



## STRATEGIC PLAN

### Our mission:

Gardenshare's mission is to solve the problem of hunger in St. Lawrence County through policy advocacy work and by strengthening the food system to benefit all County residents.

### Our vision:

**Healthy Food** – The County has a vibrant, local food system where our food choices are healthy for us, for our communities, and for the environment.

**Healthy Farms** – Farmers are able to make a living that supports their families, contributing to a robust local economy.

**Everybody Eats** – Everyone in the County has access to enough nutritious and affordable food to sustain a healthy lifestyle. When food assistance is needed, whether from government or private sector programs, it is provided in dignified ways that respect both the receiver and the giver of assistance.

### We believe that:

- Nutritious food is a basic human right, so hunger is universally unacceptable and no one should have to worry about where their next meal is coming from.
- The response to people's needs should be both human and personal, always valuing both those who need help and those who help.
- The availability of food should not be taken for granted.
- There should be an understanding and respect for the hard work and effort it takes to bring safe, nutritious, healthy food to the table.
- Government, business, organizations, and individuals must work together to ensure that everyone has access to good, nutritious food.
- Localized and grass-roots efforts are as highly valued as those that are more centralized.
- Sustained cooperation of many individuals, organizations, and government over time will lead to a hunger-free community.

### To implement this vision, we will:

- Operate as an effective charitable organization and make sound business decisions.
- Be good stewards of the human, monetary, and other resources entrusted to us.
- Remember that caring, committed, and compassionate people are our most valuable assets.
- Be honest and open in all relationships, communications, dealings, and transactions.
- Ensure that a variety of voices are represented in our decision-making.
- Remain mindful that solving hunger requires new and innovative solutions and become active participants in finding and implementing those solutions.

Creating a community where long-term solutions are not just desired, but expected may take many years. It will take more than our work to create this kind of societal change. These realizations will not deter us from taking the steps we can, each day, each month, each year, to move the world closer to this vision.

**Strategy 1:** Help local families access locally-grown food and, in doing so, support local farmers.

**Tactics:**

- Produce an annual Local Food Guide that lists local farms, farmstands, CSA's, and farmers markets and ensure its widespread distribution throughout the County.
- Help low-income families access CSA's by providing "scholarships" through the CSA Bonus Bucks program.
- Provide the equipment and training for SNAP redemption at farmers markets. Promote the availability of SNAP at the markets. Provide bonuses to SNAP recipients to encourage usage at the markets.
- Using the same equipment, make it possible for customers to use credit or debit cards at the farmers markets.
- Sell Farmers Market gift tokens to provide an opportunity for individuals or organizations to give a gift of local food.

**2016 Actions:**

Action	Assigned to	Priority
Implement plans outlined in FMPP grant to recruit and train volunteers to promote SNAP usage at Farmers Markets.	Staff	High
Develop and implement a plan to provide volunteer back-up to Farmers Market managers.	Staff	High
Work to strengthen farmers markets in the county - possibly creating a coalition, or working in each community. Develop potential funding sources for this kind of work.	Staff	High
Evaluate CSA Bonus Bucks to determine if it can be expanded, should be discontinued, or can be re-shaped in some way to serve more families.	Board Staff	High
Enhance the Local Food Guide by adding an "annual report" component and engaging volunteers to sell more ads.	Board Staff	Medium
Research the possible development of a mobile Farmers Market to serve currently underserved communities. Research to include models from other places, developing possible partners or collaborators, and possible funding sources.	Board	Low

**2017 Actions:**

- Continue implementation of FMPP grant
- Build on work to strengthen Farmers Markets
- If decided to continue CSA Bonus Bucks, do so. If decided to change the program or create a new program, begin that implementation.
- Local Food Guide
- Continue mobile Farmers Market research and feasibility

**Strategy 2:** Help ensure that local households are enrolled in programs that can help them have adequate, nutritious diets (SNAP, WIC, school meals, summer food, etc.) by collaborating with County and local government, school systems, the Food Bank of CNY, and state anti-hunger organizations.

**Tactics:**

- Implement outreach and education programs like Hunger 101 that break down myths about these

- programs
- Serve as an information hub on food resources in St. Lawrence County

2016 Actions:

Action	Assigned to	Priority
Identify and develop relationships with other organizations working on these issues in order to begin developing collaborative project ideas.	Gloria Board	High
Research issues and challenges that prevent children from participating in the federally funded child nutrition programs including school meals and summer food. If warranted, develop and begin implementation of a plan of action to improve participation rates in these programs and thereby improve children's diets and access to healthy food.	Sarah Intern	Medium
Update emergency food listing on GardenShare website.	Intern	Low
Ensure accurate information about all government food programs and how to apply is on the GardenShare website.	Intern	Low

2017 Actions:

- Continue work on child nutrition programs.

**Strategy 3:** Educate the public and policy makers about hunger, food security and food policy issues to move the County closer to our vision of "Healthy Food, Healthy Farms, Everybody Eats."

Tactics:

- Conduct educational events and programs geared to different audiences and designed to educate and engage people in food policy and food security issues.

2016 Actions:

Action	Assigned to	Priority
Conduct Hunger Action Month activities to raise awareness of the issue of hunger and of GardenShare's work, likely including a partnership with Cinema 10 and perhaps other activities	O&E Committee	High
Collaborate with Food Bank of CNY and local programs to strengthen Hunger Action Month presence	Gloria SLU PIC Intern	Medium
Evaluate the Food Day Youth Summit program to determine whether to continue	Staff Board	Medium
Growing Community Award - present the annual award and maximize the value of the award and the event to raise awareness of the issues and of GardenShare	O&E Committee	Medium
Add Hunger 101 to our menu of outreach programs and train at least 2 volunteers to present it.	Gloria O&E Committee	Low
Conduct an outreach event during Canton's Winterfest	O&E Committee	Low

2017 Actions:

- If result of evaluation warrants, conduct a Youth Summit on or near Food Day in October to educate high school students
- Hunger Action Month, Growing Community Award, Winterfest, and other outreach events

**Strategy 4:** Improve the food policy environment in St. Lawrence County in order to strengthen the local food system, support local farmers, and ensure that all County residents have access to a healthy diet.

Tactics:

- Work toward the development of a St. Lawrence County Food Policy Council.

2016 Actions:

Action	Assigned to	Priority
Participate in and support the follow-up work from the Local Food, Local Places project, with the goal of developing this into the Food Policy Council at some point.	Carol Gloria	High

2017 Actions:

- Will be determined from 2016 work

**Strategy 5:** Continue to build and strengthen GardenShare's infrastructure and organizational capacity to achieve these goals.

Ongoing tactics:

- Build a strong Board of Directors, recruiting and orienting new Directors as needed and building the diversity and skills base of the Board. Engage in an ongoing Board development program.
- Build a strong Fund Development Committee and implement diverse fundraising strategies to ensure ongoing organizational viability.
- Engage a variety of active volunteers, including interns, in the work of the organization.

2016 Actions:

Action	Assigned to	Priority
Implement the Development and Public Relations Plan.	Development Committee Board	High
Maximize the value of interns - recruiting at all four colleges and engaging interns in new ways	Staff Board	High
Recruit and train new volunteers to all committees	Board	Medium
Recruit and train one to three new Directors, with a focus on building the diversity of the Board.	Board	Medium

2017 Actions:

- Continued board and volunteer development
- Continued improving fundraising and public relations plans