



The Good Food Exchange



Winter
2013 – 2014

FDN turns 25!

FDN's Holiday Hubs welcome your fresh food donations this season — turkeys included



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WHY ALL THE hubbub over FDN's Food Hubs? The program has been such a huge success that it is being extended through the holiday season.

Two of the food hubs where backyard gardeners were able to donate fresh produce this summer and fall, to be redistributed to neighbors in need, are continuing to collect food in the weeks before the Thanksgiving, Hanukkah, Christmas, Kwanzaa, and New Year holidays.

FDN is hoping to collect as many donations of fresh, healthy, perishable food as possible, and it doesn't have to be exclusively from people's gardens. The initial response has been encouraging: on the first day of the holiday food hub program, a turkey was donated — and we'd love to see more.

The Holiday Hubs will operate daily

on Nov 19 – Nov 26 and Dec 14 – Dec 23 from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. at these two separate locations in downtown Ithaca: 411 N. Cayuga St. and 222 E. Falls St.

For those who haven't been following our Neighborhood Food Hubs success story, this past summer Friendship Donations Network launched its Neighborhood Food Hub pilot program. Our goal: to collect donated fresh produce from local gardens and distribute it to area food pantries and other food-relief programs.

At the end of the 11-week trial, more than 700 pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables had been donated and given away to neighbors in need.

Hub "Holder" Carol Ann Brust, a volunteer who hosted a cooler on her porch for donations harvested from people's gardens, enthused: "The outpouring from community mem-

bers, who have dropped off kale and tomatoes and zucchini and squash and lettuce, has just been amazing."

To Brust, what made getting involved in helping collect the produce and distribute it to community members in need was the satisfaction she got in seeing, "the smiles on [recipients'] faces. That alone is worth a million bucks."

The enthusiasm about the Food Hubs program appears contagious. Various news outlets picked up the story, including WENY-TV news, the *Ithaca Journal*, and *Tompkins Weekly*.

Volunteers also are excited to continue the program in 2014 and will meet in January to start planning for an even bigger and better success this coming year. Contact FDN if you'd like to get involved: 607-216-9522. ♦

— By Mike Charnoky



Join FDN at the Ithaca Alternative Gift Fair

Friendship Donations Network is participating in the 10th annual Ithaca Alternative Gift Fair, held Saturday, Dec. 7, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., at the First Baptist and First Presbyterian churches bordering Dewitt Park in downtown Ithaca.

The fair is a great time for you to show your support for our work, in big or small ways. Along with 60 other local not-for-profit organizations, we will be offering a selection of gifts that have meaning for Friendship Donations Network and you!

Each gift you buy comes with a card that describes it and a free greeting card. Plus, the fair is fun for everyone, including children.

Can't make it? All of the gifts can be purchased online from December 8 through 31 on the fair's website: www.ithacaaltgiftfair.org. In conjunction with #Giving Tuesday, early bird online giving — and a preview of the gifts — will also be available December 3 through 5.

Alternatives Federal Credit Union

has selected FDN to be the RoundOff recipient for December 2013. This month, AFCU members can round down their check deposits to a whole dollar amount and donate the change to FDN. We are grateful to AFCU for this opportunity.

AFCU is also holding a food drive for FDN during the month of December. You don't have to have an account at AFCU to donate food for neighbors in need during the holiday season by bringing in food to its main branch at 125 North Fulton St. to be distributed to those in need in our community. Thank you, AFCU!



“Just Be Cause” Gives Friendship Donations Our First Real Home

FOR THE FIRST TIME in our 25-year history, FDN has its own dedicated space — giving us a new lease on life, so to speak.

On September 30, 2013, Friendship Donations Network volunteers and board members joined the Dietz family and more than 100 community members to celebrate the opening of the Just Be Cause Not-for-Profit Development Center (JBCC) at 1013 West State / MLK Jr. Street.

The new facility gives FDN a central place to receive food donations for neighbors in need anytime, day or night, as well as a place to meet, plan, and train volunteers. It is helping us create greater sense of community among our volunteers and a stronger presence in our community.

Created in memory of Judy Dietz, our past president, who died in September 2012 of cancer, the new center houses FDN and four other non-profits that address issues Judy cared deeply about.

FDN staff, board members, and volunteers began planning the move more than nine months ago, working closely with the Dietz family and Judy's husband, Jerry Dietz, who purchased and directed the renovation of the building. Now their vision and hard work is a reality.

Before there was a Just Be Cause Center, Jerry Dietz lent the conference room of his company, CSP Management, to FDN for board and commit-



Tommie Blecher, Art Pearce, and Marty Hatch in front of the CoolBot they built for storing donated perishable food at FDN's new home at the Just Be Cause Center: The energy-efficient insulated space is cooled by an ordinary window air conditioner.

tee meetings. We shared our storage cooler with the Fraternal Order of the Eagles. And our local Wegmans partners, in addition to continuing to make enormous donations of day-old food for close to 25 years, have permitted us to sort it on their loading dock.

“We are enormously grateful for all the help and generosity we've received from those community supporters, as well as for the tremendous opportunity that JBCC offers us,” says FDN treasurer Art Pearce, who calls the new facility “a beautiful tribute to Judy.”

Volunteers still pick up donated food from the Wegmans loading dock, but they now transport much of it to JBCC, where they separate and sort it inside, protected from the rain, cold, and snow.

In addition to indoor space to sort food donations, our new facility includes storage for non-perishable goods, a walk-in cooler for perishable

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foods, and a small office.

The new space also allows FDN to display resources such as recipes, cookbooks, nutrition guides, and information on human services and transportation that food pantries can give to their clients.

FDN volunteers built shelving, painted, located and moved furniture, transported food, developed new policies and procedures, and trained fellow volunteers to ensure a smooth transition to the new facility.

Sustainable Tompkins and United Way of Tompkins County helped fund the construction of FDN's new CoolBot, which expands our cold storage for perishable food donations. Marty Hatch, Art Pearce and Tommie Blecher built the CoolBot. ♦

— By Jane Mt. Pleasant and Linda B. Myers

Just Be Cause Not-for-Profit Development Center, located at 1013 W. State/MLK Jr. St. in Ithaca. A plaque at the entrance to the building reads: “The Just Be Cause Not-for-Profit Development Center is dedicated to Judy Schapiro Dietz and the spirit in which she lived her life - caring about others and helping to make our community the best possible place to live.”

