





# ANNUAL REPORT 2014-2015

CULTIVATING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES THROUGH FOOD AND EDUCATION



















Green Mountain Farm-to-School's mission is to restore and strengthen local food systems in the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont by promoting positive economic and educational relationships among schools, farms, and communities.

### A Letter from the Executive Director and Chair of the Board

Dear Friends:

ack\* is a third-grade student at Barton Graded School. He loves Star Wars, basketball, and playing board games with his sisters. His family purchases groceries using food stamps and, up until last year, he had never tasted kale. Last week, I watched him serve a taste test of kale chips in his cafeteria. "Better than potato chips!" he promised his friends.

Over the last six months, Jack worked with a group of his classmates to plan, plant, tend, and harvest a garden at school. His school's food service staff cooked the vegetables he grew and served them in his school cafeteria, along with other local produce, meats, and dairy the school purchased from local farmers. All summer long, even when school was out, he and his sisters ate healthy lunches and met up with other nearby families at the food truck that visits their town. At home, Jack's family has started to cook one new food a month, inspired by the Vermont Harvest of the Month posters and recipes they see hung in their grocery store.

Jack and his family are eating healthier, more sustainable food thanks to you. The gardens, the taste tests, the education, the summer lunches, the local food distribution — these are the results of Green Mountain Farm-to-School (GMFTS) programs that you helped fund.

At GMFTS, we believe that all Vermonters deserve healthy, affordable, local food. We know that changing the way people eat and think about food improves their health, their environment, and their future. In this report we are excited to tell many stories like Jack's and to share more about the programs that help define them. Thank you for all of your support; we look forward to continuing our work with you.

Sincerely,

Katherine Sims Founder and Executive Director

\*Name and some details have been changed.

Julie Poulin Board Chair



Katherine Sims



Julie Poulin

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- Katherine Sims, Founder and Executive Director
- Catherine Cusack, Program Director
- Olivia Bulger, Farm Direct Coordinator Maire Folan, Farm-to-School Program
- Manager
- Cindy Hancock, Office Manager and Bookkeeper
- Rebecca Mitchell, Nutrition and Agriculture Educator, AmeriCorps
- Leigh Archer, Farm-to-School Coordinator, AmeriCorps

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# BUILDING A HEALTHY Northeast Kingdom

MFTS is transforming the food system in the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont through our comprehensive, placebased approach to programming. We are working across the food system to educate children and adults about healthy food

and increasing access to local food while fostering economic growth among local farms and businesses.

Working together we can build healthy communities through food and education.

### **GMFTS Uses Three Strategies to Increase Demand for Local Food**



### Why the Northeast Kingdom?

The area faces disproportionate challenges but also has a wonderful agricultural heritage.



By working in the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont, we have an opportunity to ensure that Vermonters of all income levels have access to healthy, affordable, local food.

# GMFTS PROGRAMS -Complementary and interconnected

a comprehensive, place-based approach to transform the food

system in the Northeast Kingdom for the better. Each program is complementary and interconnected, allowing us to leverage resources, share best practices, and amplify our impact.



### Farm-to-School



Gathers student feedback on recipes

Provides training to food service on using local foods

Reaches out to students and families about programming

### The Lunchbox

**Green Mountain Farm Direct** 



Buys food from local farms

Provides nutritious meals for students when school isn't in session

Provides a venue to serve and eat featured produce



Vermont Harvest of the Month

Features seasonal foods on menu and increases sales

Provides educational activities

Provides recipes for taste tests



Sells local food to school cafeterias

Sells local food for summer meals

Works with farmers to aggregate and supply HOM foods

# FARM-TO-SCHOOL

Changing The Way Kids Eat And Think About Food

he Northeast Kingdom Farm-to-School Program provides programs, resources, and networking opportunities to schools in the Northeast Kingdom, supporting their efforts to build school gardens, source local food, and provide nutrition and agriculture education.

During the 2014-2015 school year, we worked with 25 farm-toschool partner schools to run many programs that reached over 5,000 students.



### **Training the Next Generation of Leaders**

In the seven years since GMFTS was founded, we have hosted **34 AmeriCorps members** for a year of public service in school food systems as a part of our Farm-to-School Program.



#### Spotlight on Rebecca Mitchell:

After serving as an AmeriCorps member at GMFTS for two years, Becca has joined our team as a full-time staff at the organization.

"Serving as an Americorps member at GMFTS has provided me with meaningful work experience, understanding of food access and education, and a deeper sense of self. I'm grateful for the relationships I've cultivated through this experience, and I am excited to continue my journey working with this organization and making a difference for the children and communities of the Northeast Kingdom."



Our school gardens produced over one ton of food for school cafeterias. We know when students are involved in growing the food, they are more likely to try it.

### **Spotlight on Taste Tests**

Students are often reluctant to try new foods. Taste tests encourage adventurous eating by involving students in preparing and serving the new foods. This helps to raise awareness about healthy foods and build a culture of trying new foods.



### Farm to School Curriculum

ver the past several years, we have been working with schools to develop hands-on, nutrition and agriculture education lessons aligned with the Common Core Standards and tailored to each grade level. Over the past year, we've written lesson plans, tested the activities, and finalized our new Farm-to-School curriculum. Shifting to the Farm to School Curriculum has resulted in a 50 percent increase in the number of workshops that we've delivered at schools this year.

### Kindergarten:

### Animals on the Farm

- Moo to You
- Sheep to Sweater
- Poultry Power
- 1st Grade: The Fall Harvest
- Apples
- Pumpkins

### Corn

2nd Grade: Seeds

### • Seed Needs

- Seed Saving
- Seed Sprouting

### 3rd Grade: Plants to You

- Eating Plants
- Eating through the Seasons
- Preserving the Harvest

### 4th Grade: Vermont Agriculture

### Then and Now

• Vermont Crops from Past to Present

### • Sheep and Dairy History in Vermont

Cooking Then and Now

#### 5th Grade: Soil Science

- A Closer Look at Soil
- Compost Cake
- Soil Food Web

#### 6th Grade: Garden Ecosystems

- Our Garden Ecosystem
- Planning the School Garden
- Building the School Garden
- 7th Grade: Food Systems
- Our Food Systems
- Food Miles
- Food Ethics

#### 8th Grade:

#### Careers in Agriculture

- Individual projects
- Small Business projects

This work was made possible thanks to a generous grant from Stony Point Foundation.



Our inaugural Northeast Kingdom Farm-to-School Conference drew over 80 people together for a day of networking and shared-learning at Sterling College.

### **GREEN MOUNTAIN FARM DIRECT** Delivering food from local farms to our communities

Farm Direct is a regional food hub distributing local food to schools, institutions, and other sales outlets in northern Vermont.



# VERMONT HARVEST OF THE MONTH

### Promoting seasonal foods in Vermont's classrooms, cafeterias, and communities

*Vermont Harvest of the Month (HOM) is a monthly, statewide campaign providing ready-to-go materials for classrooms, cafeterias, and communities that promote local, seasonal foods.* 

### Partners across Vermont are using HOM in new and exciting ways

ach month, the Newport Ciderhouse Bar & Grill incorporates new menu offerings showcasing the month's featured harvest and sources the seasonal local produce from Green Mountain Farm Direct.

This past summer, NW Vermont Healthy Roots Collaborative implemented taste tests at several locations throughout Franklin County including community events, businesses, service organizations, and Northwestern Medical Center.

VT Fresh, a program of the Vermont Foodbank, works with partners on changing the food environment to promote fresh foods through cooking demos, displays, and signage using HOM materials.



Mixed Green

JARE

Taste Test Today!

MEALTHY ROOTS

Minud Greens

FRESH Food, a social enterprise of Vermont Works for Women, utilizes HOM as a learning tool for trainees. Taste tests and educational lessons are conducted in order to incorporate the HOM into a menu item for either



childcare meals or catering jobs for local businesses.

### Harvest of the Month Participants



Visit our new website at VermontHarvestoftheMonth.org for FREE posters, recipes, activities, and more

Harvest of the Month is a collaboration between Green Mountain Farm-to-School, Food Connects, and Vital Communities.

### THE LUNCHBOX FOOD TRUCK Serving local food to our community

The Lunchbox is a summer meal program and mobile learning kitchen that brings locally-grown food and food-based education to communities in the Northeast Kingdom.



to share results from this past fiscal year along with preliminary results from our current year. Next year's annual report will include final data from current year.

**Reaching Consumers Where They Are** We believe that the next frontier for local food is retail grocery outlets, where the vast majority of Vermonters purchase food. Over the past year, we've expanded our Taste Test program to local retail grocery stores where we can open up new markets for our food producers and significantly improve access to healthy and local food. We conducted 37 tastings at local retailers, reaching over 350 people. Ninety percent that tried the recipe



Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Coupon Program GMFTS is currently piloting a new program that will allow Orleans and Essex county residents participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, 3SquaresVT, to purchase an additional \$75 of fresh fruits and vegetables this fall and winter at five Northeast Kingdom grocery stores.

participants

gave the recipe a

thumbs up

Through the Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Coupon Program, we want to improve access to healthy foods and make fruits and vegetables more affordable for low-income residents in local grocery stores.

The project is made possible with funding from a USDA Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive (FINI) grant and a matching grant from the Farm to Plate Network Fund. GMFTS is implementing the program with support from an advisory group made up of members of the Food Retailers Task Force and others from state agencies and organizations.



We're excited to

healthy when school

help keep kids

is out!

# GROWING TO SCALE

reen Mountain Farm-to-School has seen remarkable growth since 2005, when we planted our first school garden program in our first elementary school. We are now a multi-program, regional organization reaching over 10,000 children with strong partnerships at 30+ schools, 50+ farms, and many other community institutions.

As GMFTS moves from a rapidly-growing, start-up organization to a stable, secure part of the community, our focus is shifting to sustainability and long-term planning so we can continue to grow in the future. Over the last year, we have deepened our commitment to quality programs by expanding our staff, developing core operational systems, strengthening our evaluations, and building capacity within the organization. Over the next few years, goals for the organization operations include:

- Organization-wide planning
- Strategic growth measured by good data on impact outcomes
- Increasing operational capacity and expanding our leadership team
- Building a reserve fund
- Focusing on unrestricted and long-term funding



## SUPPORTERS

We are thankful to our community of new and long-time friends who have generously supported Green Mountain Farm-to-School between July 1, 2014 and June 30, 2015 as we seek to promote the health of Vermont's children, farms, and communities.

### Major Funders (>\$2,000)

The Abbey Group Anonymous Ben & Jerry's Foundation **D&S** Distributing Food Connects The Fountain Fund GSDC/Granite State Development Corp. Harris and Frances Block Foundation Jay Peak Resort Lintilhac Foundation Lynman Orton Fund Northeast Kingdom Council on Aging Northeast Kingdom Fund of the Vermont Community Foundation Northeast Kingdom Waste Management District Northern Community Investment Corp. Jeff and Tracy Poulin Peter and Diana Poulin Poulin Grain Inc. Poulin Lumber Inc. The Rona Jaffe Foundation Charles and Violet Schafer Stony Point Foundation USDA Rural Development V & C Charitable Foundation Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets Vermont Community Foundation Vermont Housing and Conservation Board Vital Communities

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Margaret Dillon Emily Jacke

EN20 SW Tom Liu

Pete Johnson and Eloise Girard Dan and Carol Mills

Casey Kirkman Molly Perkins and Jeff Kirkman

Katherine Sims & Staff Barb and Jim Flint

David Stackpole Marie and Sam Bartlett

#### In memory of:

Shirley Ayers Ron and Lynn Wild

Napoleon Diette Conrad and Connie Daigle

Justin John and Anne Alexander

Sarah Montgomery Anonymous

Agnes O'Reilly Kathleen O'Reilly

Everett A. Willard Elizabeth Ferry

The accuracy of this listing is very important to us. Please let us know if you can't find your name or if you are listed incorrectly so that we can correct our records. Thank you!



Students from the Lowell School testified in front of Vermont legislators about the importance of farm-to-school programs. They even brought along a parsnip muffin taste test!

#### **In-Kind gifts:**

Albany Auto Repair Apple Ledge Farm John and Gwen Bailey-Rowe Sarah Baughman Steve Beault and Michel Lemieux Bella Doni Pottery Conrad Bellavance Berry Creek Farm Bonnieview Sheep Dairy Brault's Market, LLC Katelyn Burke Burke Mountain Confectionery C & C Supermarket Cellars at Jasper Hill Center for America's First Horse Couture's Maple Shop/B&B Craftsbury General Store Irene Dagesse Lisa Daigle-Farney and Mike Farney Eden Ice Cider Company Ben Farney Foote Brook Farm Ann-Britt Garcia Lou Green Mountain Coffee Roasters High Mowing Seeds Hunger Free Vermont Jay Peak Resort Jocelyn & Cinta's Bake Shop Johnny's Selected Seeds Johnson Woolen Mills Jon Somes Salon Robert and Cindy Kern Kingdom Brewing Lago Trattoria Lake Hills Landscaping Peter Limon and Judy Jackson

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# FINANCIAL REPORT

### **Statement of Activity**

July 1, 2014 - June 30, 2015

Revenue
Individual and Corporate \$92,763
Foundations and Grants \$246,113
Program Service Fees \$92,556
Events \$26,099
Total Revenue \$457,531

### Foundations and Individual and Grants: 54% Corporate: 20% Events: 6% Program Service Fees: 20%

#### **Expenses**

Total Expenses \$461,485
Development \$500
Management and General \$30,788
Program Services \$430,197



### **Summary Balance Sheet** As of June 30, 2015

### Assets

CURRENT ASSETS
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Total Current Assets \$120,310
Other Assets \$400
Vehicle and Equipment \$27,797
Accounts Receivable \$39,629
Checking/Savings \$52,484

### **Liabilities & Net Assets**

CURRENT LIABILITIES	
Accounts Payable \$9,844	
Other Liabilities \$5,376	
Total Current Liabilities \$15,220	
Total Net Assets \$105,090	



Vermont Farm-to-School, Inc., DBA Green Mountain Farm-to-School is a 501(c)(3) organization.

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### Join Us!

Help strengthen your community through food and education by becoming a supporter of Green Mountain Farm-to-School and its efforts to promote the health of Vermont's children, farms, and communities. Gifts of all amounts are appreciated.

Please make checks payable to Green Mountain Farm-to-School and mail to: Green Mountain Farm-to-School 194 Main Street, Suite 301, Newport, VT 05855

Or donate online at www.GreenMountainFarmtoSchool.org













**Green Mountain Farm-to-School** 194 Main Street, Suite 301 Newport, VT 05855

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