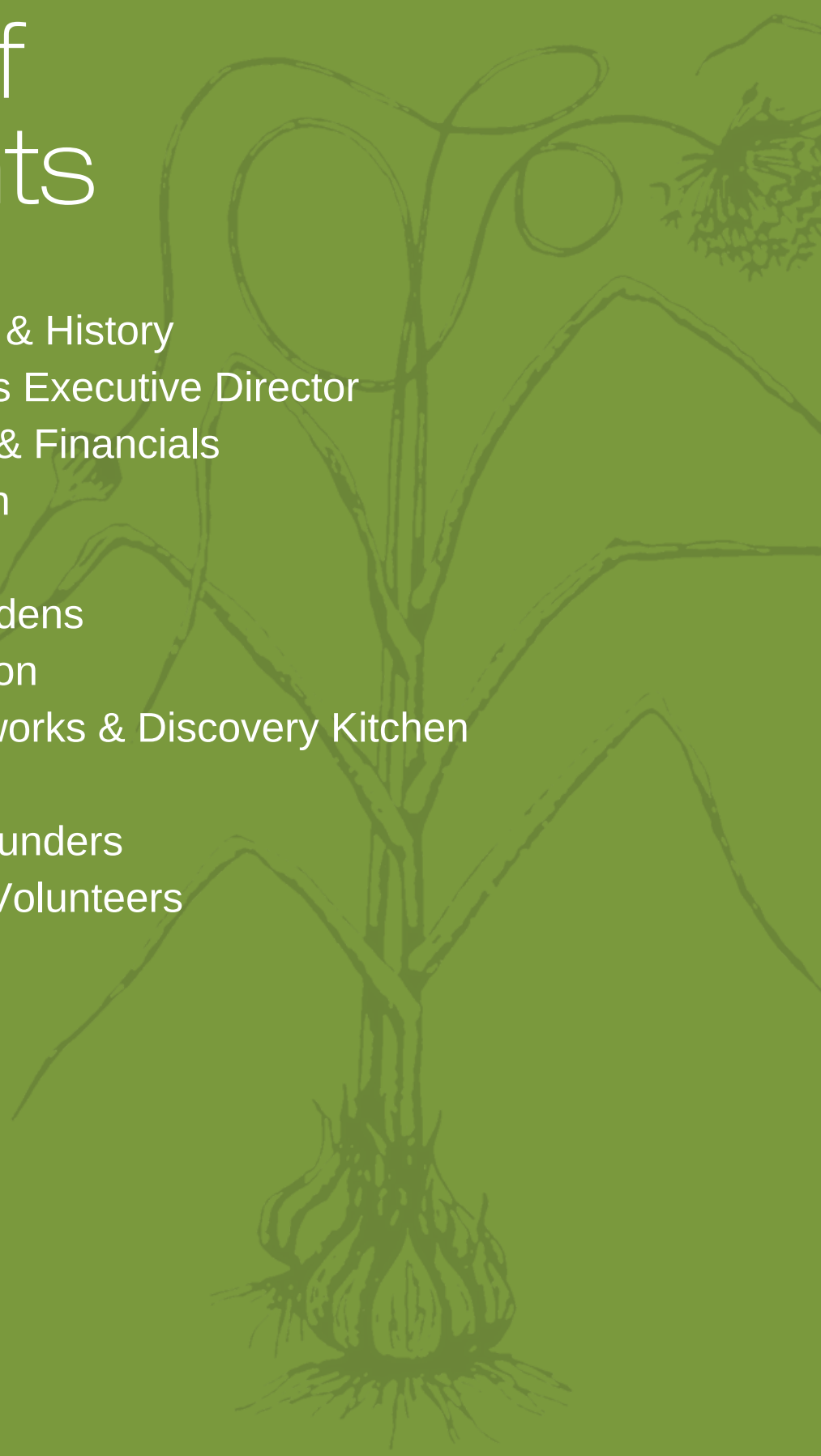




COMMUNITY  
FOOD  
INITIATIVES  
2022 Annual Report

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# Our Mission & Values

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Community Food Initiatives fosters communities where everyone has equitable access to healthy, local food. Our vision is a resilient and sustainable region where everyone is nourished by a just, inclusive, and thriving local food system.



**Culture and Community:** We value building on our assets -- natural resources, diverse community knowledge, and an Appalachian heritage of cooperation, persistence, and creativity -- and supporting everyone to see their contribution in strengthening our community.



**Education and 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 strengthen 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, supports meaningful work with livable wages, and fulfills the needs and rights of all people.



**Collaboration:** We believe in the strength of collaboration, mutually beneficial partnerships, and in doing better together.

# Our History

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Community Food Initiatives began in 1992 as a program of Appalachian Center for Economic Networks (ACEnet). While its original vision was to be a producer's association, CFI quickly evolved into its own organization with a distinct mission focused on access and equity. Since then, CFI has worked diligently to support residents of the region to grow their own food and preserve their bounty, as well as to distribute produce directly from local farmers and gardeners to community members, local pantries, and other organizations.

We celebrated our 30th birthday in 2022, and these three decades of impact were only possible thanks to the heartfelt work of our staff, volunteers, community members, partner organizations, business sponsors, board members, and so many others. We have grown as an organization, but our original purpose remains: to increase access to healthy, local food for everyone.



## From the Executive Director

*"This work is  
intergenerational,  
inspirational, hands-  
on, community-led,  
collaborative,  
creative,  
empowering and  
beautiful."*

On a sunny Saturday afternoon in late September, the Eastside Community Garden was filled with people of all ages for a CFI Garden Party.

College students, city officials, nonprofit partners, community gardeners, and friends enjoyed delicious food donated by local restaurants, participated in art activities facilitated by volunteers, and admired a gorgeous mural created through a partnership with Passion Works Studio. Gardeners led tours of their plots. Staff members helped kids dig potatoes for the Donation Station and talked with community members about the benefits of growing food sustainably. Even as we celebrated, the event spurred conversation on how gardens can serve more people in the future.

This is just a snapshot of a single afternoon at CFI in a year filled with activities, partnerships, and programming, but to me it represents so much about CFI's mission and work. This work is intergenerational, inspirational, hands-on, community-led, collaborative, creative, empowering and beautiful.

As you explore the pages of this report, I hope you also find inspiration in seeing all of the ways people are working together through CFI towards the vision of a resilient and sustainable region where everyone is nourished by a just, inclusive, and thriving local food system.

With Gratitude,

Maribeth Saleem-Tanner





# 2022 Snapshot & Financials

January 1st 2022-December 31st 2022

## The Stats



The **Donation Station** distributed 53,500+ pounds of local food



**Food Access Programs** invested \$20,000+ in our local food economy



The **Veggie Van** distributed 11,685 pounds of food



**Garden Giveaways** provided free seeds at 7 library branches, 1,400+ plant starts & 37,930 lbs of seed potatoes



**Volunteers** donated 3696 hours with CFI programs



150+ hours of lessons taught in our **Garden Education Programs**



The **Veggie Van** served 1,300+ customers

## The Numbers

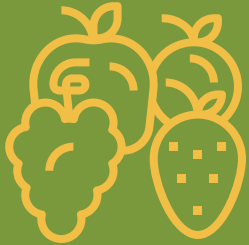
### ***FY 2022 Income***

Grants - <b>51%</b>	\$156,188
Reimbursements (ERTC) - <b>20%</b>	\$60,634
Fundraisers & Donations - <b>16%</b>	\$47,930
Business Sponsors & Donors - <b>7%</b>	\$21,225
Program Income & Funded Partnerships - <b>7%</b>	\$21,018
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$306,995</b>

### ***FY 2022 Expenses***

Community Gardens & Garden Education Staff, Service Members, Supplies - <b>27%</b>	\$81,342
Food Access Staff, Service Members, Supplies (Donation Station, Veggie Van) - <b>26%</b>	\$78,734
Community Engagement Staff, Service Members, Supplies - <b>19%</b>	\$57,907
Local Food Purchases - <b>10%</b>	\$29,901
Capacity Building: Memberships, Fees, Fundraising - <b>6%</b>	\$16,979
Facilities & Operations - <b>5%</b>	\$13,953
Tax, Insurance, Accounting, Legal - <b>4%</b>	\$10,959
Capacity Building: Planning, Conferences, Professional Development - <b>3%</b>	\$8,002
Fuel, Mileage, Vehicle Repair - <b>2%</b>	\$5,970
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$303,747</b>

# Donation Station



**53,500+ pounds of local food distributed**



**40+ pantry partners across SE Ohio**



**\$20,000+ invested in our local food economy**



**37,930 pounds of seed potatoes distributed**



CFI's Donation Station works with growers, producers, and gardeners to address regional food insecurity, improve community health, and strengthen our local economy. Community donations are used to supply fresh items to dozens of organizations each week including pantries, libraries, healthcare centers, and churches. Donation Station food is purchased and donated from the Athens Farmers Market, local farms and food businesses, gardeners, and the Chesterhill Produce Auction. These partners are vital in realizing CFI's mission to ensure everyone has access to healthy, local food in southeast Ohio. Since 2019, we have distributed over 344,000 pounds of food through the Donation Station.

In 2022, CFI invested over \$20,000 in our local food economy, partnered with over 40 pantries across Southeastern Ohio, and found strength in our amazing partnerships locally, regionally, and nationally with farmers and other organizations that support our mission.



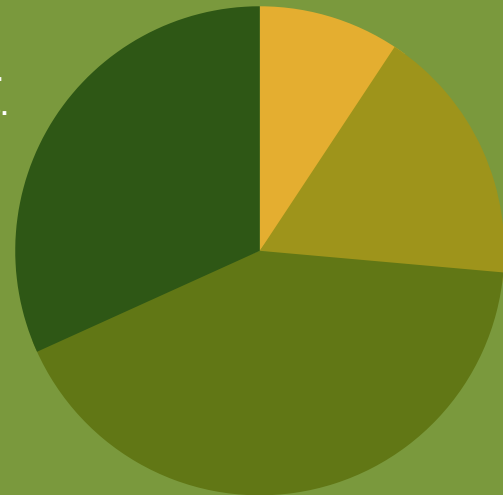
Partnerships and community generosity make Donation Station possible. This fall, Monserat Ridge Farm donated a steer that provided our distribution with over 1,000 pounds of local, grass-fed beef to share.



Oct. - Dec.  
16,505 lbs.

Jan. - Mar.  
4,831 lbs.

Apr. - June  
8,888 lbs.



Jul. - Sept.  
21,724 lbs.

### *Pounds of Food Distributed*

CFI partnered with the Athens County Food Pantry and Athens County Job and Family Services for a collaborative community food distribution event in August that served over 85 community members. Within fifteen minutes of the start of the event, we had to make a run to restock our produce tables.



This fall, CFI presented the Donation Station model to a national audience through a webinar in collaboration with the Food Systems Leadership Network. We also helped our partner, Rural Action, start a new Donation Station in Tuscarawas County. The CFI team is excited to continue to grow and share the harvest within and beyond our region as we **address food insecurity at its roots.**

# Veggie Van

With the end of 2022 came the end of the Veggie Van's third full season! Veggie Van maintained its weekly operations in Coolville and Glouster, made monthly visits to Nelsonville, and served pop-up locations in Albany, Athens, and Marietta.



The Veggie Van is a donation-based market that carries fresh fruits and vegetables to southeastern Ohio communities throughout the growing season. Offering locally-grown produce in exchange for any level of donation, the Veggie Van supports farmers while also ensuring that fresh, nutritious fruits and veggies are accessible and available for all.

All unsold produce is distributed to our food pantry partners, and all donations support food purchase and distribution. In 2022, the Veggie Van served over 1,300 customers and distributed more than 11,000 pounds of produce.



**11,685 pounds of local, healthy food distributed**



**More than 1,300 customers served**



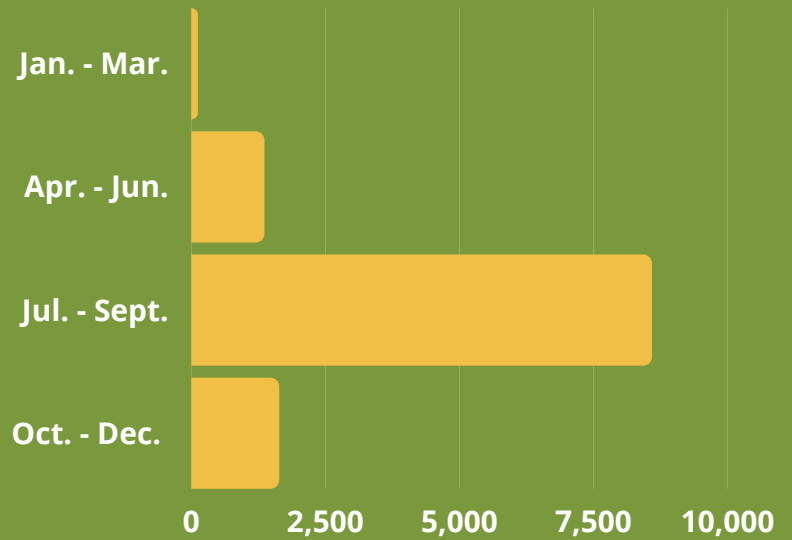
**6 communities served**



*"I love the quality of the produce. Thank you to all who are involved in the Veggie Van!" -2022 Veggie Van Customer*



*Pounds of Food Distributed*



*"Keep it up! Friendly, kind and helpful folks to deal with. Knowledgeable also." -Coolville Veggie Van Customer*





# Community Gardens

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Gardens are at the heart of CFI's mission to grow and share the harvest. CFI manages four Community Gardens in Athens and Nelsonville that had over 120 garden plots tended by community members over the course of 2022!

CFI was able to work with volunteers in 2021 to build a new shed to house shared tools for the Eastside Community Garden. In the summer of 2022, we partnered with Passion Works to have a beautiful mural painted on that very shed.

The garden shed mural was revealed in September at a Garden Party with live music, a delicious potluck spread, crafts, garden tours and kids' activities. Welcoming nearly 100 people at the event was inspiring and energizing!



*"This work feels so important because food is deeply personal ... I love that I am always learning from the people we serve and becoming a better gardener with time because of it."* -Raya,  
**COMCorps Community Gardens Coordinator**





120 garden plots  
tended by  
community members



Distributed over 1400  
plant starts to 150+  
individuals who  
planned to share  
garden produce with  
278 families.



The shed isn't the only update to the gardens this year. A new compost area was also built at Eastside Garden, providing gardeners a sustainable way to manage overripe produce as well as unwanted plants; the Athens Southside Garden added several kid-sized plots and bird feeders; and the Nelsonville Garden added a sensory garden area thanks to the HIVE Garden Club, along with a hügelkultur demonstration plot.





# Garden Education

Community Food Initiatives is on a mission to strengthen the relationship students have with local food and the natural environment. In school gardens, community-based youth education, and Sprouts--CFI's own garden-based curriculum offered in first-grade classrooms--students work with hands-on projects that spark curiosity in the natural world and help them recognize the beauty that exists all around us.

In 2022, the Garden Education Team partnered with the HIVE youth center in Nelsonville to pilot a summer garden program and expand an onsite growing area, helped design and install a pollinator/sensory garden at Amesville Elementary, led the process of installing two new ADA-accessible gardens in the Athens City School District, and supported another successful season of Hope Drive Garden Club workshops and events, engaging over 40 residents.



**157 hours of garden lessons taught**



**7 school gardens supported by CFI**



Looking at other numbers, our Garden Education team put in some serious work in 2022! We also presented to 52 adults about educating our youngest gardeners at state and national conferences in Columbus, OH, and Denver, CO, and reached 75 adults through additional Garden Education programs.

Through our garden education programs, Community Food Initiatives sows seeds of food resiliency and prosperity in the region. We're looking forward to continually finding new ways to **inspire future and current generations** of gardeners in the region.



*"Recently, we were lining up to go back inside after a Sprouts lesson in a school garden, and one of the kids shouted out, "gardening is more fun than recess!" and kids agreed, then another one shouted, "more fun than PE!" and on and on they went raving about how much fun they were having, to the point that then the whole line started chanting "garden! garden!" in unison. It was heartwarming to say the least." -Molly, Director of Garden Programs*

*"The focused engagement and enthusiasm of children as they stir compost, collect seeds or move piles of mulch is telling of the benefit from offering garden experiences. Children joyfully connect with nature, the cycle of gardening and healthy eating thanks to CFI." -Laura, School Garden Volunteer*



406 first graders reached in 20 classrooms through the Sprouts program



236 youths reached through additional CFI Garden Education programming

# Discovery Kitchen

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Discovery Kitchen is a CFI program that aims to make local, seasonal food more accessible by connecting people with creative ways they can use seasonal produce and teaching people about the many local foods that are available in this area. Beyond that, Discovery Kitchen brings the joy of cooking to people we live and work with in our community. After greatly reducing our in-person workshops for the last two years, we are excited to be back at the table with events like cooking demonstrations, tasting tables, and educational workshops.



# Nourishing Networks

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In CFI's Nourishing Networks program, trained facilitators host workshops that provide data on food security, introduce food justice concepts, discuss barriers to and strategies for food access, and support community-led follow-up projects. Nourishing Networks programs create powerful collaborative spaces that engage diverse stakeholders and build a strong community-based network of food justice advocates.

Our 2022 workshops attracted 54 participants throughout 5 events and generated strong engagement. Inspired by the power of these conversations in our communities, CFI also partners with interested organizations to train others on how to host their own Nourishing Networks workshops and discuss food insecurity wherever they are. In 2022 we trained 16 new facilitators on how to lead their own Nourishing Networks workshops!



*"I liked the community coming together in discussion, expressing ideas and interested in helping their own community." -Stewart Nourishing Networks Participant*



# 2022 Partnerships

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We're thankful for our program partnerships with organizations across the region, from businesses, to schools, to farmers, to other non-profits. Together, we're working toward a more equitable, just, and environmentally friendly future across Appalachian Ohio.

ACEnet  
Alexander Lions Club  
AmeriCorps COMCorps  
Athens Catholic Community Food Pantry  
Athens City-County Health Department  
Athens City School District  
Athens County Children's Services  
Athens Co. Creating Healthy Communities Coalition  
Athens County Food Pantry  
Athens County Jobs and Family Services  
Athens County Master Gardeners  
Athens County Public Libraries  
Athens County Visitors Bureau (Visit Athens County)  
Athens Farmers Market  
Athens Food Rescue  
Athens Metropolitan Housing Authority  
Athens Photo Project  
Bishopville Food Pantry  
Blackberry Sage Farm  
Blooming View Montessori School  
Bodhi Tree  
Care Closet  
Casa Nueva  
Chesterhill Produce Auction  
City of Albany  
City of Athens  
City of Athens Arts, Parks and Recreation Department  
Cutler Community Center  
Equinox Botanicals  
Federal Hocking School District  
Federal Valley Resource Center  
First Presbyterian Church of Athens  
First United Methodist Church  
Good Works  
HAPCAP  
Hocking College Agroecology  
Hopewell Health Centers  
Hunger Prevention Coalition  
Integrated Services for Behavioral Health  
Kilvert Community Center  
Kindred Market  
Live Healthy Appalachia  
Little Fish Brewing Company  
Lottridge Community Center  
Marietta College  
Mineral Feed My Sheep Pantry  
Nelsonville Food Cupboard  
Ohio CDC Association AmeriCorps VISTA project  
Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association  
Ohio Farm to School Network  
OhioHealth  
OHIO Student Farm & Farm to Ohio Working Group  
Ohio University Center for Campus and Community Engagement  
Ohio Valley Museum of Discovery  
OSU Extension  
OUHCOM Community Health Programs  
Radical Times Nelsonville  
Rural Action  
Rural Women's Recovery  
Salvation Army  
Serenity Grove  
Shagbark Seed & Mill  
Sheltering Arms  
Snowville Creamery  
Sojourners  
The Hive of Nelsonville  
Trimble Local Schools  
United Campus Ministry  
United Plant Savers  
University of Buffalo  
Vest Farm  
Village Bakery  
Wallace Center Food Systems Leadership Network  
Washington Co. Creating Healthy Communities Coalition

**And many more!**

# Sponsors and Funders

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The work we do at Community Food Initiatives is only possible thanks to the financial support we receive from grants, donations, and sponsors. As a grassroots community organization, CFI depends on the investment of those who support our mission. Donations, grants, and business sponsorships allow us to purchase and distribute produce, create and implement lessons for students, operate our Veggie Van, maintain our beautiful Community Gardens, and implement community-based strategies to **strengthen Southeast Ohio's local food system**. Thank you to all those that supported us in 2022.

## 2022 Platinum Harvest Sponsors

*\*Sprouts Classroom Hero, Veggie Van Farmstand Sponsor, Donation Station Powerhouse Sponsor\**

Sirius Systems Consulting

## 2022 Gold Sponsors

*\*Sprouts Teacher's Friend, Veggie Van Bundle Sponsor, Donation Station Food Access Champion\**

Hocking Valley Bank

Integrated Services for Behavioral Health

Jackie O's Pub & Brewery

Modern Woodmen

Shagbark Seed & Mill

## 2022 Silver Sponsors

*\*Sprouts Garden Caretaker, Veggie Van Pop-Up Sponsor, Donation Station Steward\**

Don Linder, e-Merge Real Estate

Erie Insurance

Parks Place Kitchen LLC

United Way of the Mid-Ohio Valley

## 2022 Bronze Harvest Sponsors

*\*Sprouts Lesson Helper, Veggie Van Sample Sponsor, Donation Station Food Access Responder\**

Bagel Street Deli

Beads and Things

Birds and Buckwheat

Bodhi Tree Guesthouse and Studio

Gerig and Gerig

Linscott Trucking

Precision Imprint

Purple Chopstix

River Willow Culinary Services, LLC

Susan Roth Art and Design

Unified Bank



# Sponsors and Funders

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## 2022 Foundations and Supporting Organizations

Amesville Elementary PTO  
Arts Midwest with support from the National Endowment for the Arts & Ohio Arts Council  
Athens City Schools  
Athens County Foundation  
Athens CROP Walk  
Athens Metropolitan Housing Authority  
Athens Returned Peace Corps Volunteers  
Athens Sunrise Rotary  
Clif Bar Family Foundation  
Edward Lamb Foundation  
Education Foundation of America  
Federal Hocking School District  
First Presbyterian Church of Athens  
Food Systems Leadership Network  
Foundation for Appalachian Ohio  
Health Path Community Connections  
KidsGardening  
Kleinpenny Educational Fund  
Kramer Family Foundation  
Martha Holden Jennings Foundation  
North Central SARE  
Osteopathic Heritage Foundation of Nelsonville  
Peoples Bank Foundation  
Rocky Community Improvement Fund  
Scotts Miracle-Gro Foundation  
Serve Ohio  
Sisters Health Foundation  
Sugar Bush Foundation  
State University of NY at Buffalo  
USDA National Institute of Food & Agriculture  
Visit Athens County  
Whole Kids Foundation

## 2022 Members and Community Donors

CFI is a membership organization, supported by 133 active members who donated to support our mission in 2022. These members, along with many additional individuals who contributed to Donation Station at the Athens Farmers Market, participated in social media fundraisers, or donated at Veggie Van, are the heart of CFI, and provide about a quarter of our budget each year.

We also rely on the growers, gardeners, and businesses that partner with us to grow and share their harvest. **In addition to dozens of individual gardeners, the following business and organizations provided food to Donation Station in 2022:**

Athens County Food Pantry, Athens County Job and Family Services, Athens Food Rescue, Athens Local Food Buying Club, Athen's Own, Blackberry Sage Farm, Blaney Family Farm, Bodhi Tree, Butcher's Bites, Cherry Orchards, CFI Community Gardens, Cowdery Farms, Crumbs Bakery, Deep Roots Farm, Gillogly Orchard, Green Edge Gardens, Greenlee's Greens, Hocking College, Homecoming Farm, Integration Acres, Jackie O's and Jackie O's Bakery, Jackson Area Ministries, Laurel Valley Creamery, Little Fish Brewing Co., Master Gardeners (Children's Garden), Milo's Whole World Gourmet, Minefire Farm, Monserat Ridge Farm, Mushbloom Garden, Mushroom Harvest, Olive Branch Catering, Park's Place, Rich Gardens, Rural Action, Sarah's Sweets, Sassafras Farm, School Garden at Amesville, School Gardens at Athens City Schools, Shade River Farm, Shagbark Seed and Mill, Snowville Creamery, Sticky Pete's Maple Syrup, Toadally Awesome Garden, Vest Farm, Wagner Fruit Farm, Westside Community Garden

# Staff, Board, and Volunteers

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We are able to accomplish all of the work that we do thanks to the continued support and person-power of our staff, volunteers, AmeriCorps members, and our Board of Directors.

## *Staff*

Maribeth Saleem-Tanner, Executive Director  
Susie Huser, Director of Outreach  
Molly Gassaway, Director of Garden Programs  
Reggie Morrow, Donation Station Program Manager  
Ivan Orquera, Veggie Van Program Manager

## *Board of Directors*

Adam Kody, President  
Mat Roberts, Vice President  
Sierra Faris, Treasurer  
Linda Parsons, Secretary  
Members:  
Ruth Dudding, Pat Tegge, Ginny Stack, Tiffany Arnold, Becky Clark, Alexandria Polanosky

## *AmeriCorps Members and Full-Year Interns*

**2021-2022 Cohort:** Raya Abner, COMCorps Community Gardens Coordinator; Ravi Harley, COMCorps Food Access Coordinator; Abby Hearne, COMCorps Education Coordinator; Zach Perie, Local Food Access Community Relations VISTA

**2022-2023 Cohort:** Raya Abner, COMCorps Community Gardens Coordinator; Sam Alexander, COMCorps Food Access Coordinator; Lucy Peloso, COMCorps Education Coordinator; Jessica Hough, Local Food Access Community Relations VISTA

**Full-Year Interns 2022-2023:** Sarah Stonerock



# Get Involved

Community Food Initiatives is always looking for community members and Ohio University students interested in food justice to volunteer or intern with us! There are a number of ways you can get involved with CFI. We host volunteers, interns, and AmeriCorps service members. Scan the QR code to learn more about CFI -- sign up for our newsletter, connect with us on social media, or reach out to us about available opportunities.

## Program areas:

- Community Gardens
- School Gardens
- Garden Education
- Food Distribution
- The Donation Station
- The Veggie Van
- Discovery Kitchen
- and more!



*"CFI has remained one of my favorite community organizations that I've ever been a part of because of the abundance of services CFI and its members provide to the southeastern Ohio community. It was volunteering at CFI where I first began to understand the importance of 'on the ground' programming and community-building." -Bethany, CFI Volunteer*

