Introduction

NH Gleans is a network of organizations working to increase the availability of fresh and local produce that is distributed to and through NH food pantries, soup kitchens, community suppers and schools. To do this, NH Gleans harvests produce from local farms and farmers markets that would otherwise have not been harvested or sold and distributes the food to organizations that can use it. Established in 2013 with a generous gift through the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation’s You Have Our Trust fund, NH Gleans employs gleaning coordinators across the state to work with farms and organizations during the growing season. Thanks to their hard work and dedication, over 204,000 pounds of fresh produce has been gleaned and distributed over the last three years to the people in New Hampshire who most need it.

Highlights

The Community Kitchen in Keene

This year marked the third season of the gleaning program at Keene’s Community Kitchen, Inc. The charitable gardening work in the local community expanded significantly this year, which prompted the hiring of a seasonal Garden Harvest Coordinator to help support these projects. The Community Kitchen continued to do community outreach and education around food and hunger such as cooking/food preservation workshops and Community Coalition’s Feast on This Film Festival. The Gleaning Coordinator sought new ideas for improving the program by working with a graduate student from Antioch University New England on a program evaluation.

SUSTAINABILITY updates

March 2016

2015 NH Gleans Annual Report

Introduction

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Highlights

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gleaning Region</th>
<th>Lead Organization</th>
<th>Pounds Gleaned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belknap</td>
<td>Belknap County Conservation District</td>
<td>2,475</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cheshire</td>
<td>The Community Kitchen, Inc.</td>
<td>52,472</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hillsborough</td>
<td>Hillsborough County Conservation District</td>
<td>27,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merrimack</td>
<td>Merrimack County Conservation District</td>
<td>13,252</td>
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<tr>
<td>North Country</td>
<td>Taproot Farm &amp; Environmental Education Center</td>
<td>1,544</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seacoast</td>
<td>NH Farm to School, Seacoast Eat Local, NOFA NH</td>
<td>11,963</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Community Kitchen in Keene

This year marked the third season of the gleaning program at Keene’s Community Kitchen, Inc. The charitable gardening work in the local community expanded significantly this year, which prompted the hiring of a seasonal Garden Harvest Coordinator to help support these projects. The Community Kitchen continued to do community outreach and education around food and hunger such as cooking/food preservation workshops and Community Coalition’s Feast on This Film Festival. The Gleaning Coordinator sought new ideas for improving the program by working with a graduate student from Antioch University New England on a program evaluation.
A total of 52,4712 pounds of fresh local produce was collected through the gleaning program in 2015. The sources of the produce included 15 commercial farms (2 of which were not operating for public production this year), 7 charitable giving gardens (producing exclusively for charitable donation), the Keene Farmer’s Market, and a wide variety of home and community gardens. A full 35% of the produce collected in 2015 was grown with the original purpose of being donated to charity.

Merrimack County Conservation District

Merrimack County Conservation District (MCCD) concluded its 2015 gleaning season having distributed 13,252.48 pounds of food to pantries, soup kitchens, homeless shelters, and school children. Twenty-one farms donated to the program, allowing MCCD to reach 22 service agencies and schools throughout Merrimack County. MCCD provided gleaning outreach materials at its SNAP/EBT booth at Concord and Penacook summer farmers’ markets. Additionally, a basket was provided at both markets for vendors and/or customers to donate food items. When bringing donated food to pantries, MCCD would often leave recipes featuring at least one of the food items provided to the pantry. To reach out to more volunteers, MCCD created an account at Volunteer NH, a website that organizations can utilize to post upcoming volunteer opportunities.

RECIPIENTS OF NH GLEANS DONATIONS

A Common Table
All Saints Church
Andover Food Pantry
Boscawen Congregational Church
Centerpoint Church
CERV (Christian Emergency Response Volunteers)
Christ the King Parish
COA Chapin Senior Center
Concord Area Community Action Program
Concord Head Start
Cornucopia Food Pantry
Danbury Food Pantry
Dover CAP
Dover Food Pantry
Dublin Community School
Emergency Food Pantry - Operation Blessing, Inc.
Epping Bible Baptist Church Food Pantry
Exeter Congregational Church Food Pantry
First Congregational Church (Concord)
Francesstown Community Supper
Fremont Food Pantry
Friendly Kitchen
Friends of Forgotten Children
Greater Wakefield Food Pantry
Greenfield CCC Food Pantry
Greenfield Commons
Hancock Community Supper
Henniker Food Pantry
Hopkinton Food Pantry
Immaculate Conception of Penacook
Immaculate Heart of Mary (Concord)
Interfaith Food Pantry
Jaffrey Food Pantry
Kearsarve Valley Community Action Programs
KLS Community Food Pantry
Loudon Food Pantry
Nashua Soup Kitchen
New Durham Food Pantry
New Hampshire Food Bank (Belknap)
New Hampshire Food Bank (Hillsborough)
New Life (Assembly of God) Food Pantry
Newmarket Community Church Food Pantry
Northfield-Tilton Food Pantry
Nottingham Food Pantry
Peterborough Food Pantry
Phoenix House
Raymond CAC
Raymond Community Action
River Center
Salem CAC
Salvation Army Food Pantry (Concord)
Salvation Army McKenna House
Sanbornton Congregational Church
Sandown Community Food Pantry
Seabrook Community Table (Soup Kitchen)
Seacoast Community Action
Seacoast Family Food Pantry
Seacoast Mental Health Consumer Alliance, Inc.
Seymour Osman Community Center
SHARE Outreach (Milford)
South Sutton Trinity Bible
Southern New Hampshire Services
St. Vincent de Paul (Keene)
St. Paul’s Episcopal Church
St. Thomas More Food Pantry
St. Vincent de Paul Society Food Pantry (Exeter)
Strafford Community Action Partnership (Dover)
Strafford Community Action Partnership (Farmington)
Strafford Community Action Partnership (Milton)
The Community Kitchen
The Salvation Army Soup Kitchen and Food Pantry
The Seacoast Family Food Pantry
Twin Rivers Interfaith Food Pantry
United Church of Penacook
Vineyard Church Food Pantry
Waysmeet Center - Cornucopia
Wilton Open Cupboard Food Pantry
Windham Senior Center
MCCD also partnered with Colby-Sawyer College. Two different groups of students on separate occasions helped MCCD to harvest food. The first was a group of students from the Applied Sustainable Farming class, accompanied by their professor, who helped clear over 700 pounds of kale, Swiss chard, and scallions. The professor has been a longtime supporter of NH Gleans and makes a point of getting his students involved in hands-on projects throughout the semester. The second group of students was from Colby-Sawyer’s Feed the Freezer group. This is an extra-curricular campus club that works with their school’s kitchen to salvage leftover food to bring to food pantries. They helped MCCD pick over 300 pounds of carrots at a nearby farm and brought it to New London’s food pantry. 

Stories
Every gleaning season brings special stories and new developments. One of the season’s stories begins with a chance encounter in a convenience store. The Gleaning Coordinator was standing in line when a gentleman standing behind her noticed The Community Kitchen logo on her sweatshirt. A conversation ensued, as the man was interested in finding a community engagement activity for his two middle school aged grandchildren over the summer. As a result, this gentleman and his two grandchildren spent at least two mornings a week volunteering at The Community Kitchen throughout the summer, one in the warehouse, and one harvesting produce at Cheshire County Fairgrounds Farm. The fact that gleanings were taking place on regular Tuesday mornings also attracted several other folks looking for community engagement activities for their children, so on several occasions, gleaning became a social activity for up to five middle-school aged children. The Gleaning Coordinator has taken note and plans to “sell” the gleaning program in the community as an excellent family activity, especially for middle school aged kids.

Merrimack gleaning coordinator, Alyssa Lemmermann, with students from Colby-Sawyer’s Feed the Freezer at Spring Ledge Farm.

To further extend the utilization of the fresh produce provided, MCCD loaned Andover Elementary/Middle

It was so nice to see the smiles on the children’s faces when they were told to take enough apples so they could have one every day. When everyone had a sweet potato, squash, and pumpkin in their Thanksgiving basket, we were asked by many clients, “Is this really all for me and my family?” As the number of needy families increase, donations such as yours helps us provide for all those who come to our door, so again, I thank you!

– Janet Perusse, Coordinator, I.C.C. Food Pantry
School (AEMS) a flash-freeze unit. After a short training, staff were able to freeze produce in a matter of minutes, ensuring incorporation of local foods in school meals beyond the growing season. Blueberries were the easiest to freeze, however, food items like Swiss chard have to be blanched prior to freezing. AEMS principal reported in March that they were still enjoying the blueberries brought to them over the summer! Joanne Jones, Andover Elementary Middle School Kitchen Director, also expressed her enthusiasm for the gleaned produce. “I just wanted to express my appreciation for your generosity in bringing our school the wonderful fresh produce this year,” said Jones. “We flash froze the blueberries and kale, the kale we incorporated in soups, and the blueberries we are still enjoying in yogurt parfaits and smoothies. I have never seen so many apples as we were given, it almost took over the kitchen! But I heard many people say that they had never tasted apples as good as they were... local and fresh, very nice! Many thanks.”

**Program Successes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Volunteers</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Farms</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Recipient Organizations</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Pounds Gleaned</td>
<td>28,864</td>
<td>65,094</td>
<td>109,685</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**2016 Program Goals**

- Glean at least 132,000 pounds of food
- Increase connections to schools and summer meal programs
- Launch NH Gleans website
- Train NH farmers market managers to set up their own gleaning/food donation programs

**Why NH Gleans**

From the Hunger in America 2014 Study:
- More than 10% of New Hampshire residents don’t know where their next meal is coming from.
- More than 10 million pounds of food is distributed through the NH Food Bank which serves almost 400 food pantries and soup kitchens in the state.
- Many of these food pantries are only open once a week or once a month.
- 57% of clients who access food pantries have an income below the poverty level.
- 68% of these clients have to choose between food and paying their utility bills.

_Housed at the Sustainability Institute at the University of New Hampshire, NH Farm to School is a statewide program working to connect New Hampshire farms and schools. Such sustainable food system work is a key component of the Sustainability Institute. Sustainability is a core value of UNH, shaping its culture, informing behavior, and guiding its work. As a nationally recognized leader, UNH draws on the Sustainability Institute to act as convener, cultivator and champion of sustainability on campus, in the state and region, and around the world. Learn more at www.nhfarmtoschool.org and www.sustainableunh.unh.edu_