they continue to contribute to your project's future activities, beyond the performance period of this FMPP grant?**

Our community partners were an integral part of the project. For Objective 1, our primary partners were the City of Providence, West Elmwood Housing Development Corporation, and Farm Fresh RI. The City partners with SCLT to provide urban farmland through its Lots of Hope program, and it also provides funding to community partners like SCLT to build urban farms. West Elmwood Housing Development Corporation and Farm Fresh RI operate the three farmers markets in South Providence where PUFN farmers sell and where participants in the nutrition training program are most likely to shop. SCLT advised WEHDC on founding the Sankofa Market, and we participate in its advisory committee.

For Objective 2, we partnered with area schools and organizations to recruit participants for the Young Farmers program. These included The Met School, UCAP School, Providence Career and Technical Academy, the Davey Lopes Recreation Center, youth NAACP chapter, SWAP (a neighborhood affordable housing organization), and the Salvation Army. Because this is a newly expanded program, we relied on this extensive list of community partners in order to connect with young applicants in our target area. During the program, other community partners collaborated – usually free of charge – with us to provide food system workshops and field trips. These partners included Farmacy Herbs, the Genesis Center culinary arts program, Sidewalk Ends Farm, and Scratch Farm.

For Objective 3, we partnered with Brown University and Miriam Hospital through the project contractor, Dr. Mary Flynn. Additionally, we partnered with other community organizations in order to host the 6- week training courses at their facilities. The following organizations hosted a 6- week course: Lifespan Community Health Center, the RI Free Clinic, South Providence Neighborhood Ministries, Elmwood Community Center, the Genesis Center, and Providence Parent Academy. Finally, we offered the cooking demonstrations in partnership with other community organizations including: Providence Community Libraries, Food on the Move Mobile Market, the Sankofa Market, St. Joseph's Health Center, and the Pawtucket Housing Authority. All of these organizations assisted by advertising the course or cooking demonstration and otherwise assisting in recruiting participants from their clients/students.

5. Are you using contractors to conduct the work? If so, how did their work contribute to the results of the FMPP project?

SCLT employed one contractor to conduct the Better Health and Gardens nutrition training program. Her work contributed to the FMPP project because it allowed SCLT to build on her significant experience as a nutritionist, researcher, and educator. It also expanded the project's reach because she trained Brown University students to teach the Better Health and Gardens curriculum as part of their university coursework, which minimized our personnel costs.

6. Have you publicized any results yet?*

- i. If yes, how did you publicize the results?**
- ii. To whom did you publicize the results?**
- iii. How many stakeholders (i.e. people, entities) did you reach?**

***Send any publicity information (brochures, announcements, newsletters, etc.) electronically along with this report. Non-electronic promotional items should be digitally photographed and emailed with this report (do not send the actual item).**

Through SCLT's online and mailed newsletters, we have publicized a variety of activities carried out through this grant. The online newsletter reaches a mailing list of 3,700 members of SCLT and others interested in Rhode Island food access and agriculture issues. The mailed newsletter reaches 2,000 households. SCLT's Facebook account has 2,100 followers.

Attached are 3 articles that publicized this FMPP project's results:

- November 2014 SCLT E-News, regarding the Better Health and Gardens program
- Fall 2015 SCLT print newsletter, "Youth staff learn new skills, build Southside's impact"
- Fall 2016 SCLT print newsletter, "Engaging children and youth in thinking about the food we eat"

7. Have you collected any feedback from your community and additional stakeholders about your work?

- i. **If so, how did you collect the information?**
- ii. **What feedback was relayed (specific comments)?**

We collected feedback from participating farmers in end-of-year written surveys. The farmers reported that the Network meetings benefited their businesses by providing an opportunity to meet with other farmers and learn best practices from each other. Many also relayed that they depended on SCLT support for access to farmland and to markets.

SCLT solicited feedback from its Young Farmer participants through written surveys, one-on-one check-in meetings, and group discussions. All reported or displayed: an interest in and knowledge of food growing and food systems; increased job skills and confidence; an increased knowledge of future food system or environmental job or civic opportunities. Written feedback included:

- *"I'll never take salad for granted! It was hard to grow."*
- *"I've learned about harvesting, planting, and the different ways of caring for each plant"*
- *"I learned how important it is to patronize the farmers market because that's how they make money"*
- *I learned about different herbs, how to harvest, and that EBT and WIC are accepted at farmers markets"*

After each of the eight *Better Health and Garden* 6-week courses, a survey was distributed measuring possible changes in nutrition habits due to the course. More than 50% of participants reported that they were "likely to increase their consumption of fruits and vegetables," while almost all participants said they "plan to continue using recipes/foods discussed in the program."

8. Budget Summary:

- i. **As part of the FMPP closeout procedures, you are required to submit the SF-425 (Final Federal Financial Report). Check here if you have completed the SF-425 and are submitting it with this report: X**
- ii. **Did the project generate any income?**

a. If yes, how much was generated and how was it used to further the objectives of the award?

No, it did not generate any income.

9. Lessons Learned:

- i. Summarize any lessons learned. They should draw on positive experiences (e.g. good ideas that improved project efficiency or saved money) and negative experiences (e.g. what did not go well and what needs to be changed).**
- ii. If goals or outcome measures were not achieved, identify and share the lessons learned to help others expedite problem-solving:**
- iii. Describe any lessons learned in the administration of the project that might be helpful for others who would want to implement a similar project:**

At the time of writing the grant, we anticipated that the best way to support Providence urban farmers was to build a network for peer-to-peer learning and collaboration. What we found, however was that some of our farmers needed more intensive support in order to increase production and expand their businesses. To provide this support, SCLT pursued additional USDA and other grants. For instance, we found that our immigrant and refugee farmers needed specific skills building and one-on-one technical assistance. We were able to provide this level of service through a USDA 2501 grant. Because of these differential needs across our farmers – often based on their English language skills or time in the United States – a cross-cultural network was less productive than we anticipated.

The Urban Farmer Network identified infrastructure needs, and particularly greenhouse space, as limiting to their businesses and therefore a key area for action. During the grant period, SCLT worked diligently to secure a greenhouse space lease on behalf of the Network members. At the last minute, the City of Providence determined it was unable to lease the space to us. This reflects a broader issue we confronted: The Rhode Island agriculture sector faces particularly high barriers to entry and expansion due to the high cost of farmland. For the small-scale farmers, and particularly for the immigrant and refugee farmers we work with, their businesses can expand only slowly.

Through our Young Farmer Program, we confronted the substantial knowledge gap that existed for high schoolers about the food system generally, and urban farming and nutrition specifically. As a result, technically farming skills and practice had to be contextualized by larger lessons about the food systems, including discussions about food deserts, nutrition and diet-related illness, as well as food policy. Additionally, as the program grew, SCLT also realized that agricultural efficacy could be developed most meaningfully by developing an independent growing space beyond City Farm. SCLT purchased land and built a Youth Enterprise Farm, which will ultimately serve as an incubation site at which we can observe how successful the transfer of agricultural skills has been through initial farmer mentorship at City Farm. Moreover, the space will allow youth the space to address problems they have identified in their local food system by developing plausible entrepreneurial responses.

One approach we learned that enhanced staff capacity and efficiency was in the execution of public cooking demonstrations. Cooking demonstrations were not only an effective way to share cooking and nutrition instruction through one healthy recipe, but also served as helpful catalyst for answering questions about federal food assistance or offering information about local farmers markets. The cooking demonstrations drew in new audiences of community residents who did not normally purchase local produce. It taught them practical food preparation skills and a seasonal recipe. Pairing this with

information on where to shop for the produce items locally yielded a greater curiosity and interest in the markets than when we conducted marketing about farmers markets without the cooking demonstrations.

10. Future Work:

- i. How will you continue the work of this project beyond the performance period? In other words, how will you parlay the results of your project's work to benefit future community goals and initiatives? Include information about community impact and outreach, anticipated increases in markets and/or sales, estimated number of jobs retained/created, and any other information you'd like to share about the future of your project.**
- ii. Do you have any recommendations for future activities and, if applicable, an outline of next steps or additional research that might advance the project goals?**

i. We will continue this work in three ways:

First, the Providence Urban Farmer Network efforts have expanded into SCLT's statewide beginning farmer training program funded through the USDA Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program. This program seeks to achieve four objectives: provide training and technical assistance, manage multiple incubator sites, offer on-farm apprentice training, and facilitate a land transfer working group. This program builds from the FMPP grant because it provides the kind of training and access to land which had be raised as barriers by the PUFN farmers during the Network meetings. Through the BFRDP grant we seek to support 42 participants to start farming, 60 to help prepare to start farming, and 102 participants to improve their farming success.

Second, the Young Farmer Program continues to expand and adapt. Its new home, the Youth Enterprise Farm, will begin its first full year of production in 2017. Here the young farmers will have the space and autonomy to grow, tend and market their own crops. It also will serve as a community education space, where the young farmers can train their peers and neighbors in urban agriculture and healthy eating. In addition, the young farmer program will expand into the neighboring cities of Pawtucket and Central Falls, where we anticipate hiring three new youth in summer 2017. They also will grow, tend and market crops as part of SCLT's Galego Community Farm. We hope that our Young Farmer program will lead some of the urban youth to careers in agriculture, natural resources, or food systems. In fact, SCLT joined with the University of Rhode Island to apply for the USDA's Higher Education Multicultural Scholars Program. If awarded, this grant would provide scholarships to young people – like those in our young farmer program – to attend the University and major in the agricultural sciences.

Third, SCLT is in the process of revising its nutrition and healthy eating program, based on our lessons learned from the FMPP Better Health and Gardens program. One focus of the program will be on teaching families together, so that the parents and children can reinforce the lessons at home with each other. We also are expanding our in- house curriculum portfolio so that we have capacity within the organization for teaching nutrition, rather than relying on external consultants and students. In this curriculum, we plan to include traditional ethnic crops as ingredients in the healthy eating recipes. This expands farmers' market demand for these crops by reaching a new customer base.

ii. One future activity that SCLT is planning is development of the Somerset Food Hub in Providence, RI in order to increase consumption of locally produced agricultural products and to develop new market opportunities for the farmers that we serve. These are important goals because poverty and poor

nutrition are causing dire health consequences for many of our area residents. The Somerset Food Hub will be developed into a location where a diverse group of farmers can aggregate, store, process and distribute locally produced food. As part of the project, SCLT will identify and secure specific wholesale channels and institutional customers, provide training and technical assistance to farmers about how to plan, produce and prepare food for distribution through the Somerset Food Hub and identify emerging local food businesses that will not only purchase produce from the Somerset Food Hub but will also co-locate in the Somerset Food Hub facility.

Next steps include:

- Identify and secure specific wholesale channels and institutional customers for initial levels of supply and continue to provide capacity to identify new channels and customers as farmers scale up their business enterprises.
- Provide training and technical assistance to farmers about how to plan, produce and prepare food for distribution through the Somerset Food Hub.
- Identify 3 emerging local food businesses that will not only purchase produce from the Somerset Food Hub but will also co-locate in the Somerset Food Hub facility.
- Develop the Somerset Food Hub as a location where community gardeners, urban farmers, youth farmers, beginning rural farmers, small scale farmers and SCLT production farms can aggregate, store, process and distribute locally produced food to wholesale and institutional marketing channels.



Youth spread the word about healthy food



Sankofa Market builds a loyal customer base



Grange owners' aim is building community



Growing for Good

Fresh news from Southside Community Land Trust

Youth staff learn new skills, build Southside's impact

By Laura Bozzi

Providence youth need meaningful work opportunities now to prepare them for good jobs down the road.

Last summer we hired 11 high school students, and five this fall, who worked to help us raise awareness of healthy food access issues in our target neighborhoods. The youth staff gained confidence and work-readiness skills, while enriching our own work and greatly extending our impact.

"The program affects our personal life, the community and the coming generation."

- Summer youth staff member

Southside has long worked with youth interns, and continues to do so, at City Farm. This expanded program was designed for youth to work across the food system, and to receive an hourly wage.

Over six weeks last summer youth staff learned skills as varied as teaching, farming, construction, public speaking

and advocacy. They worked individually and in teams, planting and harvesting at City Farm and co-teaching younger children about gardening and healthy eating.

They also teamed up to go door-to-door in South Providence, Olneyville, and the West End to invite neighbors to shop at three area farmers markets. Youth staff provided information about location and hours and answered residents' questions, often in Spanish. In all, they visited nearly 2,000 households! We could not have had nearly the same reach without them.

Once a week all 11 came together for group activities that were particularly impactful. They visited a farmers market, many for the first time, interviewing customers to better understand food access needs. They participated in a food justice workshop. They went to the State House to meet with RI Secretary of State Nellie Gorbea and to City Hall to talk with Providence Healthy Communities Office Director Peter Asen.

Five of the summer staff returned this fall to help us plan for the program's momentous next step: building a Youth Enterprise Farm on a ¼-acre plot at



Fall youth staff, from left: Zoraida, Jay, Dalia and Jariliz, with program director Laura Bozzi, second from left (Not pictured: Johnny).

Somerset and Hayward Streets, a few blocks from our office. They helped facilitate a design charrette in early September that brought together community members and partners to generate ideas about the farm's design and programming. When completed, Southside's youth program will be based at the farm.

Taking part in a program with a variety of tasks enabled youth staff to step up based on their strengths, and to try things they've never done before. Dalia, a senior at the Met School, wrote and delivered the opening remarks at the Youth Farm charrette. Another, Jay, had worked so diligently over the summer

that we selected her to speak at our fall Harvesting Hope fundraiser. Her speech reflected the maturity, hard work, and responsibility she demonstrated in her work at Southside.

Since then youth staff have been learning about entrepreneurship and business planning, in order to answer questions like: What crops will they grow? What market channels will they pursue? How can the neighbors be involved?

The youth are inspired to know they are part of building our future youth programs. Our goal is to help them sustain this sense of ownership as the Youth Enterprise Farm takes shape. Your financial support for Southside is enabling them to take on new roles and commit themselves to this exciting challenge. 🌱



Jay speaking about her experience at Southside to a roomful of supporters at our fall fundraiser.

Sankofa Markets attracts loyal fans in city's West End

Sales are up over last year and on track for a farmers market in its second year

By Andrew Cook

This past growing season four Southside market growers were out in pouring rain and blistering heat every Wednesday afternoon, selling their produce at the Sankofa World Market, the city's newest farmers market. With help from our staff, they ran a successful collaborative booth featuring both familiar and exotic produce native to the growers' home countries.

The Market was started by the West Elmwood Housing Development Corporation in 2014. It was moved this summer from Dexter Street to a much more visible location: the front lawn of Knight Memorial Library, on Elmwood Avenue in the West End. The move definitely paid off, with sales up over last year and on-track for a market in its second year, according to Farm Fresh RI.

Longtime Southside market grower and garden leader Chia Xiong believes the location and the market have great potential. Chia would know, having seen it happen before. In 2009 she helped start the now-successful collaborative booth at the Broad Street Farmers Market.

Southside staff are also no strangers to the slow and steady work of building a market. "Markets take time to develop," says Community Growers Director Rob Booz. "Just like we watched Lippitt Park, Armory and Broad Street grow into successful markets, it's been great to see Sankofa develop into a thriving market, and one that serves the neighborhood so well."

Staff played a variety of support roles, both in the months leading up to the market as well as during the growing season, including marketing produce, setting up the display, staffing the booth and keeping sales records.

The Southside collaborative at Sankofa was a mix of new and experienced market growers from three continents, including Chia from Laos, Garmai Mawolo and Hawa Kanneh from Liberia, and Jaime Salinas from Venezuela. Most had to leave their home countries due to economic or political upheaval. Growing and selling food was a way to do what they loved and to connect with their new neighbors, from their homelands and elsewhere.

The booth offered a range of produce,



Besides produce, the market offers crafts, live music and informational booths. Here, Charlotte sells baskets made in Rwanda.

including hard-to-find crops (in the U.S., at least) like bitter ball (a relative of eggplant), fiwate (a fragrant Liberian herb somewhere between thyme and oregano), callaloo (a kind of amaranth) and sweet potato greens (healthy and delicious). The fact that they were selling these crops in the West End (home to

many of Providence's recent immigrants), at a convenient location, no less, earned the booth a devoted group of customers who came back week after week.

The market ended in September, but everyone's already thinking about next year. Southside staff are working with market growers to come up with improvements, while the growers are looking for more land to farm so they can expand and sell at other markets. But, they're all quick to add that they're coming back to Sankofa next year.

Come check it out when the markets re-open next June! 🌱



Southside staff including Andrew, helped staff a booth at Sankofa every week, where four Southside growers sold their produce.

Restaurant owners say building community is their real goal

By Jenny Boone

These are good times for Rob and Uschi Yaffe. Next year they will celebrate the 20th anniversary of their restaurant, Garden Grille. Meanwhile, the couple's Wildflour Bakery and Café is firmly established, and their most ambitious undertaking, The Grange, has also become a thriving Providence restaurant and live music venue, attracting customers from as far away as Boston and the Cape.

Rob says he owes their success to several things, not least of which is customers' growing demand for – and the availability of – high-quality, locally grown, organic ingredients. The Yaffe's restaurants are the largest customers of Farm Fresh RI, and also buy from the Little City Growers Coop started by Southside. Each has a great menu and devoted following. Rob credits Uschi for her creative vision, including finding unusual architectural pieces that give the Grange a lived-in, comfortable feel. But, he says it's their simple drive to bring people together around good food that makes them work.

"It's about community. We exist to provide experiences where people connect with each other. If we're not doing that," he says, "then why are we here?"

Indeed.

Rob grew up in a family that early on embraced a healthy lifestyle, spirituality



Rob and Uschi Yaffe, owners of the Grange, Garden Grille and Wildflour.

"Our mission [and Southside's] are completely aligned."

– Rob Yaffe

and progressive politics. Around 1940 his grandmother, Reggie, adopted a raw food vegan diet and began a life-long yoga and meditation practice. His mother Erna was inspired to open the first natural foods store in Providence, the Golden Sheaf, in 1971.

The store introduced the community to natural and organic foods, much of it sold in bulk (a novelty at the time) rather than prepackaged, including flours that were ground fresh daily

using a stone grinder, as well as seeds, dried fruits, honey and oils. It was the first larger-scale alternative to conventional grocery stores, selling products that were free of artificial preservatives, flavors or coloring.

Rob worked after school and on weekends at the Golden Sheaf. At 23, his mother passed away unexpectedly, putting him in charge of the store. After 20 years he decided to close it, but a few years later he opened the Garden Grille, one of the area's first vegetarian restaurants.

While Rob says he and Uschi don't preach strict vegetarianism (only Wildflour is completely vegan) he still delights in hearing of new customers who are surprised that their richly flavored, complex, meatless dishes at The Grange and Garden Grille could be so satisfying.

"We're able to give people a transformative experience," says Rob. "We have an opportunity to change peoples' consciousness."

During his lifetime he has seen enormous changes in people's eating habits, including their awareness of how their food choices affect not only their own well-being, but the health of their communities. "Southside," he adds, "is at the

forefront of that shift.”

He and Uschi have supported Southside in countless ways over the years, hosting fundraisers and donating food from their restaurants to our events. Last summer they donated all of the profits from their Table to Farm fundraiser at the Grange to Southside. After seeing A Place at the Table, a documentary about hunger in the United States, he organized a screening in partnership with Southside at Congregation Beth Sholom.

He believes that helping Southside

is a way to enable people who can't afford to eat out to nonetheless be able to buy and grow organic, healthy food. "Our missions are completely aligned," he says.

The Yaffes' gratitude for their customers runs deep. On Wednesday, January 13, they plan to give back to the community in a celebration of the Garden Grille's 20th year by donating 100% of the day's food sales to local charities and causes. Mark your calendar, and bring an appetite. 🌱



The Grange

PLEASE GIVE TO OUR ANNUAL FUND

In these pages are stories of how Southside and others are working to make nutritious, locally grown food available throughout greater Providence. Taken together, this work is reshaping the local food system to benefit our health, economy and environment.

People like you, who generously support Southside's mission, are making these momentous changes possible. As we near the end of our fiscal year, we're asking you to renew your commitment.

Your support means we'll continue to bring children from low-income backgrounds to City Farm, where they'll see (pick, and taste!) the fruits and vegetables they need to grow up healthy and strong. It means our high school staff can build on this knowledge, and develop advocacy skills to encourage their neighbors and families to shop at farmers markets in their neighborhoods.

Your support helps Southside to continue training aspiring urban farmers, such as those selling at the Sankofa farmers market and to the local restaurants that buy delicious, organic produce grown on Southside land.

So, please make a donation to our Annual Fund. Your gift will bring about even greater changes to our food system, and enable even more Rhode Islanders to enjoy nutritious, sustainably grown food. Thank you!

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SCLT's mission to provide access to land, education and other resources so people in Greater Providence can grow food in environmentally sustainable ways and create community food systems where locally produced, affordable and healthy food is available to all.

Down on the farm with SCLT's 2016 apprentices

Expanded, USDA-funded program is expected to level the playing field for beginning farmers



Apprentice Santa Toribio at Pat's Pastured Farm.

apprentice position at Pat's Pastured Farm, she had never worked on a small-scale, sustainable livestock farm.

Santa is one of three apprentices who gained valuable knowledge and experience through SCLT's expanded Farm Apprenticeship Program. The program was modeled on the success of apprenticeships offered at City Farm for more than a decade. Its goal is to provide paid, professional training to aspiring organic farmers. This year the program aimed at bolstering the careers of people of color and veterans, who have been

Santa Toribio's introduction to animal husbandry came over two decades ago, when she was a university student in Santo Domingo studying veterinary sciences. However, prior to this past summer when she received an SCLT

traditionally denied access to U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) programs designed to support small and mid-sized family farms.

The apprenticeships were funded through a USDA Socially Disadvantaged Veterans, Farmers, and Ranchers grant program, which responds to a legacy of discriminatory practices in some USDA agencies brought to light in a landmark court case in 1965. The USDA's actions excluded African Americans, in particular, from lending, training and other programs that improved the livelihoods of thousands of rural white farmers during the previous century. As a result, the Section 2501 program was established in the 1990 Farm Bill.

Each of this year's three farm apprentices brought his or her own talents and interests to the program. In addition to Santa, the other apprentices were David Kuma and Jamhal Latimer. David grew up gardening and had worked in a nursery and in landscaping. Jamhal is a Marine Corps vet with a newfound passion for healthy foods.

"My knowledge of farming was that you put a seed in the ground and you water it, and that was it," he said, adding, "it was a huge jump" to learn all that he has about sustainable agriculture from the program.

Continued next page >>

Celebrating the second year of Pawtucket's Galego Farm

On October 14 we celebrated the annual harvest with residents of Galego Court in Pawtucket's Weeden/Barton neighborhood. Children spent the afternoon bobbing for apples and racing in potato sacks, while everyone enjoyed hot cider and grilled corn.

This was the second summer that SCLT operated a range of urban agriculture programs at the site. This year's community gardening program included a mix of children, parents and grandparents who explored wild plants, learned to care for seedlings and taste-tested radishes, English peas, and purslane (a kid favorite!).

Despite a dry summer and limited infrastructure, two beginning urban farmers have been working the land at Galego. Manny and Miatta farm here and have sold their crops at Providence and Pawtucket farmers markets. Despite the rabbits that often visited her plot, Miatta harvested a bounty of hot peppers, cherry tomatoes, bitterball and greens. Manny grew a variety of plants,

including herbs, hearty sweet potato greens, Swiss chard and vibrant gladiolas. He also collected organic matter from all over the state to make thousands of pounds of rich compost to use next spring.

In August, 80 brand new plots were built in the community garden area that spans the site's northern hillside. In September two new youth staff who live at Galego Court joined SCLT and have been preparing the beds, planting garlic and planning outreach to other residents about upcoming garden workshops and events. In October, the youth staff worked alongside second graders who returned from the summer program to plant carrots and garlic.

As the garlic pokes through the soil in spring, residents can look forward to another bountiful year at the Galego Community Farm. We expect that all 80 garden plots will be assigned and that this beautiful urban space will be productive for years to come.

Alyssa Rooks, SCLT program associate



Please support our 2016 Annual Fund!

Dear friends:

I hope you are touched by the breadth and depth of the work described in this newsletter. Here you will meet the people involved in our youth programs, beginning farmer training and Pawtucket/Central Falls initiative. You will see the excitement, expansion and big dreams about the future of our local food system. You will even recognize that we continue to remain true to our roots in South Providence community gardens.

Working with community gardeners, urban and rural farmers, youth staff, volunteers, donors and the local business community, we are dismantling many of the obstacles facing people in Rhode Island's most economically challenged communities. **And, we need your help. Will you make a gift to the Annual Fund so that in 2017:**

Our community gardens can provide fresh, healthy food, reduce the urban heat island effect, keep our drinking water clean by filtering storm water, and offer safe places for respite, inspiration and community.

Our farms can provide income for growers, training programs for people who want to start or expand their farm business, and a meaningful way for thoughtful consumers to stay true to their values.

Our youth programs can offer experiences in healthy eating and food growing as well as important lessons on how young people can increase food, economic and environmental justice.

These programs form the cornerstone of a local food system that works for *all* Rhode Islanders, by significantly reducing diet-related chronic disease

and food insecurity while increasing economic opportunity and responsible environmental stewardship.

So, today, I ask you to please use the remittance envelope in this newsletter and make a gift to our Annual Fund. There is a great need in the Providence, Pawtucket and Central Falls communities we serve. We cannot do this work without you!

Thank you.

Margaret DeVos, Executive Director and Louis Raymond, Board Chair

In August, 2016, the Southside Community Land Trust Board of Directors approved revisions to the organization's Strategic Plan. These revisions include:

-  Program expansion into communities throughout Rhode Island. This revision recognizes our partnerships in Pawtucket and Central Falls, through which we are expanding and developing local capacity to improve access to fresh, healthy and affordable food.
-  Increased emphasis on developing local food systems beyond our current scope of activities. These might include partnerships and properties that would support food manufacturing, food retail, food distribution, etc. in economically challenged neighborhoods.
-  New emphasis on ensuring appropriate facilities. SCLT programs and staff have outgrown our current headquarters at 109 Somerset. The 2016 Strategic Plan recognizes a need to invest in our administrative and program facilities.

Apprentice program *Continued from previous page*

Three farmers hosted the apprentices this year: Patrick McNiff of Pat's Pastured in East Greenwich, and Ben Torpey of Scratch Farm and Christina Dedora of Blue Skys Farm, both in Cranston. Patrick, Ben and Christina led the apprentices through a range of farm work over the season—from harvesting to livestock de-parasiting—depending on the site. In addition to working with their mentors two full days per week, apprentices attended farm tours and workshops throughout the state, as well as the Northeast Organic Farming Association summer conference.

The partnership between mentors and apprentices exemplifies the relationships SCLT has fostered within the state's farming sector: Patrick, Ben and Christina all started their farming careers at SCLT before launching their own businesses. SCLT staff look forward to perpetuating this cycle, having just received almost \$600,000 through the USDA's Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program to develop new and beginning farmers through workshops, mentorship and technical assistance over the next three years. More apprenticeships, similar to the ones offered in 2016, will be financed by this grant in 2017.

Having completed their apprenticeships at the beginning of September, Santa, David and Jamhal are considering their options for the future. David wants to spend next season working on a different local farm before starting his own operation. In the meantime, he plans to take advantage

of SCLT's market grower workshops and resources to strengthen his skill set.

Santa, who gave up her career in the DR to live near her grandchildren, has a more complicated situation.

Neither her degree in veterinary science, nor her master's in animal surgery, are recognized here. Nevertheless, she plans to share what she learned about pasturing with her former colleagues at the Department of Health in the DR, who seek to increase the number of women livestock farmers in that country.

Jamhal plans to build on his experience in the near future by farming in an urban plot or assisting with school gardens. Eventually he wants to start his own nonprofit farm for veterans, the homeless and people struggling with substance abuse, where he plans to use the organic practices he learned at Blue Skys Farm.

SCLT will start recruiting beginning farmers for the 2017 Apprenticeship Program next spring. Please contact Laura Bozzi at laura@southsideclt.org if you are interested in receiving application information when it is available.

Maggie Krueger, SCLT program associate



David Kuma apprenticed at Scratch Farm and Jamhal Latimer at Blue Skys Farm.



Photo left: SCLT youth staff visiting Central Falls Mayor James Diossa in his chambers. From Left: Jariliz, Noel, Dalia, Jailine, Alice, Mayor Diossa, Josh, Sergio and Adam. Photo right: Ayi Tin (foreground) and other youth staff spreading clean soil at the Somerset Hayward Youth Enterprise Farm in August.



Engaging children and youth in thinking about the food we eat

Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities works on many levels to change the availability of healthy food, and the demand for it, in low-income neighborhoods.

Many of the young people involved with SCLT have a very personal understanding of what it's like to grow up without healthy food. They know that when you live in a food desert, you're unable to make wise dietary choices and, as a result, diseases like diabetes, hypertension and cancer proliferate among family and friends. Experiences like these often provide the insights and inspiration that strengthen our programs to improve the daily nutrition, economic security and health of SCLT's neighbors, young and old.

Last summer, as part of our *Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities* program, we offered fun, hands-on learning opportunities to roughly 100 K-8 children from the South Side, Olneyville and West End. Activities focused on nutrition, growing and cooking healthy meals and snacks and the need for all people to eat high-quality, fresh produce in order to enjoy good health. The program took place at four different sites, two days per week during July and August. SCLT program staff led the summer activities along with 10 high school youth staff recruited last spring. Much of their work built on concepts and projects begun by previous youth staff from the spring, as well as from the 2015 program. Each session includes several youth staff from the previous one, creating continuity and leadership opportunities.

Besides working with young children in our education program, youth staff conducted door-to-door outreach about area farmers markets and offered nutrition information to adults and seniors at local churches, libraries and other gathering places. They spent time with community and political leaders, such as Central Falls Mayor James Diossa, who encouraged them to dream big and not to let age get in the way of their ambitions. They also visited professionals in the food, agriculture and media sectors to learn about their work. The encounters exposed them to both potential mentors and little known career possibilities.

Youth in our fall program are pursuing many of the same activities, as well as further developing the Somerset Hayward Youth Enterprise Farm. Recently they planted their first garlic crop on the ¼ acre site, which they will harvest next spring.

Through their experiences in *Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities* children and youth are gaining a greater perspective on our food system. They're

also discovering their potential to help SCLT achieve its goal of turning Rhode Island's food deserts into thriving communities where fresh, healthy and affordable food is easily available to all.

Amica partners with SCLT on high-impact youth program

We asked Meredith Gregory, Amica's Charitable Giving Coordinator, to talk about the Amica Companies Foundation's (ACF's) mission and its support for our *Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities* program.

[Meredith] The ACF's mission is to harness the power of enduring relationships to help individuals, families and communities become economically independent and strong. In 2016 the Foundation provided support to Southside Community Land Trust with a \$15,000 grant to benefit the organization's *Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities* program.

How does this program fit into the ACF's overall vision? What particularly interested the foundation in supporting our work?

This educational program closely aligns with the mission of our Foundation. It helps youth learn meaningful life skills and use resources in their own backyards to provide access to and opportunity for urban farming initiatives. The Foundation is proud to support the good work of SCLT, and to see the life-changing impact it's having on youth in Rhode Island.

You visited our program at the Davey Lopes Recreation Center in August. What impressions did it leave with you?

I was extremely impressed with the immense knowledge and expertise that the staff, teachers and mentors possess on urban farming education. The amount of work and careful attention that Maggie [Krueger, SCLT program associate] put into planning each lesson showed the passion and effort that go into all of the work at SCLT. The children were engaged and welcoming, and I had a wonderful time taking part in a program that we help to support.

Thanks to Amica for generously investing in the children and youth of Providence!



Southside Community Land Trust's mission is to provide access to land, education and other resources so people in Rhode Island can grow food in environmentally sustainable ways and create community food systems where locally produced, affordable and healthy food is available to all.

Elders can now grow food at Higher Ground

Usually it takes somewhere between several months to a year or more for a new garden or urban farm to go from the idea stage to completion (with design and planning, funding, installation and planting in between). So, when a garden for the nonprofit Higher Ground International was up and running within two months of being proposed, some of its clients called it a miracle.

One thing for certain is that it's difficult to say no to Higher Ground's charismatic founder, Henrietta White-Holder, a powerful force for good in the world. Her organization works to empower members of the West African diaspora in Providence as well as those seeking peace and prosperity in Henrietta's native Liberia. One of her projects is raising funds for an indoor marketplace to help farmers, especially women, sell their produce in rural Liberia.

In July, an SCLT staff member was introduced to Henrie at a community gathering. Coincidentally, another staffer met her at a different event the following morning. By then Henrie had already formulated her proposal: that SCLT help answer the need among Liberian elders to grow traditional West African produce by building four raised beds at the organization's Rukyia Center on Prairie Avenue.

Within weeks we provided the technical expertise, wood, soil and other materials for the beds, which clients of Amos House assembled. The city of Providence also contributed to the effort. You can see a video of one of the grateful elders singing in her native Liberian dialect while working in her garden bed on the nonprofit's Facebook page: facebook.com/highergroundinternational.NGO

To learn more about Higher Ground, visit their website at highergroundintl.org.

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Growing for Good

Fresh news from Southside Community Land Trust

SPRING 2016

SCLT Founder to step aside when Board term ends

Serial entrepreneur Debbie Schimberg is pleased that organization remains true to its roots



Debbie Schimberg started Southside Community Land Trust in 1981 with two friends who were also recent Brown University graduates. She later helped found the International Charter School in Pawtucket and the Providence Community Library. She and her husband, Kevin Neel, are the owners of Verve, makers of Glee Gum, which is headquartered in South Providence. Debbie won the 2015 U.S. Small Business Administration award for “RI Woman-Owned Small Business of the Year.”

Debbie and her family still live in the purple house next to City Farm. One of her three children majored in food policy and environmental studies at Brown and all of them work on the family’s gardens at their home and office. After eight years Debbie will be stepping down from the SCLT Board of Directors this spring. We sat down with her to discuss the history of the Land Trust and her thoughts on its future.

How and why did you start SCLT?

DS: I had just graduated from college with a degree in Comparative Literature and had no plans for a career. My friends and I had heard about the work of SWAP [Stop Wasting Abandoned Property, which converts abandoned properties into affordable housing] in South Providence and decided to buy a house to use as a model of self-sufficiency. So, we bought a house for one thousand dollars from the City. It had no heat and no plumbing; we were so naïve that we thought we could fix it up in three months.

I had heard a speaker at Brown, [social justice activist] Chuck Matthei, who talked about the alternative models of land tenure and the community land trust model, where land is held in common and the community controls the use of the land. We wanted to start community gardens for neighborhood residents on the vacant, junk-filled lots around the house, but we had no money. I cold-called Peggy Sharpe, who came to the South Side to take a tour and listen to our vision: amazingly, she gave us five thousand dollars!

Thanks to her generosity, we bought the lots that are now City Farm from the City for fifty dollars each and used the rest of the money to clean them and bring in clean soil.

‘SCLT has been able to build the foundation of thirty-plus years and take a leading role in food policy in Rhode Island.’



Debbie with Southside neighbors during a work day in 1982, at the Somerset Community Garden, SCLT's first.

How has SCLT changed over the years?

It’s like watching children grow up: you have influence in the beginning and then they grow up and go their own way. Over the years it’s been exciting to see the Land Trust grow and thrive and adapt to changing conditions. SCLT has been able to build the foundation of thirty-plus years and take a leading role in food policy, not just in Providence, but in Rhode Island. SCLT has stayed true to its roots of providing land for gardening in Providence neighborhoods while simultaneously showing people how important the work is and how it is transferrable to other places.

The organization now has a great staff and a clear direction, such as new urban farms and the beginning farmers training program.

Where does your passion for helping people come from?

I like to connect people to resources and to each other to solve a problem. I enjoy being a catalyst for making things happen.

The SCLT Board of Directors wishes Debbie the best of luck. We will all miss her wisdom and enthusiasm!

—Roberta Groch, SCLT Board Member

In this issue

- Annual Plant Sale: May 14–15
- Spring is membership season
- What’s growing at City Farm



Help us make Rhode Island a greener, healthier and more equitable place to live

If you're reading this then you care about food, health and making the world a safer, saner and better place for all people. That, in a nutshell, is what Southside Community Land Trust is about.

We take great pride in helping people grow, sell and eat more affordable and nutritious food. Through this work we promote environmentally sustainable agriculture. We build safe, green and welcoming spaces in some of Rhode Island's most economically challenged communities. And we foster hope, inspiration and opportunity in the neighborhoods where we work.

None of this would be possible without the generous and thoughtful people who commit to our mission by becoming members. April is a great time of year to join, or to renew, so that you can use your membership benefits at our annual Rare & Unusual Plant Sale (May 14–15), and throughout the growing season.

With your ongoing support we will build more community gardens and urban farms, provide education and resources for gardeners and beginning farmers, and offer youth employment and training programs.

If you haven't become a member yet, or renewed your membership for 2016, please use the enclosed envelope, or go online at our secure website at www.southsideclt.org

Margaret DeVos, SCLT's Executive Director
& Louis Raymond, Board Chair

We'd love to have you as a member!

Here are some of the perks members are entitled to:

- Up to 50 gallons of organic compost picked up at the Plant Sale, plus a 10% discount on all purchases made that weekend
- Members-only preview during the first hour of the Plant Sale—a virtual guarantee that you'll come home with your favorite vegetable, herb and perennials
- Additional discounts with our fabulous retail partners, including gardening supply stores, nurseries and florists, plus specialty shops selling unusual gifts, kitchen supplies, herbal products and even a bike repair shop. See www.southsideclt.org for a complete list.
- SCLT workshops, events and volunteer opportunities throughout the year where you can rub shoulders with people who share your passion for sustainability, health and good food



Aerial view of Urban Edge Farm in Cranston, RI

Southside Community Land Trust's 24th Annual **PLANT SALE** 2016

Saturday May 14th 10am - 2pm
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Sunday May 15th 10am - 2pm

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SOUTHSIDE COMMUNITY LAND TRUST
we help people grow food

at City Farm
168 West Clifford
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Providence



In the greenhouse, from left: Met School students Jariliz, Noel and Alejandra; City Farm Steward Rich Pederson at work

'City Farm becomes part of you'

Volunteers, interns, apprentices and staff relish the camaraderie and shared satisfaction of bringing thousands of seedlings to life every spring.

As the growing season ramps up, SCLT's greenhouse at City Farm becomes a bustling place. Even with winter's final storm (in April!) only just melting away, tiny sprouts are making their way through the soil on a recent Friday afternoon. Their progress is closely monitored by the skilled staff, high school interns and a revolving cast of devoted volunteers who drop in throughout the week to help out.

With the annual Rare & Unusual Plant Sale now only weeks away, it's all hands on deck.

Under the direction of City Farm Steward Rich Pederson, Craig Demi and Nayeema Eusuf serve the vital roles of farm apprentice and assistant farm steward, respectively.

As Nayeema transplants delicate pepper seedlings into individual pots, she explains where the greenhouse staff and volunteers are in the process of preparing for the May 14–15 Plant Sale:

"We've already had to move the cold-hardy plants outside, like chards, broccoli, and kale, because there's no way to make room for the [estimated] 20,000 plants that get their start in the greenhouse. The peppers and tomatoes don't like the cold, so they get to stay inside until the very end," she says.

One of Nayeema's favorite parts of the season, though, is yet to come. "I'll be picking up the chickens in a week or so, and that's always a fun time. The kids who come to the Farm love them, and they're just a lot of fun to have around," she says. The chickens also provide the eggs sold at the Hope Street Farmers Market in Providence from May to November.

Meanwhile, after Craig and two of the Met School interns, Alex and Alejandra, return from the communal lunch at SCLT's office, he immediately sets to work watering the hundreds of sprouting plants. While his apprenticeship started in March, Craig has been involved with SCLT in various ways for years. He was originally a

patron of City Farm's stand at the farmers market, eventually became a member, then a volunteer last year, harvesting produce once a week. Finally he grabbed the opportunity to join the seasonal staff when an apprenticeship opened up.

"I can remember when I was working at a bakery many years ago, and Rich used to bring in the raspberries they'd grown at City Farm. I would use them that very morning, and it was great because they were just ... that fresh," he recalls. Making a connection with the farmer was special. "There was something so cool about him coming in, and there being a face for the produce like that."

On this day the staff, interns and volunteers are hard at work inside the warm greenhouse prepping for the tomato seeding. By now, two more Met students, Jariliz and Noel, have joined the crew. Tomatoes are one of the most important plants sold at the Plant Sale, and this year the farm will be offering 55 unique varieties. With the hardier plants outside, there's plenty of room for the tomatoes, and seeding the trays is the big task of the day. Luckily, Fridays are a popular day at the greenhouse, so there are plenty of green thumbs about.

Over in the heart of the operation, the compost corner, Alex and Alejandra fill four-inch pots for transplanting. Despite completely different academic focuses (Alejandra studies Arts and Environmental Activism, while Alex pursues Biotechnology and Genetic Studies), they both feel a special connection to the farm and the camaraderie of those bringing the plants to life.

"There's something deep and amazing about being a part of this place," Alejandra says, with Alex nodding next to her. He follows up with, "City Farm becomes a part of you."

Alex, a newcomer to the farm, says, "I feel at my best when I'm working with the earth, and it feels really special to be doing that here."

As long-time volunteer Kris Kearney sets to work on the tomatoes, Rich and Craig exuberantly discuss the cucumber seeds they each saved from last season.

'I feel at my best when I'm working with the earth, and it feels really special to be doing that here.'

—Alex, Met School student

Continued next page >>

City Farm *Continued from previous page*

“How well will they germinate?” Kris wonders. “We’ll see!” says Rich. Germination can be serendipitous, making it impossible to predict exactly what will be available at the Sale until mid-way through the weeks of transplanting that take place every April and May.

Later, Kris talks about how her background led her to Southside. “I have a big garden and a degree in horticulture. Everyone gets bored of hearing me talk about plants, but I get to come here and everyone loves talking about them!”



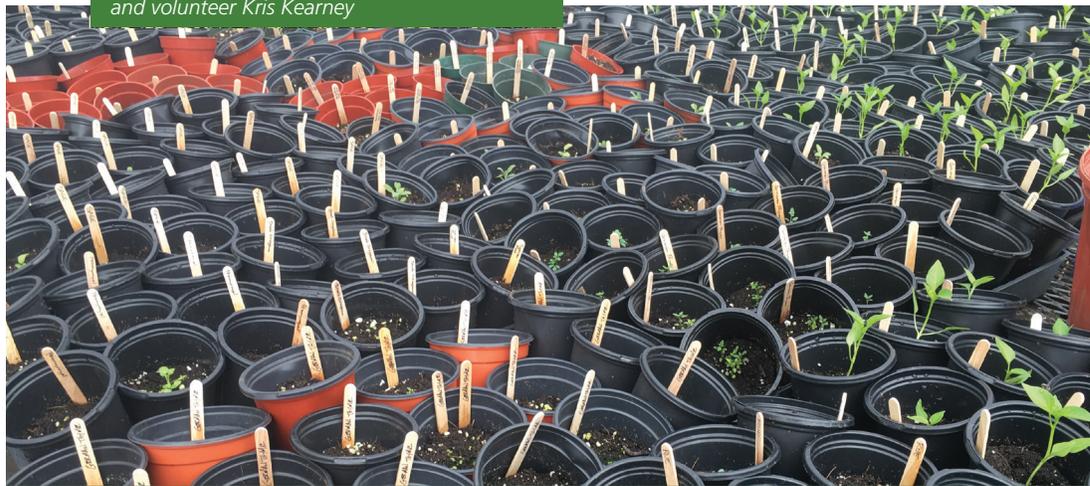
City Farm staff Craig Demi and Rich Pederson and volunteer Kris Kearney

While people continue with their individual tasks, Rich gives Nayeema and Craig pointers for the Urban Agriculture Kickoff workshops around Providence the next day. As they chat, they continue to coax along the thousands of seedlings preparing for their big day in the sun. 🌱

—Bruce Downes

Bruce is a senior at Brown University who is serving as a spring intern at SCLT.

SCLT is fortunate to have a robust apprenticeship program this year, with three USDA-funded positions at sustainable farms we partner with, in addition to Craig’s apprenticeship at City Farm. (The other apprentices are working at Scratch and Blue Skys Farm, and Pat’s Pastured.) In our fall newsletter we’ll hear about their experiences, and whether they plan to pursue small-scale, organic farming in Rhode Island after their apprenticeships end.



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we help people grow food

Southside Community Land Trust provides access to land, education and other resources so people in Greater Providence can grow food in environmentally sustainable ways and create community food systems where locally produced, affordable and healthy food is available to all.

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