

# COMMUNITY FOOD INITIATIVES

## 2017 ANNUAL REPORT





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## Our Vision

Our vision is a resilient region in which everyone in our community has access to an equitable, inclusive, and thriving local food system.

## Our Mission

Our mission is to foster communities where everyone has access to fresh, local food.

## Our Values

**Culture & Community**— We value naming our assets--soil, seeds, and an Appalachian heritage of food production and preservation--so that everyone can see their place in strengthening our assets and our community.

**Education & Empowerment**— We believe that by sharing the knowledge to grow and prepare wholesome foods, people become empowered to feed their families, improve their health, and their community.

**Justice**— We are rooted in the belief that equitable access to fresh and nutritious local food leads to a safe and clean environment, meaningful work with living wages, and fulfills the needs and rights of all people.

**Collaboration**— We believe in the strength of collaboration and doing better together.



# Letter to the Community



Dear Friends,

I often find myself reflecting with gratitude on everyone connected to the organization throughout the years. CFI has adapted, learned and grown so much with the help of many people. The development of a resilient region in which everyone has access to an equitable, inclusive and thriving local food system is possible because of our dedicated community.

We've begun interviewing past staff, board members, and volunteers in an effort to capture our history. Seeing where we've been sheds light on the road ahead. "CFI takes the homegrown wisdom and skills of community members and preserves and respects that knowledge while getting it out to the community," said Leslie Schaller, CFI founder. Former AmeriCorps Service Member, Badger Johnson shared, "the work that CFI does helps make sure the benefits of the local food movement are felt broadly throughout the community." You can see more interviews on the website blog. For me, the interviews are a source of accountability to ensure we are staying true to our mission and making an authentic impact. Additionally, they are a source of inspiration as I learn stories from volunteers, gardeners, farmers and food pantry coordinators that provide the direction we need as we travel the road ahead.

From all of us at Community Food Initiatives, thank you!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mary Nally".

Mary Nally  
Executive Director



# Community Gardens

**In 2017-**

- **20,000 square feet under production**
- **51 Gardeners at 5 community garden sites**

Across Athens County, from Nelsonville, Chauncey, Glouster and on Athens City's Eastside and Southside neighborhoods, friends and family are growing food together. Community Gardens provide space for skill sharing, support and accountability, and helps build bridges between neighbors. Equipped with the land, tools, water, mulch, and volunteer support, these gardens continue to thrive and feed the region.

Looking ahead, there are plans to relocate the Chauncey and Nelsonville Community Gardens so growers have better conditions and more sustainable locations.

*“As an apartment dweller, I loved having dedicated space to garden.”* —a community gardener

*“I enjoy any contact with the staff as they have been friendly, supportive, knowledgeable, willing to help in any way that they can. The advice and the training given to us were very effective.”*

—a community gardener



# Garden & Culinary Workshops



*“There are definitely enough opportunities to gardening advice and education, particularly if a gardener has a certain interest, through the garden workshops on different topics.”*

*—a community gardener*

We seek to provide hands-on opportunities to build wellness, knowledge, and skills in the garden and kitchen.

Some of our favorite workshop memories include garlic planting with Rich Organic Gardens, season extension for community and school gardens, and learning to grow mushrooms with Creekside farms.

We also launched a Food Preservation Rental Equipment Service so anyone can borrow a water bath canner, pressure canner, or dehydrator for only \$5 per day. It's the perfect follow up to a food preservation workshop!

**In 2017-**

- **Hosted 34 workshops reaching 339 participants**



# Discovery Kitchen



*"People love the produce; it's a gift, it's amazing"* - Anita Hajivandi, River of Life Care Closet, Meigs County

People build confidence in increasing their fresh produce consumption if they have a little help and encouragement, so Discovery Kitchen offers easy how-to's, recipes, and tasty samples to help inspire increased confidence in the kitchen! We want to help make sure that the food our community works to donate gets put to use in tasty, healthy meals.

**In 2017-**

- **80 Discovery Kitchen Classes and Tasting Tables reaching 1,288 people**



# Donation Station

The Donation Station addresses the most immediate food security issue and ensure access to healthy fresh foods for everyone.

We receive both food and monetary donations each week at local farmers markets and produce auctions from customers, vendors, and local community gardeners. The monetary donations are used to purchase fresh foods from the market and auction vendors.

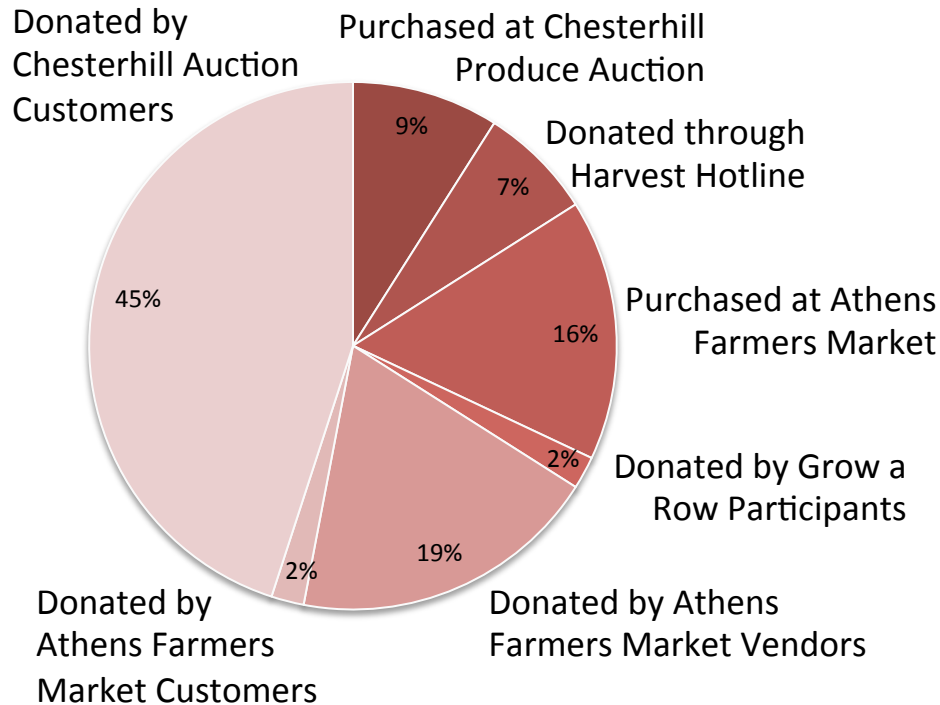
This unique program addresses poverty and food insecurity issues while supporting the growth of the local food economy.

In 2017, the Donation Station expanded to reach 5 SE Ohio Counties: Athens, Meigs, Morgan, Vinton, and Washington.



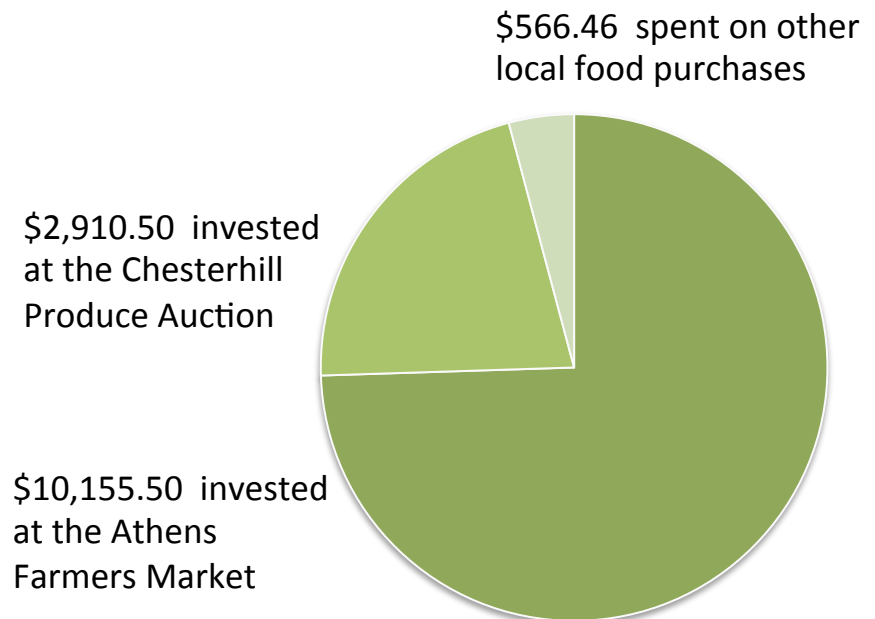
*"Getting fresh produce every week is great-- it's fresher, tastes better and sometimes I joke with the patrons that I picked it all myself!" -Monna Taylor, Bishopville Food Pantry*

# Donation Station's Contribution to the Local Food Solution in 2017



**90,410.5 pounds** distributed to **41** food pantries and social services agencies.

**\$13,632.46** invested in the Local Food Economy, supporting our Farmers and Food Producers.



# School Gardens

School Gardening is an investment in sustaining and growing the harvest here in Appalachian Ohio. School Gardening activities enable students to learn about gardening, the environment, food, and nutrition. While gardening, students develop practical life skills and engage in physical activity. As outdoor learning labs, school gardens offer a unique, multi-sensory, inquiry-based education. Most importantly, the creative, and often playful approach of school gardening instills confidence and enthusiasm for life-long learning.

## In 2017-

- **36 consultations and site visits**
- **50 educational events reaching 849 students**

*"I have been amazed at the excitement from the kids. They have assumed total responsibility for the garden, are busy planning for spring and have lots of ideas of how to share the harvest next year!"*

Leslie Jones, West Elementary Teacher





# Ridge & Hollow Seed Alliance



*"I loved learning how to clean seeds before sharing them, and the hands-on seed saving techniques."*

—workshop participant

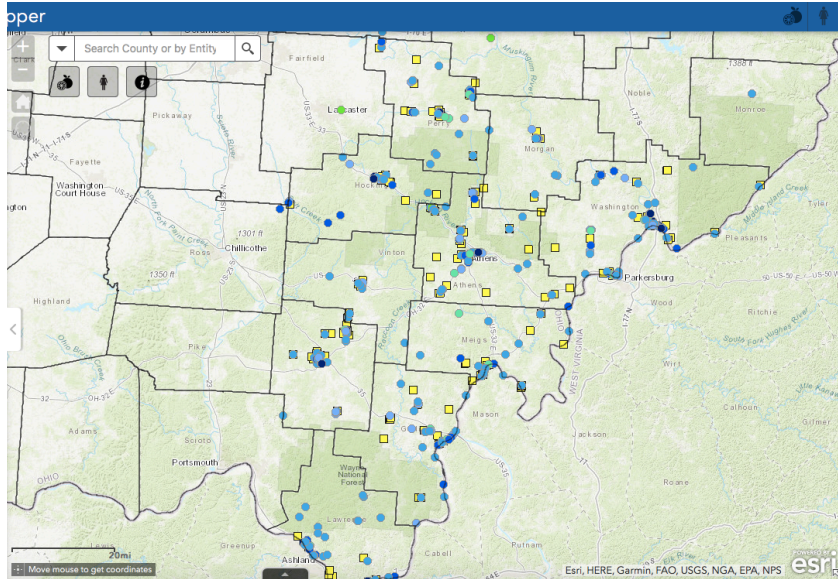
We're dedicated to increasing food security for future generations by supporting the preservation of regionally adapted, open-pollinated seeds through partnerships with skilled seed savers living in our region.

In partnership with professors and researchers from the Ohio State University, Antioch College, Ohio University and nonprofit partners, we hosted a Seed to Sustainability Workshop Series across the state, providing education and building seed savers network to address barriers for small scale growers and seed libraries.

## In 2017—

- Hosted 3 workshops reaching 48 participants
- Partnered with 4 contracted growers
- \$2,206 in seed sales at 6 retailers and events, including the Athens Farmers Market, Pop-Up Markets and regional conferences

# SEO FOODLINK

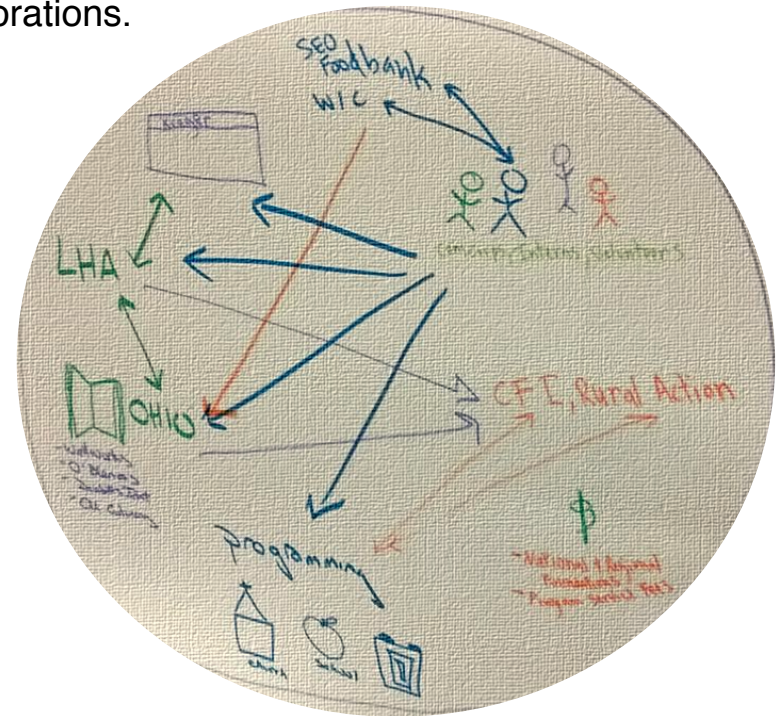


In an effort to address hunger and poverty in the region, we are developing the Southeast Ohio FOODLINK project. This community-driven online resource hub and learning commons maps locations and information of food pantries and grocers in 10 SE Ohio counties, and overlaps poverty and census data so citizens, non-profit leaders and policy makers can make more informed decisions and identify possibilities for new collaborations.

**In 2017-**

- **Mapped 185 food pantries and free meal programs**
- **Mapped 379 retail grocers**

SEO FOODLINK will launch in early 2018 and will be followed by Nourishing Networks community workshops in each county.





# Seed & Plant Give-Aways



As a way to empower members of our community to garden and grow their own food, we host seed and plant giveaways. We believe that sometimes all anyone needs is a nudge in the right direction, so we are excited to promote healthy food access for all with free seeds and plants. Many thanks to the Athens County Public Libraries, Jackson Area Ministries, HAPCAP and Athens County Job & Family Services for helping make this possible!

## In 2017—

- **30,000 pounds of seed potatoes given to families in Perry, Athens, Meigs, Morgan, Vinton and Washington counties in Ohio and McDowell and Boone counties in West Virginia**
- **1,819 seed packets of 246 varieties distributed to families in 8 SE Ohio counties**
- **1,473 plant starts distributed to families in 8 SE Ohio counties**



# YEAH! Youth Entrepreneurs at Hope

The YEAH Kids program coaches youth living at Hope Apartments, managed by the Athens Metropolitan Housing Authority. Participants grow their own produce, have weekly kitchen workshops at the ACEnet kitchen to make tasty treats such as kimchi, sauerkraut, jam, and baked goods. They sell their produce and food products at the Athens Farmers Market as a summer job experience.

## In 2017-

- **9 participants attended 13 markets and made \$965 in collective profits**

YEAH Kids had trainings on Professionalism; Hygiene Best Practices in a Commercial Kitchen; Knife Safety & Food Handling Safety; Best Practices for Organic Gardening and Money Management with Ohio University Credit Union. They also took field trips to Solid Ground Farm, Integration Acres, Ohio University Credit Union, and Sells Park with Raccoon Creek Watershed Restoration Team.

**Kid Power**, that runs over the winter months provides all youth at Hope Drive with the opportunity for engagement to play games, practice healthy life skills, go on field trips and have positive adult mentorship. Events included ice skating, swimming, hikes, yoga, cooking, and art projects.



# What Parents are Saying



*"Having my sons participate in the YEAH program has had a positive impact on them and our family. They are learning how to grow veggies and they always talk about it with me because I grew up in the garden. Knowing that my children are gardening and acquiring these skills means a lot."*

*"My son has shown higher levels of self-esteem since joining YEAH. He used to be more reclusive."*

*"I have seen an improvement in how my son manages money."*

*"Skills my kids have picked up since becoming part of the YEAH program include gardening and sometimes willingness to try new foods. They have picked up skills in food preparation. They come home and brag about cooking at ACEnet. My kids save money. My daughter has also picked up business skills, she exhibits leadership qualities."*

*"I have noticed that their work ethic is better; they are more likely to do their chores."*





# Donation Station Development



Ross County launched the first pilot replication of the Donation Station in 2017. A partnership between the Chillicothe Farmers Market, Operation Hope and Integrated Services Behavioral Health is improving food security for all.

## In 2017-

- **11,016 pounds of local food for Ross County food pantries**
- **Over \$5,000 invested in market vendors**

We're excited to continue providing technical support to stabilize the program and begin developing Donation Stations in other communities in 2018.



# Financial Report

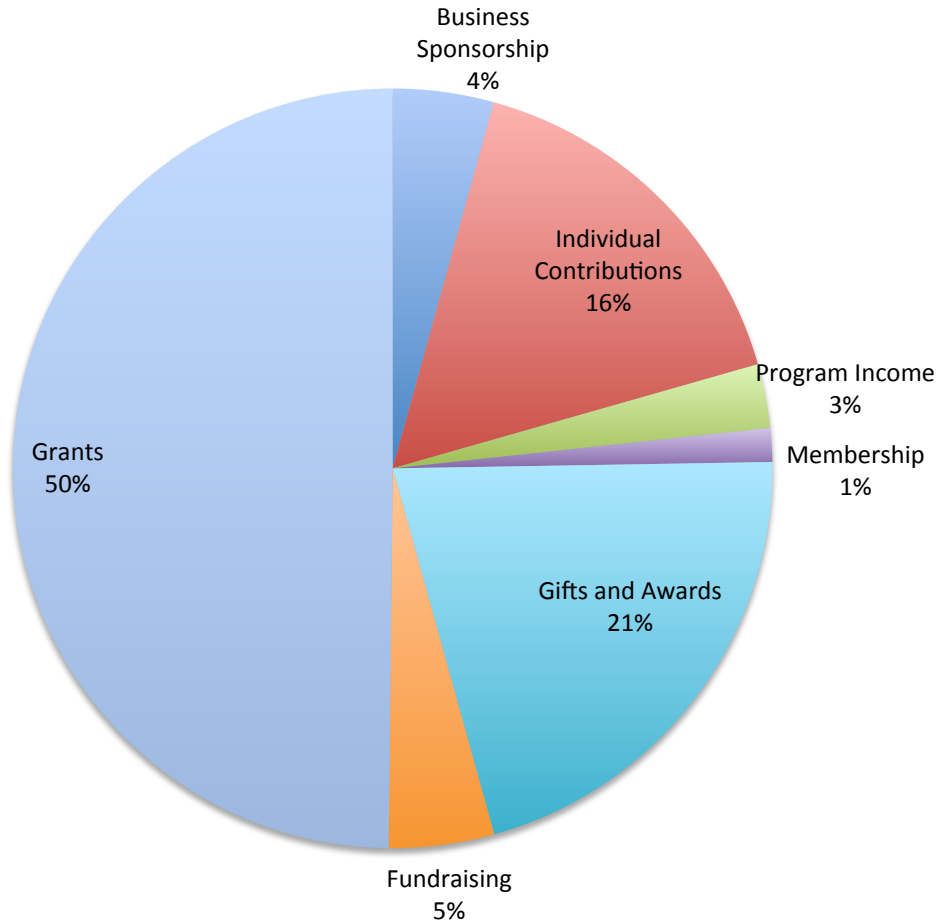


## Special Thanks to our Funders-

Athens City-County Health Department  
Athens County Foundation  
Brown/Holroyd Family Fund  
City of Athens  
Clif Bar Family Foundation  
Edward Lamb Foundation  
Grow Appalachia  
Leona Cibrowski Trust  
Kleinpenny Family Foundation  
Kramer Family Foundation  
Ohio Community Development Corp. Association  
OSU InFACT  
Osteopathic Heritage Foundation  
Sister's Health Foundation  
Sugar Bush Foundation

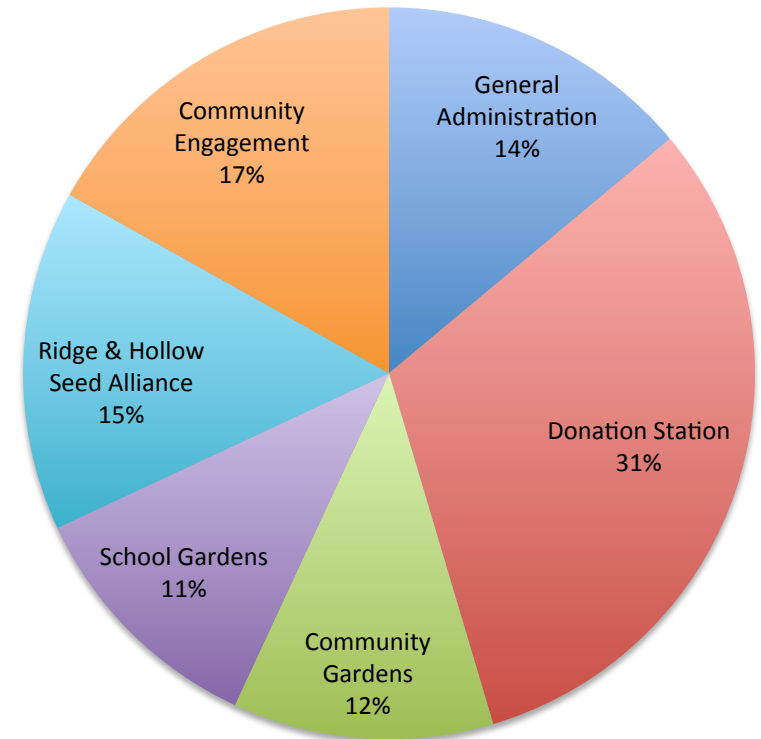
Thanks to each and every community member who helps grow and share the harvest through your membership and donations!

# 2017 Income & Expenses



**Income \$188,469**

\*Note Income doesn't show  
2016 carry-over



**Expenses \$197,793**



**Many thanks** to our Business Sponsors, Partners, members and friends who attended the Harvest Dinner and other benefit events in 2017. We love celebrating with you!



# Our 2017 Business Sponsors





# Special Thanks to the 362 Volunteers who put in 1,394 Hours of Service in 2017!

## Board of Directors

Ann Brown ♦ Ruth Dudding ♦ Lori Gromen ♦ Linda Parsons ♦ Brian Plow ♦ Angie Porvaznik  
Steve Scanlan ♦ Kira Slepchenko ♦ Rick Vest ♦ Keith Wilde

Special Thanks to Exiting Board Members Sarah Conley-Ballew, Lee Gregg and Nancy Pierce!

## Staff

Mary Nally, Executive Director

Ryan Leach (through June 2017) & Caitlin Garrity, Donation Station Program Manager

Jess Chadwell, Ridge & Hollow Seed Alliance Manager

Jessica Arnold, Community Engagement Manager

Raina Schoonover, AmeriCorps VISTA SEO FOODLINK Coordinator

Janice Brewer (through July 2017) & Javi Devia, Community Garden Coordinator

David Doddridge (through July 2017) & Jess Markowitz, School Garden Coordinator

JaMilla Holland (through July 2017) & Moira Snuffer, Donation Station & Discovery Kitchen Coordinator

Allison Hall (through July 2017) & Katie Conlon, AmeriCorps VISTA Strategic Plan Coordinator

Margaret Hoff, Fiscal Administrator

## Ohio University Student Work Study, Summer Service Corps & Interns

Megan Almeida, Bethany Bella, Kelly Fernandez, Jordyn Henderson, Marianne Jacobs, Hunter Winegar,  
Sonia Ivancic, Joy Kostansek, Stephanie Oswald, Abigail Trevor, Lucas Hakes-Rodriguez, Sarah Hill,  
Raquel Gleicher, Hannah Stillions, Maddie Hale, Nichole Parks and Ciara Martin

# Get Involved!

**Join us and get involved in growing and sharing the harvest!**

## **Opportunities Include—**

- Become a Member
- Attend Workshops
- Take the Grow-A-Row Pledge
- Become a Volunteer or Intern
- Join us for the Annual Membership Gathering on March 24<sup>th</sup> 6pm-8pm at the Athens Community Center



[www.communityfoodinitiatives.org](http://www.communityfoodinitiatives.org)



Community Food Initiatives



@AthensOhioCFI



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