

# Community Farms Outreach Newsletter

240 Beaver Street, Waltham, MA 02452 781-899-2403 [www.communityfarms.org](http://www.communityfarms.org)



July 2003

## ***Farmland Preservation at the Field Station***

Dee Kricker, *President, CFO Board of Directors*

The survival of Waltham Fields Community Farm depends upon leasing the fields, greenhouse, storage and office spaces at the UMass Field Station. However, the survival of the Field Station may ultimately depend on Waltham Fields Community Farm. While we await word on the impact of the final budget cuts from UMass, we know the following: UMass will not invest public funds in the Field Station in the foreseeable future and the Field Station needs a revenue stream to maintain the facility and provide a foundation for growth. The question arises, if UMass won't invest, who will, and what kind of growth would that be?

*Rather than stand by and watch the downward spiral of neglect caused by almost two decades of a lack of investment and dedicated resources to the Field Station site, it is time for those of us who care about Waltham Fields Community Farm, the surrounding land and historical structures, to act.* Already, one-fourth of the greenhouse space has been torn down, the roof over the main brick structure is leaking badly, one barn has fallen down, a second is in poor condition and the historic mid-1800's barn needs a new roof immediately to prevent irreparable rot. The 56-acre site of unique buildings and grounds has only a bare-bones maintenance and administrative staff. Despite their hard work, there is no money for sorely needed capital improvements. Over the past two decades, UMass has virtually mothballed this site, and it shows. Of course, they haven't wanted to do this, but as their financial crisis deepens, the Field Station languishes. *Something must be done now to reverse this trend, before the place is permanently shut down and sold to the highest bidder.*

What is required is a dramatic initiative that will transform the Field Station into a contemporary Agroecological Education Center representing the best of current practices. Such a goal is outlined in the "Vision Statement for the Cornelia Warren Farm Center" with its mission: ***To preserve the historical and ecological integrity of Cornelia Warren Farm and to promote its use as a place where the public can learn about and become involved in revitalizing urban agriculture, community-based food systems, and our continued connection with the land that supports us all.*** The vision statement, now posted on our web site, was developed by a small group of Friends of Cornelia Warren Farm this past year. It formulates goals derived from a survey of current users and it outlines a plan for revenue generation inspired by successful programs established around the country.

As an anchor tenant operating the six-acre Waltham Fields Community Farm, Community Farms Outreach is in a unique position to lead such an effort. With a large, active membership base who cares and is knowledgeable about the issues related to local food production, small scale farming, community supported agriculture, and sustainable living practices, CFO has the potential to assemble a planning team to coordinate the revitalization of the Field Station site. In order to do this, CFO must expand its own administrative and staffing capacity. It must work with key stakeholders and supporters including other tenant and site users, UMass officials, Waltham officials, surrounding neighborhood residents, and the state. Such a group is now working to plan the future disposition of the adjacent Fernald State School property soon to be closed by the state. Both properties are part of the Western Greenway, an interconnected corridor of large acreages within Waltham and Belmont (see [www.walthamlandtrust.org](http://www.walthamlandtrust.org)).

By revamping this regional resource, we reclaim and celebrate the agricultural heritage of those who farmed this area in the past. We pay special homage to Cornelia Warren, the philanthropist dairy farmer who bequeathed this site for agricultural and educational purposes. We also preserve our farm. If you are interested in learning more about these issues and would like to become involved in such a project, please contact us by email at [board@communityfarms.org](mailto:board@communityfarms.org). The next meeting of our Farmland Preservation Committee is Thursday July 10, at 7:30 pm at the Field Station.



### **2004 CFO Board of Directors**

The CFO Board of Directors has begun the process of identifying the types of skills, experience and knowledge our 2004 Board needs to successfully address the challenges that face us. We have not yet completed this task, but we have identified the need for new board members with knowledge about sustainable agriculture, fund raising, finances, nonprofit legal issues and farmland preservation. Board terms are for one year, with a commitment to attend monthly board meetings and participate in committee work as needed in between board meetings. ***If you, or someone you know, has skills in these areas, time to contribute to our work and interest in a board position, please contact CFO Board Secretary, Elise Hoblitzelle at (617) 923-2641 or [board@communityfarms.org](mailto:board@communityfarms.org)***

## Community Farms Outreach

### Board of Directors

[Board@communityfarms.org](mailto:Board@communityfarms.org)

Dee Kricker - Waltham  
*President*

Gretta Anderson - Arlington  
*Vice President*

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Liz Fuller - Waltham  
Jane Hammer - Arlington  
Adam Lesser - Newton  
Anna Linakis - Somerville  
Joe Orlando - Waltham  
Oakes Plimpton - Arlington  
Chris Yoder - Dover

### Staff

John Mitchell  
*Farm Manager*

[JohnMitchell@communityfarms.org](mailto:JohnMitchell@communityfarms.org)

Derek Christianson  
*Associate Director*  
*Assistant Farm Manager*  
[DerekChristianson@communityfarms.org](mailto:DerekChristianson@communityfarms.org)

Ellen Gray  
Jonathan Kirschner  
*2003 Farmhands*

Andrew 'Coop' Cooper  
Justine Kahn  
*Agricultural interns*

Thea Patterson  
*Children's Garden Coordinator*  
[education@communityfarms.org](mailto:education@communityfarms.org)

### Newsletter editor

Martha Creedon  
[MLCreedon@yahoo.com](mailto:MLCreedon@yahoo.com)

### Community Farms Outreach, Inc.

Our mission is to promote, support and manage community farms and farms in the community. Community farms are farms that are charitable and educational: growing produce for soup kitchens, shelters and food pantries, educating children and adults about how and where their food is grown and generally to preserve the open space and beauty of farms.

Community Farms Outreach, Inc. is a 501(c)3 nonprofit charitable corporation.

## Our Farm: Community Supported Agriculture

Gretta Anderson, *Vice President, CFO Board of Directors*

It is easy to see the many ways that members and volunteers support our farm. Almost any day you visit Waltham Fields you will see them working side-by-side with farm staff in the fields and greenhouse. You will also notice people dropping by – to bring lunch, help build the new distribution shelter, join a farm tour or socialize at a 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday picnic, help harvest and deliver vegetables, or say hello. Waltham Fields is a farm that is well supported by this community.

The support flows in both directions: WFCF and CFO support this community in ways that include, yet extend beyond, great vegetables. In the weekly CSA newsletter, Clayton writes about the farm as a welcoming community; Henrietta speaks of being exhilarated by the excellence she finds here; Sai tells us that our farm is supporting his dream of a more sustainable lifestyle; members and volunteers talk about the pleasure of physical labor, reconnecting with memories of a family garden, delight at finding fat earthworms, garden snakes, and ladybugs. For others, it is a chance to share with the children in our lives the wonder of germinating seeds and the amazement at how quickly a chipmunk can find and eat just-planted squash seeds! The CFO mission supports a desire some members have to give the kind of food we would like to receive if we fell on hard times. The work of Community Farms Outreach supports many of us as we try to translate our values and beliefs about the environment, agriculture and sustainable food systems into action.

In what ways does this farm nourish you? What piece of the CFO mission—hunger relief, education about sustainable food production, the preservation of community farms and farmland – resonates most for you? As we work in the fields or gather for picnics, talk with us about why you support this farm and this organization and in what ways they support you.

### Members and volunteers form the core of this community....

Have you wondered how we can do so much with such a small paid work force?

**Americorps:** Jane Hammer researched and applied to Americorps on behalf of CFO. As a result, a group of young people will work with us in July and August.

**CFO Brochure:** Heather Quinn has designed a new brochure for CFO.

**Computer stuff:** Clayton Carter, Dan Melnechuk, Jeff Engerman, Saskia Oosting and data entry crew, Jodie, Dudley, Helene, Debby work on various projects.

**Distribution Shelter:** Jared Shaw worked with his dad to design our new shelter. Jared along with Annaliese Franz, Burke and Caron Minsley, David Granger and Chrissie Foot, Chris Tonelli, Clayton Carter and others dug the holes (in the rain!!!) and built the shelter.



**Fieldwork:** Ben, Irv, Marina, Linda, Chris, Allison, Caron, Sai, Robin, Micheline, Tim, Tom, Jennifer, Brad, Wren, Barrett, Ellen, Whitt, Annette, Katie, Coop, Justine, Dudley, Nicole, Georgia, Clayton, Kendra, Paul, Henrietta, Joe, Annaliese, and many more have worked in the fields rain and shine & rain & rain & rain.....

**Newsletters:** Martha Creedon edits the CSA weekly and CFO quarterly newsletters, squeezing more text onto one page than anyone imagined possible!

**Produce Donations:** Dee Kricker, et al have streamlined our program (see article)

**3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday Gatherings:** Gretta Anderson, Jane Hammer, Amy, Bill, Andrea, Sky, Julie, Anna, Betsy, Crissy, Elise, Janet, Marisa, Marty, Dee, and Oakes help prepare for farm picnics.

**Web Site:** Liz Fuller and Ken Green have designed our new website and keep it up-to-date. Stephanie Thurrott edits our website content, making it a joy to read.

## ***Hunger Relief: Produce Donation Program***

Charitable harvests are integral to the founding vision of Community Farms Outreach. Since its germination in the fertile minds of an idealistic crew of gleaners in 1995, Waltham Fields Community Farm has distributed approximately 120,000 pounds of organically grown produce to over 25 agencies in local communities. Our hunger relief efforts provide bushels of fresh produce to soup kitchens, food pantries and homeless shelters, supplying healthy nourishment to people in need. Often, our vegetables are the only source of fresh produce supporting the nutritional needs of these programs.

This year we began delivering produce to local food programs on June 9. We harvest for charity on Sunday, Monday and Wednesday mornings. Shareholders and other CFO members deliver produce on Monday and Wednesday mornings. *Contact Dee Kricker if you would like to get involved in our Produce Donation Program.*

***2004 Produce Donation Recipients***  
Waltham Salvation Army Food for Free  
Greater Boston Food Bank  
Sandra's Lodge  
Waltham Red Cross Food Pantry



***Thank you*** to all the CFO members and community volunteers who coordinate, harvest and deliver our vegetables to area food programs! Special thanks to Dee Kricker, Janet Yeracaris, Toby Peterson, Oakes Plimpton, Betsy Blagdon, Nora Bloch and Graeme Williams.

## ***Education: Connecting with the Roots of our Food System***, Derek Christianson, Associate Director and Assistant Farm Manager

WFCF has been hosting many local school groups for education and community service programs. On June 30th we began another summer of our Children's Learning Garden. Working with Cambridge Adventure Day Camp, Thea Patterson, our Children's Garden Coordinator, runs a program for 60+ Cambridge youth. Children ages 6-10 visit the farm three mornings a week over a 6 week period, learning about how food is grown and connecting with the roots of our food system. The Children's Learning Garden can be seen right next to our hoop house, and contains a full variety of vegetable and herbs. Thea has expanded our Children's Garden program this year to offer activities for the Cambridge Arts Center summer campers.

Our educational programming this year includes a number of other new offerings. Orientations to Fieldwork and Child-friendly Farm Tours this spring introduced over 100 people to our farm, fieldwork and our mission.

*If you are interested in helping to support and expand the educational programs at CFO, contact Rebecca Petersen-Leary, CFO Education Committee, rpetersen\_leary2002@yahoo.com. For information about the Children's Garden contact Thea Patterson. To arrange for a school or community group to work in the fields contact Derek Christianson.*

## **Membership Drive**

We hope to expand our membership this year, increasing the visibility of CFO in the community and broadening our base of support. Our goal is 150 new CFO members. *If you know someone who supports our mission, please encourage them to become CFO members.* Membership benefits include the quarterly CFO newsletter, voting privileges at the Annual Meeting and the opportunity to join WFCF CSA.

### **2003 Community Farms Outreach Membership Application**

Join us as we work to relieve hunger, reclaim farmland and reconnect with the knowledge of sustainable food production. Complete the form below and mail it along with your membership fee to CFO, 240 Beaver Street, Waltham, MA 02452.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State and Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number(s): \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Select a membership level:

\_\_\$250 \_\_\$100\_\_\$50\_\_\$25 (minimum level required for CSA enrollment) \_\_\$15 student/other

Community Farms Outreach, Inc. is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization. All contributions are tax deductible to the extent permitted by law.

## Office Space and Room Rental

*UMass Field Station*

*240 Beaver Street, Waltham*

Office space is available for nonprofit organizations whose missions are directed towards agriculture, horticulture, environmental or public health issues, or youth development. Located on a 56-acre agricultural site, some of these offices have views of one of the loveliest (and only!) farms in Waltham. Parking included. Three office spaces are available. The UMass site also has an auditorium, classroom and conference room for rent at very reasonable rates. Contact Joe Donoghue (781) 891-0650 x13.

## Financial News

This year Community Farms Outreach has received grants from several new foundations including Greenleaf (\$10,000), BankNorth (\$5,000) and the Architectural Heritage Foundation (\$1,000). CFO members, including many shareholders, have donated more than \$3,000 so far this year. In light of the recent UMass budget cuts and the anticipated increase in our rent, we are especially grateful for this financial support.



## Calendar of Events

- Sunday, July 20**
- 3rd Sunday Gathering at the farm, byo picnic and beverage. Friends and family are welcome to attend, 12:30-1:30. Join us to welcome the Americorp volunteers!
  - Child Friendly Farm Tour, 1:30-2:00.
- Monday, July 21**
- CFO Board of Directors Meeting, 8pm at the farm.
- August 8-10**
- NOFA (Northeast Organic Farming Association) summer conference in Amherst. Details at <http://www.nofamass.org>
- Sunday, August 17**
- 3rd Sunday Gathering at the farm, byo picnic and beverage, 12:30-1:30
  - Informational Meeting, Northwest Earth Institute Study Circles, [www.nwei.org](http://www.nwei.org), 1:30 at the farm.
- Sunday, Sept. 21**
- 3rd Sunday Gathering at the farm, byo picnic and beverage, 12:30-1:30
- Monday, Sept. 22**
- CFO Board of Directors Meeting, 8pm at the farm. Open to the public.



*Community Farms Outreach, Inc.*

*240 Beaver Street*

*Waltham, MA 02452*

- Hunger Relief
- Education
- Farm Preservation