



2017 – 2018

ANNUAL REPORT

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

Dear Friends,

As Vermonters, we are accustomed to watching the landscape change from season to season, each observation creating opportunities for reflection. Likewise, at Green Mountain Farm-to-School, we view change as a chance for evaluation of the previous year's work, a time to adjust to ensure positive and lasting growth in the communities we serve.

During this time of evaluation, we are constantly looking for ways to reach more students, connect with more farmers and engage more consumers around food, agriculture and education. We also look to build on the strengths inherent in the Vermont way of life, the strong networks and partnerships with people who share our goals and commitment to our children. Goals to build a healthier and more vibrant Northeast Kingdom guide our work and help to create a path forward.

Over the last year, with our goals in mind, we have asked ourselves critical questions that have led to the advancement of our programs. Specifically, the creation of a farm to school professional development series for area teachers who are ready to embed our vision into their schools' culture, the distribution of more food than ever before to schools and institutions across the region via Green Mountain Farm Direct, and the serving of more free meals to our children from The Lunchbox food truck. We are proud of what we've accomplished in the past year and are energized to build on this momentum to expand our reach in the year to come.

In this annual report – our tenth – we're excited to share stories of change and highlights going back ten years. Looking forward, we'd like to share how we are progressing on our strategic goals – namely, how our organization is developing strong partnerships with businesses and other organizations across the state and beyond.

We look forward to another successful year to come. Thank you for all of your support.

Sincerely,



Catherine Cusack
Executive Director



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Catherine Cusack, Executive Director
Jeyna Diallo, Outreach Coordinator
Maire Folan, Farm-to-School Program Manager
Edifice Jengo, Finance Coordinator
Herb Page, Farm to School Training Assistant
Amrita Parry, Food Hub Manager
Sophie Westover, Communication and Development Coordinator

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Celebrating 10 years of cultivating healthy communities

through food and education.



10 Years

..... Since 2008

Connecting Farms, Schools & Communities



Celebrating 10 years of Green Mountain Farm-to-School

In 2008, a dedicated group of farmers, parents, and funders launched Green Mountain Farm-to-School (GMFTS). Since, GMFTS and our partners have worked together to increase access to local, healthy food in the Northeast Kingdom, resulting in a stronger local food economy, improved nutrition education in area schools, and healthier communities. Our story begins 10 years ago with our founder, Katherine Sims, who recognized that despite Vermont's vibrant local food systems, many of the regions most vulnerable populations were being left behind – particularly here in the Northeast Kingdom.

Over the years, the organization has grown to a leader in the farm-to-school and local food movements with four robust programs. GMFTS now staffs six full-time individuals and is a yearly host site for five AmeriCorps members serving through the Lyndon Economic opportunity AmeriCorps Program (LEAP).

Some of our key achievements from the past ten years include:

- Distributing over \$1,813,000 worth of local food to area institutions via Green Mountain Farm Direct;
- Growing over 20,700 pounds of food in school gardens;
- Conducting 4,200 after school and in school workshops; 223 farm field trips; and 560 taste tests with students;
- Serving 7,863 free lunches to children in the summer months from the Lunchbox;
- Serving over 31,700 children with farm to school programming

We look forward to the next ten years of cultivating healthy communities through food and education.

1 in 4
children in
the Northeast
Kingdom are
food insecure.



Students at Jay/Westfield show off produce harvested from GMFTS's first school garden.

Strategic Plan 2018 - 2021

- Goal 1:** Deliver and continually improve a holistic set of high-quality, high-impact programs.
- Goal 2:** Strengthen and develop strategic and committed partnerships that can serve as a platform for the delivery of our mission and realization of our vision.
- Goal 3:** Articulate the entirety of what we do and powerfully communicate it to our stakeholders and community.
- Goal 4:** Enhance the health and effectiveness of the organization by supporting employees and board engagement.
- Goal 5:** Ensure long-term financial strength and stability.

Spotlight: Goal 2

GMFTS is proud of the reciprocal partnerships we've established with organizations, networks, towns, businesses, schools, and farms throughout the state and beyond.





Farm-to-School

Reaching across the classroom, cafeteria and community.

We believe that if we can change the way that kids eat and think about food, we can help build healthy and resilient children and improve farm vitality.

→ In 2017-2018, 5 AmeriCorps members served as Farm-to-School Coordinators through the Lyndon Economic opportunity AmeriCorps Program (LEAP).

→ Our Farm to School programming reached 22 schools in the NEK with hands on, experiential education around food, nutrition, and agriculture.

→ Coordinators organized 19 farm field trips, 236 educational workshops, and conducted 109 taste-tests.

→ School gardens produced 6,756 servings of food, donated to cafeterias, food shelves, and the Lunchbox food truck.



Left: Students from Craftsbury Elementary School observe chickens during a farm field trip. Middle: Monthly taste-tests expose students to healthy, Vermont-grown foods. Right: Teachers from regional schools gather for a professional development workshop focused on building self-sustaining farm to school programming.

HOW FARM TO SCHOOL LEAVES A LASTING IMPACT ON YOUTH



Gina Basiliere first became involved with Green Mountain Farm-to-School as a student at Troy Elementary School in 2009- the site of one GMFTS's first school gardens. "I remember working to build the beds and the excitement of planting seeds and starters," says Basiliere.

GMFTS helped Basiliere spread her love of gardening with others and provided the space, tools, and knowledge to help teach her how to pass on that knowledge to future generations of gardeners. "I know that GMFTS has affected every student of every school they work with," she says, "The connection between the garden and our plates is critical to understanding food systems. Working with plants teaches patience, perseverance, flexibility, and love – that is something that you can't learn from a book."

What's Basiliere's favorite thing about GMFTS? "It is that they make healthy, local food available to children of the Northeast Kingdom, all the while getting kids outside to engage with the natural world."



Green Mountain Farm Direct

Fresh. Local. Direct.

Green Mountain Farm Direct (GMFD) is a regional food hub increasing access to healthy food by delivering from local farms to schools, restaurants, and institutions in Northern Vermont.

GMFD works with 37 local farms to provide a variety of local foods including apples, meat, vegetables, grains, eggs, and dairy.

Last year, Green Mountain Farm Direct distributed \$409,399.22 worth of local food from 37 farms to 95 customers.

GMFD customer base is comprised of 56 schools, 1 buying club, 15 retailers, 9 restaurants, 1 corrections facility, 2 senior meal sites, 2 hospitals, 2 producers, 4 camps, and 3 other institutions

Schools purchased \$174,507.41 of local food through Green Mountain Farm Direct, supporting the local economy.



Left: Freshly harvested heirloom tomatoes from Deep Root Organic Co-op.; Middle left: Greg Smith of Smitty's Berry Farm at his farm stand in Derby, VT. Middle right: Roberta Royer of Nothin' But Curd/J & R Family Farm in Troy, VT recently entered into the value-added market, producing cheese curds and spreads.; Right: A selection of Nothin' But Curd's cheeses.



How Green Mountain Farm Direct supports our local farms

Family owned since 1828, owner-operator Allen Hall of Hall's Orchards, grows and harvests apples and pears in Isle La Motte. Hall has worked with Green Mountain Farm Direct (GMFD), since 2014.

"Working with Green Mountain Farm Direct has introduced my business to several new markets that I didn't have access to before," says Hall, "And, I have

business all through the winter months, which is also something I didn't have before I partnered with GMFD."

With GMFD, Hall can reach consumers throughout northern Vermont, as far as Barre, nearly 100 miles from his orchard in remote Isle La Motte. "Since my name is on all the boxes of apples that get sent out through GMFD, people throughout the state now know about my orchard," Hall notes, "I see that as good marketing for my business."

Vermont Harvest of the Month

GMFD worked with 35 customers to production plan for the Vermont Harvest of the Month and distributed:



240 bunches of Swiss Chard
440 lbs of Summer Squash
816 bunches of Kale
1,960 lbs of Sweet Potatoes
2,040 lbs of Winter Squash
240 quarts of Buttermilk
1,440 lbs of Cabbage
14 gallons of Maple Syrup
1,425 lbs of Carrots
156 bunches of Radishes
45 lbs of Shoots
165 lbs of Spinach



Lunchbox Food Truck

Closing the summer nutrition gap.

The Lunchbox seeks to provide the community with healthy and locally-sourced meals throughout the summer. Children eat for free and the community can purchase a fresh and local feel-good lunch with proceeds helping to support the free summer meals program. The Lunchbox also strives to increase consumer knowledge and skills about how to purchase and prepare low-cost, healthy meals.

In the summer of 2017, the Lunchbox served

1,534 free of summer meals to kids & sold **983** healthy, affordable meals to adults.

A focus on local food procurement resulted in

\$1,139 paid to local producers, supporting **13** farms.

28 educational events were held throughout the summer

in collaboration with **14** community and human service organizations.



Left: Posters for the Fresh Fruits & Vegetable Coupon Program.; Middle: The Craftsbury General Store proudly displays a banner advertising the Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Coupon Program; Right: Communications and Development Coordinator, Sophie Westover assists children on the 'smoothie bike' at 'Kid's Wellness Day' in Newport, VT

Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Coupon Program

Increasing access to fresh, healthy, local food for our community.

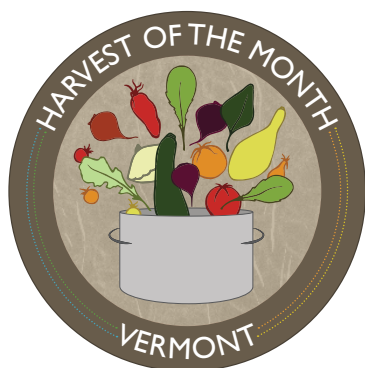
Thanks to partnerships with Wholesome Wave and the USDA Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive Grant Program, the Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Coupon program offers community members enrolled in the 3SquaresVT program, supplemental coupons for fresh fruits and vegetables.

In 2017-2018, **\$38,180** of coupons were redeemed at five participating grocery stores: Ray's Market, C&C Supermarket, Kingdom Market, Craftsbury General Store, and Vista Foods Newport.

"Thank you, thank you, thank you! The program really helped me out this winter. I live on social security and this program allowed me to buy apples, and bananas, and carrots and other produce I wouldn't otherwise buy. I feel like this kept me healthier — I haven't had a cold all winter!"

— Anonymous Coupon Recipient





“The children loved the squash bread and really enjoyed making it!”



Vermont Harvest of the Month

Encouraging seasonal, local eating all year round.

Vermont Harvest of the Month (HOM) is a campaign that provides ready to go materials for the classroom, cafeteria, and community that promotes the use of local, seasonal Vermont foods.



Who does the Vermont Harvest of the Month target?

Schools & other educational institutions, health care providers, individuals, retailers and restaurants, non-profits

Vermont Harvest of the Month in the classroom:

Cabbage PH Indicator Science Experiment: To celebrate February's Harvest of the Month, Cabbage, students learn how cabbage can be used to test liquids of varying acid levels. Depending on the pH of the liquid, the cabbage turns various shades of pink, purple, or green.



Left: Outreach Coordinator, Jeyna Diallo, hosts a HOM taste-test at a local grocery store. Right: AmeriCorps Farm to School Coordinator, Hayly Hock, prepares for a HOM taste-test at a member school

Did you know?

We have a wealth of free resources for you to download and use in your school, home, store or community. Whether it's HOM crop specific lesson plans, recipes, or printable lunch line signs, HOM's free resources provide our community with everything they need to celebrate local Vermont food.



Vermont Harvest of the Month in the cafeteria and community:

Each month, GMFTS conducts taste tests at schools and retailers, highlighting how that month's featured harvest can be prepared. In schools, students prepare and serve the taste test to their classmates, who then have the opportunity to try the recipe, helping to develop healthy food preferences and eating habits.

120 Taste Tests independently conducted by schools throughout Vermont using HOM crops and recipes reached **12,156** individuals. **60%** of students who participated in the Taste Tests reported liking the recipe!

Why Taste Tests?

Taste tests create foundations for healthy futures. They introduce children to new, nutritious foods they may otherwise not have the opportunity to try. This helps children develop healthy eating preferences, increases their willingness to try new foods, and leads to children asking for healthy foods at home.





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www.jasperhillfarm.com

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FINANCIAL REPORT

REVENUE

BALANCE SHEET

Assets	FY 2017	FY 2018
Current Assets:		
Checking/Savings	\$ 39,322	\$ 65,214
Accounts Receivable	\$ 97,363	\$ 120,590
Vehicle and Equipment	\$ 12,491	\$ 5,412
Other Assets	\$ 117,750	\$ 29,065
Total Current Assets	\$ 266,926	\$ 220,281

Liabilities & Net Assets

Current Liabilities:		
Accounts Payable	\$ 16,857	\$ 20,333
Other Liabilities	\$ 7,409	\$ 4,263
Total Current Liabilities	\$ 24,266	\$ 24,595
Total Net Assets	\$ 241,660	\$ 195,686
Total Liabilities & Net Assets	\$ 265,926	\$ 220,281

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITY

	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 18 %
Revenue			
Individual and Corporate:	\$ 269,075	\$ 228,232	25.43%
Foundations & Grants:	\$ 192,296	\$ 168,111	18.73%
Program Service Revenue:	\$ 436,535	\$ 484,766	54.01%
Events:	\$ 14,071	\$ 16,359	1.82%
Total Revenue	\$ 911,976	\$ 897,467	100.00%
Expenses			
Program Services	\$ 637,225	\$ 634,475	66.96%
Management and Admin	\$ 281,729	\$ 313,068	33.04%
Total Expenses:	\$ 918,955	\$ 947,543	100.00%

Individual & Corporate



25.43%

Foundations & Grants



18.73%

Program Revenue



54.01%

Events



1.82%



Join Us!

Help strengthen our 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:

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115 2nd Street, Newport, VT 05855

Or donate online at:
www.GreenMountainFarmtoSchool.org





Green Mountain Farm-to-School
115 2nd Street
Newport, VT 05855

802-334-2044
www.GreenMountainFarmtoSchool.org

