



2021

ANNUAL REPORT

Waltham Fields Community Farm
240 Beaver St, Waltham MA

Our Mission: Waltham Fields Community Farm cultivates sustainable and equitable relationships between people, their food supply, and the land from which it grows.

2021 Board of Directors

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MESSAGE FROM WFCF ED

Greetings Farm friends,

I am challenged by the task of encapsulating all that our community and staff experienced this year due to the significant impacts of an enduring pandemic and climate change without expressing recognition that there is need to strengthen our initiatives and broaden our collaborations even further in the new year to support meaningful change in our organization and community. The concept of sustainability has been ever present as we examined our mission, land care practices, program capacities, community engagement, and the wellness of our program participants and essential staff. Inequities in our community persist and we will continue to examine our practices and need for greater diversity, representation and perspectives about those we serve.

We do not struggle, however, in sharing the depths of our gratitude for the tremendous accomplishments our staff and directors achieved in 2021. This year's report highlights their goals achieved, and resources extended from our fields. It also illuminates the abundant impact our members, shareholders, volunteers, program participants and community leaders contributed to our successes and alignment with our mission in the past year.

We are grateful for our team's perseverance through extreme heat, mental, physical exhaustion and operational challenges and humbled to witness the care extended to each other's wellness. Laughter, meals shared, and free-throws in the parking lot were just a few of the ways we expressed ourselves and offered levity and comfort for each other.

We look ahead and endure to cultivate new relationships, sustainably steward the farmland in our care for a quarter century and provide equitable access to nourishment for all in our community.



**STACEY DALEY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

FINANCIALS

FINANCIAL STATUS: We began and ended 2021 in good financial standing.

Operating Expenses

Agricultural (non-salary) \$146,639

Wages and benefits \$556,941

Organizational infrastructure \$90,724

Facilities, fees & insurance \$36,351

Supplies \$40,411

Prof Service fees \$29,740

Budgeted contributions to reserves \$20,192

Total expenses: \$832,877

Income

Foundations - Grants \$132,653

Government Grants \$169,424

Fundraisers \$38,523

Annual Appeal: \$52,139

Membership \$22,961

Business Donations \$50,662

Education Income \$64,724

Other donations: \$67,452

Agriculture Income: \$405,653

Total Income \$1,128,693

Highlights

1. 2021 Annual Appeal Total: \$52k (goal \$35k)

1. 2021 Agricultural Income Total: \$405k (goal \$424k)

1. Individual Donations Total: \$67k (goal: \$32k)



AGRICULTURAL PROGRAM OVERVIEW

BY ERINN ROBERTS, FARM MANAGER

The farm staff was comprised of Erinn Roberts and Johanna Flies as farm managers, along with Dan Roberts as equipment manager. Tim Cooke, Nadine Dyskant-Miller, Isabella DiBianca, Lisa Sinnhuber, and Dora Sevor were all part of our returning crew of experienced farmers, for either full or partial seasons. Nadine and Isabella were our Assistant Growers, with a focus on increased training in tractor operation, pest identification and management, crop planning, and equipment repair and maintenance. The biggest change to our staffing structure in 2021 was the introduction of the Community Outreach Farmer position, designed to strengthen the work of our food access and volunteer programs. An amazing "people person", Kate Cowie-Haskell seemed to intuitively connect with so many different participants in our outreach programs and we couldn't have been more pleased to have her shape this new role. With the additions of Arron, Anna M., Anna Z., McKinzey, Daniel, and Nick, our crew peaked at 13 folks in the fields, which is the minimum this farm needs during the height of the season.

Thankfully, we were able to safely welcome back volunteers this season with a few COVID adaptations, and hosted both scheduled groups (mainly corporations and workplaces) and individual "drop-in" hours (via registration to limit group size).

WFCF farmed the full acreage at the Field Station and 75% of the Lyman Estate land, cover cropping $\frac{2}{3}$ of an acre at that site. With the uncertainty of the pandemic still pervasive throughout our crop planning period, and the resource-heavy demands of the Weston fields, we decided to rest those fields again as one measure to conserve limited means and materials.

To date, the farm has provided over 100,000 lb. of fresh vegetables in the CSA share, at the Mobile Outreach Market, to Food for Free, and to Waltham Public Schools. This represents a significant decrease in production from a typical year, in which we could expect about 1.5 times that amount.

Total Pounds Distributed through 2021 CSA:



**Summer CSA:
85k lb.**



**ESS CSA:
13k lb.**

AGRICULTURAL PROGRAM, CONTD

The exceptionally well-drained fields at the home site were put to the test this year, with both record rainfall and record heat hitting us after a dry start to the season. Many parts of the farm were under water for the first time that I can recall seeing and yet we were more well-off than other farms across the state who already contend with typical drainage issues. Despite our best efforts, overall yields were diminished, most notably in key staple crops such as tomatoes, lettuce, and kale. We had an average or successful year with a handful of crops, including eggplant, cucumbers, and garlic.

Our partnership with Picadilly Farm continued to evolve in a manner similar to 2020. This year, Picadilly provided all of the green and sweet peppers, melons, sweet potatoes, and leeks in the Summer CSA along with a majority of the potatoes and winter squashes. They will supply all of the potatoes and butternut squash for the Extended Season share. Despite their own diminished yields due to weather, they were able to offer all anticipated amounts of these crops with the exception of watermelons and cantaloupes. This model of selecting targeted crops grown by Picadilly has enabled us to better strategize the production on our own acreage by eliminating a handful of crops that have historically been very challenging due to pest and disease pressure at this site. The Picadilly-grown crops represent about 10% of the total value of the Summer CSA.

We welcomed the addition of a refrigerated cargo van to our fleet of equipment this year, thanks to funding from a Massachusetts Food Security Infrastructure grant. The van supported the distribution of the Mobile Outreach Market and Produce Rx boxes, eliminating the need to remove a farm truck from production during the workday. No one had to chase down a truck in the field or keep time check if we were at the Lyman site with both trucks, or worry about how to manage both farm work and deliveries if we were down a truck. Removing these logistical challenges made a bigger impact on efficiency than it might seem on the surface. Having the van also enabled us to navigate the weather challenges more easily, with refrigeration at the ready and protection from the rain. During a particularly rainy Mobile Outreach Market day, Kate drove door to door throughout the Housing Authority neighborhood delivering boxes to individual households.

As we wrap up another year of farming during the pandemic, one of the most important aspects of the season to highlight is the incredible camaraderie of the staff that grew this food. I was fortunate to work shoulder-to-shoulder with a group of fascinating, inspiring, smart, savvy, compassionate, supportive, empathetic, and hard-working individuals who each brought their own light to a challenging season. For that, I thank Johanna, Dan, Tim, Nadine, Isabella, Dora, Lisa, Anna, Anna, Arron, McKinzey, Daniel, Nick, and Kate. And Stacey, Ana, Courtney, Kamelia, and Marla for running the rest of the show.



Average weight per Summer CSA Share:

- 12.35 lb. per week
- 247 lbs total for 20 week share
- Total CSA value \$905

FOOD ACCESS

BY ERINN ROBERTS & KATE COWIE-HASKELL, COMMUNITY
OUTREACH FARMER

Waltham Fields Community Farm has continued to develop and strengthen partnerships with local organizations to ensure fresh produce reaches community members of all income levels. In the 2021 season, we welcomed our first Community Outreach Farmer, who was dedicated to the success of two programs specifically targeting food access in Waltham: the Mobile Outreach Market and the Prescription Produce program.

Produce Perscription Program:

We were thrilled to expand on the Prescription Produce Program, also known as Veggie Rx, which began last year in partnership with Charles River Community Health (CRCH). 12 CRCH patients were selected to receive a free farm share each week. Farm staff delivered produce to CRCH for pickup each week, and participants also had the option to participate in the Pick-Your-Own crops. To encourage program participation, we hosted a Pick-Your-Own orientation at the farm, which was attended by 8 adults and 6 children. A number of them returned to the farm throughout the season to pick produce.

Our produce was supplemented with generous donations from Mount Auburn Hospital, who supplied shelf stable dry goods for each week's program. Sabrina Sakhai, Brandeis student and Rich/Collins Fellow, developed info and recipe sheets to complement the produce in each week's share. Our immeasurable gratitude goes to Jacqueline Caceres, Maria Castonguay, and Berlineda Pierre at CRCH for their instrumental role in orchestrating this program. Much gratitude to Life Science Cares for funding this trial project! In addition, many thanks to the Rich/Collins Fellowship Program for funding welcome bags for participants.

Prescription Produce program impact (not including Pick-Your-Own crop values):

Total value of distributions over 18 weeks: \$7,867.92

Total weight: 2,995.32 lb.

Average value per pound: \$2.63

Total boxes distributed: 216

Average box value: \$36.42

Mobile Outreach Market

This season WFCF explored a new partnership with the Waltham Housing Authority (WHA) to bring high quality produce directly to families in need. Over the course of 13 weeks, staff from WFCF and WHA operated a free pop-up market that alternated between two WHA neighborhoods. The market exclusively served the residents of each neighborhood and was entirely free—residents did not have to provide SNAP cards, vouchers, or \$5 cash for payment, as they had in previous years.

The exclusive partnership with the Waltham Housing Authority allowed us to be a consistent presence in each neighborhood, which built connections with residents and youth. It also helped us limit traffic-flow to support social distancing guidelines. Most importantly, it brought us within walking distance of over 100 low-income families each week.

The Mobile Outreach Market greatly benefitted from a new refrigerated van, secured through a government Food Security Infrastructure Grant last year.



FOOD ACCESS, CONT'D

Mobile Outreach Market, Cont'd

The van kept produce fresh and cool until the end of the market, and gave us flexibility during inclement weather. During storms and rain, we were able to deliver produce door-to-door instead of cancelling the market.

In previous years, we have been able to supplement our crops with produce, like apples and corn, procured from the Boston Area Gleaners (BAG). BAG moved their operations at the start of the season so our partnership with them will no longer be continuing. Throughout the season we supplied produce through the Mobile Outreach Market in the following quantities:

Total value of distributions over 13 weeks: \$33,250

Total weight: 14,191 lb.

Average value per pound: \$2.30

Total boxes distributed: 1,300

Average box value: \$25

We would like to thank the Waltham Housing Authority for their hospitality and partnership. Special thanks to Ann Callahan, Services Coordinator, for her knowledge and energy. She was a crucial part of the Mobile Outreach Market this season. We are very grateful to the support received for this program from the city of Waltham, Cambridge Savings Bank Charitable Foundation, Fullen-Smith Foundation, Middlesex Savings Charitable Foundation, and the Jones Partnership Fund of the First Parish in Waltham.

Food for All

Half-priced Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Shares: In 2021, we sold 19 of our 20 subsidized Food for All CSA summer shares. And in the Extended Season CSA, in 2021 we offered 10 shares and sold 10.

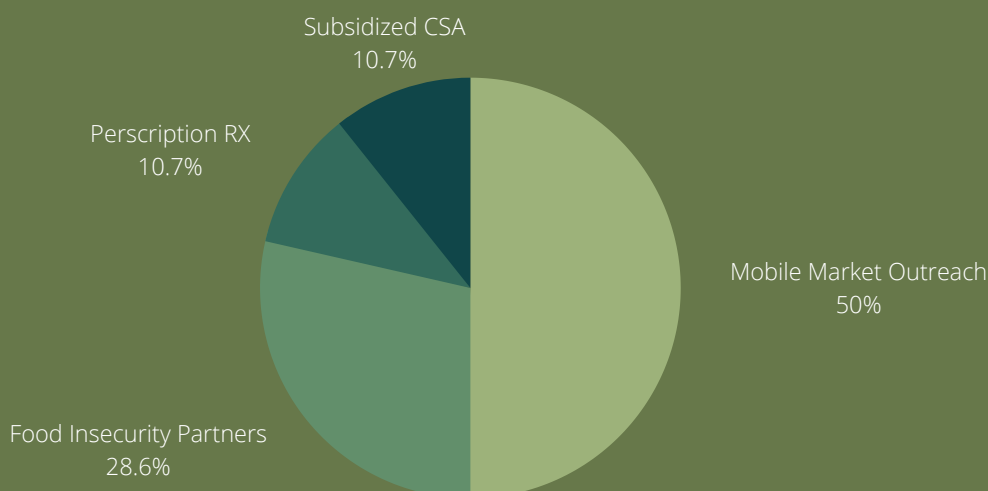
Farm-to-School Distributions

Once again, Waltham Fields provided the Waltham Public School with fresh local produce by supplying over 1,500 lbs of our vegetables in 2021.

2021 Food Insecurity Partner:

In addition, WFCF distributed over 8,000 pounds of sustainably grown vegetables to Food for Free, our longest enduring partner in providing access to healthy food and fighting food insecurity in Greater Boston.

Hunger Relief Distributions per program by weight



EDUCATION

BY JESSICA HERWICK, EDUCATION DIRECTOR

Learning Garden

This year, we fostered a deep gratitude for the outdoor space we know as the Learning Garden.

During the first half of this year, many schools remained virtual, and indoor community gatherings were limited or cancelled, but we were able to keep our education programs consistently open to provide in-person experiences in this outdoor setting beginning in January with Little Sprouts, School-Age programs, Teen Corps, and Rabbit Ambassadors (along with the occasional field trip for learning pods and homeschooling families). We soaked up every moment, socializing, learning, exploring, and enduring many difficult days with the support of our friends. Toddlers, school agers, high schoolers and families came together here when there were few places to go for enriching experiences and fostering friendships in person.

We found a deeper connection to our virtual community in rhythm with our on-site programs, as we created and uploaded new and original content from the farm each month. Awareness of our YouTube channel and hybrid Workshop-To-Go programs grew, and we continued sharing our farm-based Google classroom with schools and families seeking the connection but not yet ready for in-person gatherings. In the early spring, we grew over 1,000 sunflowers with Waltham School Nutrition and Waltham Creative Start students and families through contactless seed kit distributions coupled with virtual field trips.



EDUCATION, CONT'D

Our staff of educators happily scheduled COVID vaccinations and eagerly returned to the Learning Garden to lead modified on-site spring and summer programs. Our Rabbit Ambassador family grew with the adoption of a pedigreed rabbit, Rufus the Great, who was married to Marshmallow in June with over 30 Rabbit Ambassadors present as witnesses. When school reopened for in-person learning this fall, we were ready! After-school participants shared their new anxieties and excitement being back in their classrooms. We were able to bring back some limited food preparation, and revelled in the joys of freshly popped popcorn, group vegetable chopping, and pie making experiments.

Our community of learners planted and harvested over 500 lb. of produce in the garden beds, which program participants shared with each other and their families. We grew mint for Rancatore's Fresh Mint ice cream (maybe you tasted some at the Ice Cream Social in June!) In August, in partnership with the Waltham Recreation Department, Waltham middle school students fully participated in the food system by harvesting, washing, and weighing dozens of pounds of basil, then tasting their own pints of Basil Chip ice cream. We held eleven workshops, four ongoing seasonal program series, dozens of outdoor field trips for local schools, scout troops, and learning pods in Waltham and beyond. We gathered for Farm Day on-site, for the first time since 2019, welcoming upwards of 1,000 community members to this precious farmland to celebrate together.

Outreach

We strengthened our partnership with Waltham Black Future Fund and continue to raise awareness of and support their mission, participating in the WBFF T-shirt campaign. As a Waltham Recreation Program Partner, we welcomed dozens of Waltham youth back to the farm for summer programs and look forward to sharing spring, summer, and fall programs as a 2022 partner. Our workshop programs connected with more than four local businesses this year, providing opportunities for small, independent businesses and farmers to share their knowledge. With the support of the Waltham Cultural Council, guidance from the Waltham Public Library, and leadership of Summer Education Intern, Mary DiMaggio, we launched our first StoryWalk® series, with translations provided by the Waltham Partnership for Youth. The Learning Garden is evolving once again into a more inclusive space, welcoming all members of our diverse community, and modifying our spaces to best meet their needs and requests for learning opportunities.

We reached some long-term goals this year with our partners and our community, detailed here as highlights of the year.

Perhaps you've seen our Perennial Pollinator Row next to the strawberry patch in the Learning Garden. Since 2020, our community of learners has joined wild edibles expert Russ Cohen and Jessica Herwick, Director of Education, to replace invasive plants with native, pollinator-friendly perennial species to improve the health of the pollinator habitats in the Learning Garden and the borders of the farm fields. In addition to native milkweed varieties, participants established wild flowering mints, goldenrod, and elderberry bushes, and removed invasive trees, ground vines, and wild mustards. This spring, with habitat requirements met, we were able to register as a certified Monarch Waystation with Monarch Watch, a nonprofit education, conservation, and research program working to support Monarch health. They certify and map Monarch Waystations along the migration route, from Canada to Mexico, in collaboration with citizen scientists and farmers. You can now find Waltham Fields Community Farm on the Waystation Map online!

Learning Garden Additions

We welcomed our new Learning Garden Cottage, a 16' x 26' barn-style shelter, which provides a cozy, imaginative space for more consistent programming in inclement weather. The space allows maximum air flow with three sets of double barn doors and windows on opposing walls.

EDUCATION, CONT'D

In the five months since it arrived, the cottage has kept us dry through a few after-school hours, a farm birthday gathering, and an adult & family workshop. While it took only a few hours to assemble, this indoor learning space has become a reality with the help of many hands and multiple supporters over several years. We extend special thanks to Harpley Foundation and The 200 Foundation for their generous support, to Jennifer Letourneau and Bryan R. for valiantly donating their time and engineering expertise to ensure the stability and sustainability of the cottage, and to the generous individuals who contributed support, who wish to remain anonymous. We appreciate you beyond words.

With the arrival of the new shed, we began to alter our growing spaces to create a more inclusive learning environment for all members of our community. Boston Cares and their crew of volunteers from Audax came together for two sessions of community building in the Learning Garden. Volunteers built raised beds to make growing and harvesting food a more accessible experience for differently-abled adults and youth. We are so grateful for the time, energy, and experience lent by Boston Cares and Audax, and look forward to growing mushrooms, veggies, and herbs in the new beds this spring.

We are proud of the many accomplishments of this year, but there is still work to be done. The cottage needs flooring and furniture, and our accessible growing spaces need ramps and pathways. We look forward to the short winter rest, the time to reflect on all we have accomplished, and to plan for the future. With a greater awareness of safety measures, increased confidence in our ability to adjust as needed, and a new hope for youth vaccinations on the horizon, we look forward to announcing a full calendar of Education Programs for 2022! Keep your eye on our online Calendar of Events.

In The Community

Special thanks to our team of educators - Mary DiMaggio, Harry Parker, Jocelyn Wang, Matthew Swift, Fin Rounds, Frankie Worman, Anneliese Linden, and Sydney Romagnolo - for going above and beyond to lend their positivity and creativity in support of our programs and our young farmers. Thanks to Kristie Hobson-Edmonton and Ann Callahan for stepping in to lead our crew during a challenging summer. Thanks to Learning Garden Workshare, Jennifer Letourneau, for keeping our compost turned and our garden beds weed-free, and to Forest Foundation Intern, Cassie Kearney, for the beautiful updates to our walking tour. Most special thanks to our diligent chicken caretakers, Sydney Romagnolo and Klenda Martinez-Gasbarro, who have lovingly cared for our hens. Most of all, thanks to our community of learners and all of our program participants; you inspire us everyday and your enthusiasm has been our stronghold throughout this year.



**The Learning Garden educated
670 children on the farm, and 928
virtually in 2021**

SERVICE LEARNING & VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS

BY MARLA RHODES, VOLUNTEER & DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR

Volunteer service is integrally entwined with the origin of Waltham Fields Community Farm. Each year we are reminded of the value of this work, with the amazingly generous time that is gifted to us from hundreds of people and dozens of local corporate groups. This year was no exception.

On-farm group volunteer activity mirrored the rates of COVID vaccination, gradually increasing monthly. More corporations felt comfortable in arranging volunteer groups as the season progressed. Protocols for groups shifted in tandem with higher percentages of people becoming fully vaccinated. We hosted three volunteer groups in June, eight in September, and six in the first two weeks of October.

Due to the ongoing pandemic and lack of widely available vaccines in early spring 2021, our farmers did not use volunteers in the greenhouses to start seeds. Volunteers began the season by helping with our curbside-pickup Seedling Sale in May. We also started our registration-only Volunteer Friday Mornings for individuals, and welcomed groups back into the fields. A new seasonal Community Outreach Farmer position allowed us to schedule 2 days/week for individuals and groups. Volunteers spent the best and the worst of the weather alongside Community Outreach Farmer Kate in the fields. Volunteers, including several board directors, staffed Farm Day in October.

We especially cherish the people who come out on their own time for a few hours to do whatever is needed. This year, our Volunteer of the Year goes to Cynthia Kagno, who showed up for multiple Tuesday afternoon sessions to prepare boxes of vegetables for local food access projects.

In 2021, approximately 400 people, including 22 groups, contributing over 1,000 hours of labor worked in our farm fields, tended the perennial gardens, built raised beds in the Learning Garden, weighed and boxed produce for our Mobile Outreach Market and Produce Rx program, and staffed our events.



THANK YOU

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2021 Waltham Fields Community Farm Staff

Year-Round:

Kamelia Aly - Bookkeeper & Communications Editor
Stacey Daley - Executive Director
Johanna Flies - Assistant Farm Manager
Jessica Herwick - Education Director
Marla Rhodes - Volunteer & Development Coordinator
Erinn Roberts - Farm Manager
Courtney Sodano - Administrative Coordinator
Ana Strayton - Farm Stand & Distribution Manager

Seasonal:

Assistant Growers: Isabella DiBianca, Nadine Dyskant-Miller
Field Crew: Arron Juang, Anna McCown, Nicholas Polizzi, Daniel Rojas-Cooke, Lisa Sinnhuber, McKinzey Torrance, Anna Zeitz
Community Outreach Farmer: Kate Cowie-Haskell
CSA Distribution Workshare Team: Maria Abdo, Julie Chamberlin, Chelsea Dubin, Joy Grimes, Luna Goddard, Laurel Potter, Edward Wakefield
Learning Garden Educators: Anneliese, Fin, Frankie, Harry, Matt, Mary
Learning Garden Workshare: Jennifer
Education Interns: Cassie, Mary
Perennial Garden Workshares: Wendy Hilbrunner, Emily Scruggs, Kristin Sopko
Container Garden Workshares: Dede Dussault, Deepika Madan
Equipment Supervisors: Tim Cooke, Dan Roberts