

Everybody Eats

GardenShare's 2012 Annual Report

DIRECTOR REPORT

Since 2001, GardenShare has been working to build a robust, equitable and environmentally sound food system in the North Country. Back then, it wasn't on everybody's radar that there may be something wrong with our industrial food system; that we were embarking on a health crisis largely created by poor diet; that food desserts were making it hard for low-income families to make nutritious choices; that we were raising the first generation of Americans slated to live shorter lives than their parents.

Founder Phil Harnden started with the simple premise that the pleasure of eating delicious, healthy food belongs to all of us. Beginning by encouraging gardeners to plant an extra row for the hungry and inspiring community gardens that supply food pantries, it soon became clear that these issues encompass deep, systemic questions that require deep, systemic answers. Connecting our food system more directly with consumers, regardless of income, was one way to begin to address these issues, so Phil began publishing an annual Local Food Guide, brought food stamp service to area farmers' markets, and developed CSA Bonus Bucks to connect low-income families to CSA. GardenShare also took every opportunity to provide information, bring speakers, and offer workshops to producers and consumers about food system issues of all kinds.

2012 has been an amazing year of building on these programs, developing new ways to deepen our reach into our regional food system to build equality, while tapping into our regional agricultural economic potential as well. We've highlighted some of our 2012 successes here, but the real excitement is always looking forward. This year we have set the stage to do even more great work in the coming year.

For the first time, in 2013 all of the county's farmers' markets will share resources and

work together to promote our direct market farmers, developing new ways to build market, include low-income families, harness the power of new technologies, and more.

2013 will host another Food Day Youth Summit, our biennial program that connects high school students from across the region with important food issues like diet and health, sustainable agriculture, hunger in our communities, and junk food marketing to kids. The focus of the Summit will be on Action Projects that students take back to their schools and accomplish over the course of the following year.

We all hate to admit it, but government policy determines what food ends up on our tables. Federal subsidies make some food more affordable than other food, for example, while local regulation can preclude food sovereignty, as we see with misguided zoning regulation in the Town of Canton. 2013 will see GardenShare taking on policy issues in a more active way.

And of course, we will continue our flagship programs of our Local Food Guide, CSA Bonus Bucks, EBT at Farmer's Markets, expanding that option to use Food Stamp benefits at additional St. Lawrence County farmers' markets, and for CSA as well, and more.

Your feedback, input, comments, and suggestions are always welcome. Please join us at one of our free events, like our Queen of the Sun screening on February 12 at Canton's Winterfest, or our Harvest Social in November. If you're interested in supporting us, our committees are made up of community volunteers, and we could always use your financial support as well. See gardenshare.org for more details.

Respectfully submitted,



Aviva Gold, Executive Director

GardenShare's 2012 HIGHLIGHTS

NOFA-NY honors GardenShare for "food justice" work on Jan. 21.

Small Farm Rising screening & mini CSA fair at Canton Winterfest on Feb. 16.

Everybody Eats, GardenShare's newsletter, is relaunched as a **bimonthly e-newsletter**.

Wholesale Success Workshop & Meet the Buyers Reception for small producers on March 5.

Our **8th Annual Local Food Guide** in May.

EBT incentive launches at two area farmers' markets **offering \$1.50 for each food stamp dollar**, nearly **doubling EBT sales** for those two markets for the year.

Meat Processing study released in August, which shows **substantial potential in increasing local meat processing capacity, & adding organic certification**.

CSA Bonus Bucks serves **75 families!**

Benefit Dinner at 1844 House in June **raises needed funds & awareness** for GardenShare.

Harvest Social in November honors **Carlton Doane** with annual **Growing Community Award**

Farmers' Market Gift Token program launches in November.



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Thank you to our 2012 Supporters

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Sustainers Support GardenShare's Work

GardenShare's Sustainers Circle is a group of individuals, businesses and organizations who commit to support GardenShare at any level for three or more years.

As a small organization, we are at the mercy of economic instability, state and federal budget wrangling, and just plain difficult times. A commitment of support helps us plan ahead, and ensures that we'll have money in the bank to continue to run our flagship programs that help make our community a great place to find fresh, local food, regardless of income.

GardenShare Sustainers are a valuable part of our organization, providing financial stability, as well as sharing valuable insights, helping to shape our programs and our thinking about important food system issues.

Join our Sustainers Circle at any level. Flexible payment plans are available. For more information see gardenshare.org, call us at 315-261-8054, or email info@gardenshare.org.



"Like the rest of the world, the North Country needs a new agricultural revolution; we need fewer factory farms and more healthy local food, responsibly produced and accessible to everyone. GardenShare, in its gentle, persistent way, is in the vanguard of that revolution in our region. Supporting GardenShare is one of the best ways I know of 'thinking globally and acting locally.'"

— Liam Hunt, GardenShare
Sustainer & Board Member

Special thanks to our 2012 community volunteers, part-time help & interns

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