

# Community Food Initiatives Annual Report 2013



*Coolville Elementary students show their enthusiasm for growing, preparing and eating local food!*

Mary Nally, Executive Director  
740.593.5971  
[cfi@communityfoodinitiatives.org](mailto:cfi@communityfoodinitiatives.org)

## Executive Summary

2013 is marked in the CFI history books as the year of reinforcing the foundation of our work. Taking an asset-based approach to solving the issues of food justice has allowed us to expand our reach and inspire. Our belief is that by naming our assets—soil, seeds and an Appalachian heritage of food production and preservation —everyone in SE Ohio can see their place in strengthening our community.

According to Athens County Job and Family Services, over 31% of Athens County live in poverty, compared to 14.8% in Ohio.

Feeding America's Map the Meal Gap identifies 20% of Athens County as being food insecure. Many of those in poverty have jobs, but struggle with low wages or transportation barriers. Poverty is a complex issue and there's not a simple solution. Changes at the Federal and State level are creating more challenges within the existing safety net. As a community, we can harness these problems as opportunities to focus on our strengths and create local solutions, such as building a local food system that provides good jobs and good food for all.

A significant part of strengthening CFI's foundation has been to build stronger relationships with other organizations. Many of us share common goals. Hocking Athens Perry Community Action, Rural Action's Chesterhill Produce Auction, all the agencies and food pantries connected to the Donation Station and the Athens Public Library system are just some of our partners.

I have felt especially grateful to CFI members, volunteers, staff and our Board of Directors that continuously keep us moving forward with enthusiasm and strategic thinking to bring our mission to fruition — ensuring that everyone has access to fresh local foods, whether it be through culinary, food preservation and gardening education, in the community and school gardens, or through food pantries receiving recipes using seasonal ingredients. It's these folks, and it's you, that move this mission forward, building momentum to take us into a brighter future.

Truly,



Mary Nally  
Executive Director



*Glouster Community Gardeners installed a water tank and tool shed in 2013*

## Contents

Executive Summary.....	1
Community Gardens: Gardens, Workshops, YEAH Kids, and Seed Saving.....	3
School Gardens: School Garden Resource Support and Curriculum.....	5
Donation Station: Local Food Access .....	6
Discovery Kitchen: Local Food Education.....	8
Seed Give-Aways.....	9
Membership and Support.....	10

## Community Garden Program 2013 Highlights

Over 243 People  
Attend 35 Workshops



Over 70 Community  
Gardeners at 6 sites



YEAH Kids Earn Record  
Profits of \$1,328

# The Community Garden Program

## The Gardens

CFI managed over 70 community gardeners around Athens County at six different community garden sites: Hope, Eastside, Nelsonville, Glouster, Chauncey and the newest—Southside/Carriage Hill. It was a challenging year with heavy rains and thus lots of weeds. Thankfully, community volunteers and AmeriCorps Service Members pitched in to help the community gardeners maintain their plots and reap good harvests.



*Monthly work parties help keep gardens in shape.*

## Tools for Success

All the community gardens are now equipped for success with tool sheds, tools, easy water access and composting facilities. CFI now also coordinates monthly work parties at each community garden to help gardeners meet each other and to bring volunteers to lend a hand with garden maintenance. The Southside/Carriage Hill Community Garden had a great first year with many enthusiastic gardeners. This garden is open to the residents of Carriage Hill and anyone living on the Southside of Athens City. The soil is good, and it has a beautiful view from the top of the ridge!

Plans are in the works to fence in both the Eastside and Southside/Carriage Hill Community Gardens in 2014 to help protect them from animal pests. Stay tuned!



*Ruth Dudding shares her culinary expertise at the Healthy Cooking for the Holidays Workshop*

## The Workshops

CFI hosted 35 Garden and Culinary Workshops with over 243 individuals attending. We were especially excited to host a Community Orchard Workshop Series, educating people on planting, grafting, and pruning of fruit trees. CFI supports fruit and nut trees on public property and residents planting on their own private property. CFI also hosted canning workshops every month during the summer as well as workshops on dehydration and fermentation. Gardening workshops covered composting, organic pest control and seed saving techniques.



## The YEAH Kids



YEAH (Youth Entrepreneurs At Hope) Kids had a record year in 2013, making \$1,328 in profits shared among participants. These young adults live in subsidized housing and spend their summers working a production vegetable and herb garden and making value added products such as sauerkraut and jams in ACEnet's commercial kitchen. They vend at the Athens Farmers Market, learning business and professional skills in addition to agricultural and culinary skills.

*"I learned how to properly put lids on jars during canning so that the food will stay fresh. I learned how to talk to people at the Athens Farmer's Market and that has helped me to feel more comfortable talking to people at school." -YEAH Kids Participant, Age 15*

## Seed Saving Projects

The Southeastern Ohio Seed Inventory of 2013 focuses on our micro-region's seed savers, and is now printed and distributed more widely as it is available not only at local stores such as White's Mill, Little Professor and the Village Bakery Café, but also through online purchasing.

Eden Kinkaid, a CFI Intern, created a Seed Saving Guide, offering easy to understand step-by-step instructions for seed saving of the most common garden vegetables. Currently a Fulbright Scholar in India working on seed sovereignty, Eden has met and shared this book with Vandana Shiva, an international food justice activist.

CFI staff were also honored to present on the annual SE Ohio Seed Savers Exchanges at the Ohio Ecological Farm and Food Association Conference in February of 2013.



## School Gardens

Thankfully, there are many organizations, parents and students working toward improving school food by including healthier and more local options. This has given CFI the opportunity to increase our focus on school gardens. CFI believes that school gardens offer an opportunity to teach food literacy—increasing knowledge of where our food comes from and familiarity with regional produce and staple crops. This can help break down the barriers of feeling confident in growing one's own food and directly impact food security.

Working with all five school districts, the Athens County Children Services garden, day care centers and others, CFI is now providing resource support for garden planning, planting, maintenance and integrating the garden into lesson plans. Our staff hosted School Garden Roundtable Meetings, a chance for stakeholders to share their best practices and network. We're also happy to get invited to work with students directly in the gardens, lending a hand to our hard-working teachers who may struggle to find time to plan these activities in the midst of changes in testing standards.



*Mike McTernan and Trimble Elementary students explore squash family varieties at the Trimble school garden.*

### School Garden 2013 Highlights

- 257 children participate in garden lessons taught by CFI staff
- Two School Garden Roundtable Meetings held with representation from all school districts and several day care centers
- Pilot lesson plans are in development to help teachers use the gardens with their students

CFI School Garden Coordinator Mike McTernan put the rubber to the road, meeting school garden stakeholders, attending meetings and coordinating garden clean-up days. Mike's persistence is paying off— more teachers are coming forward with interest in using the school gardens, and reports keep coming in from the schools at how much the students enjoy getting outside. Federal-Hocking, Athens City, and Trimble High School all now have season extension or green houses in place, extending the season to allow for more student-garden engagement.

## The Donation Station

The Donation Station grew by leaps and bounds in 2013. A partnership with Rural Action's Chesterhill Produce Auction increased incoming food donations as staff are now there twice per week during peak growing season in addition to twice per week at the Athens Farmers Market. Being part of the Chesterhill Produce Auction has meant friendships with new farmers and donors, and increasing our network of local sources of food (apples and eggs) during the winter months.



*Donation Station at the Chesterhill Produce Auction*



*Donation Station Manager, Erik Peterson (center), and volunteers had a fruitful time harvesting apples in Nelsonville.*

Another source of our growth has been from harvesting and gleanng opportunities. The word got out at the Athens Farmers Market among vendors that CFI can wrangle up a team of volunteers to harvest lettuce and potatoes for the Donation Station. This allows food to get to those in need that may otherwise go to waste because of a lack of staffing or that it's not ideal for market (though still plenty tasty and good looking).

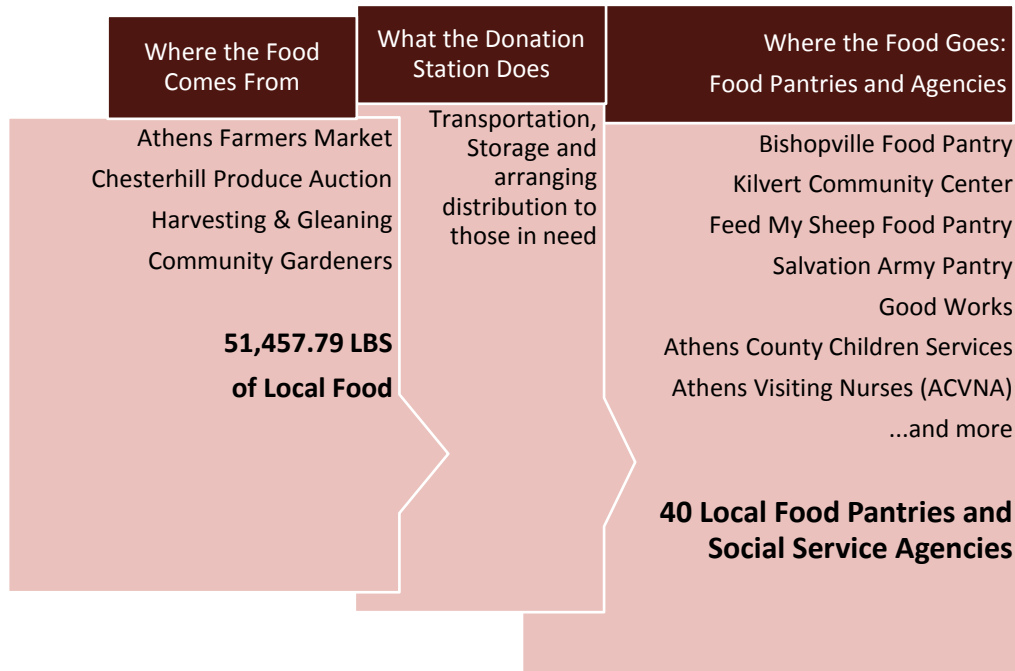
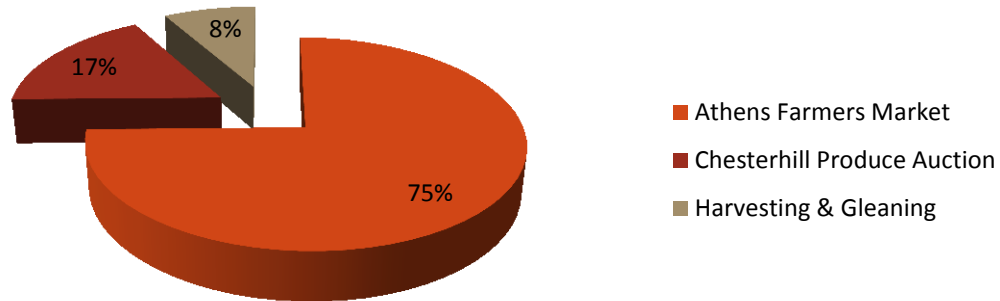
Community members have also jumped on board with harvesting. In October, we got a phone call from a resident in Nelsonville with apple trees, branches weighed down with apples. "They are tasty, but I have more than I need. Can't they go to the food pantries?" He asked us to come harvest them. In one day, staff and volunteers collected nearly 500 pounds of apples!

In 2014, CFI is hoping to take advantage of more harvesting opportunities with our farmer friends at the Athens Farmers Market and community members. Contact us if you've got quality food for harvest and as long as we've got volunteers ready and able, we'll be there!

CFI Donation Station staff presented at the Real Food Real Local Institute, to communities interested in replicating the Donation Station program as part of their 30 Mile Meal projects. CFI will be working on promoting the Donation Station program around SE Ohio and Appalachia as a way to both address food security and strengthen local food economies.

## THE DONATION STATION IN NUMBERS

**51, 457.79 Pounds of Local Food Distributed in  
2013 from three Primary Sources**





## Discovery Kitchen

New in 2013 was the creation and piloting of the Discovery Kitchen, a companion program to the Donation Station. You may have asked yourself if people receiving fresh produce know how to prepare it and why what we eat matters to our health? To ensure that our good intentions are creating good results, the Discovery Kitchen was created. Discovery Kitchen offers cooking classes to food pantry patrons and agency clients with demonstrations, recipes and samples using the seasonal foods we distribute.

CFI staff Nicole Shanks and Jenn Thompson developed ten lessons and recipes and connected with **167** individuals during 2013.



CFI Staff Jenn Thompson and Nicole Shanks letting all kale break loose!

*"I'd never eaten beans before (I participated in Discovery Kitchen). I helped prepare mujudra, a lentil and rice soup. Both my son and I ate second servings! I learned that eating beans reduces my risk of developing Type 2 Diabetes, and I feel like this is a recipe I can make at home with my family."*

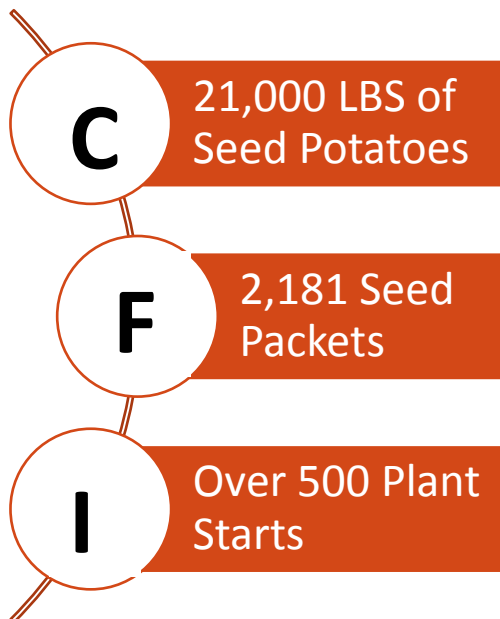
-Discovery Kitchen Participant

## Seed & Plant Start Give-Aways

You've got to have seeds to plant if you hope to grow food for your family and loved ones.

CFI staff all worked together in 2013 to bring the seeds to the people!

Below are the total amounts distributed to the SE Ohio region.



*CFI staff distributed 21,000 lbs of seed potatoes in 24 hours! If all planted, that makes 210,000 lbs of potatoes!*

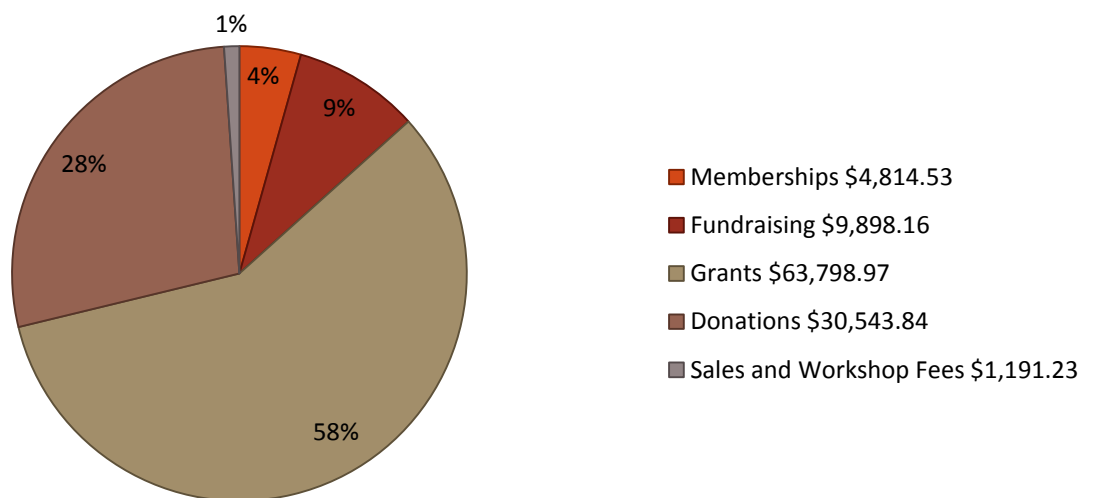
## Membership & Support

CFI couldn't have a more appropriate name because we truly are community based! Every day, we are grateful to live in a region supporting local healthy food access, building a strong local food system and resilient communities. CFI's backbone is our membership!

Grant Funders in 2013 include: Sister's of Saint Joseph Charitable Foundation, Athens Foundation, Rocky Boots Community Improvement Fund, Sugar Bush Foundation, Kramer Family Foundation, Edward Lamb Foundation, Tiescher Foundation, Athens Metropolitan Housing Authority, and the City of Athens.

*Thank You!*

**Income for 2013     \$110,246.73**  
**\$46,447.76 Raised Locally**



### Board of Directors

Tom Redfern, President ♦ Nancy Pierce, Treasurer  
 ♦ Penny Shelton ♦ Don Shamblin ♦ Greg Broadhurst ♦ Barbara Fisher  
 ♦ Lee Gregg ♦ Kira Slepchenko ♦ Ruth Dudding ♦ Lori Gromen ♦ Ann Brown

### Staff

Mary Nally, Executive Director  
 Erik Peterson, Donation Station Manager  
 Jess Chadwell, Community Garden Coordinator AmeriCorps Service Member  
 Mike McTernan, School Coordinator AmeriCorps Service Member  
 Jenn Thompson, Donation Station & Discovery Kitchen Coordinator AmeriCorps Service Member  
 Dave Holtkamp, Community Engagement Coordinator AmeriCorps Service Member  
 Ohio University & Hocking College Student Employees and Interns: Ross Brinkerhoff, Thomas Cleary,  
 Eden Kinkaid, Christina Kloha, Khrista Martin, Mary Seymour, Eric Sturgell, and Avery Tucker