



Summer 2015

# The Good Food Exchange

## Summer's Bounty Is Not Wasted, Thanks to FDN's Generous Food Donors

**A**H, SUMMER! Ithaca's loveliest season. Also its most bounteous when it comes to such fresh vegetables and fruits as kale, lettuce, spinach, corn, tomatoes, berries and cherries.

Which means that the people in our community who count on the 30 food pantries and venues that FDN serves will have a lot of that healthy, delicious food as part of their diets. Often this is the very food that our neighbors with limited income can't afford.

At the same time, thanks to the generosity of area farmers, CSA shareholders and backyard gardeners in our area, that surplus food will not go to waste and end up in compost heaps and landfills.

About 20 vendors of fresh produce at the Ithaca Farmers Market donate up to 500 pounds of food weekly to FDN during the growing season.

The story begins in Ithaca in the early 1980s with Alice Napierski, a volunteer at Loaves and Fishes, a nonprofit Christian ministry affiliated with St. John's Episcopal Church that offers free hot meals on weekdays.

"Alice approached food vendors at the Farmers Market to donate their excess produce to Loaves and Fishes," recalls FDN



founder Sara Pines. "Her energy and devotion was incredible. Over nearly 30 years she never missed a Saturday or Sunday."

"There was a natural collaboration between Loaves and Fishes and FDN," says Rev. Christina Culver, who joined the ministry as executive director of Loaves and Fishes about five years ago. As the Farmers Market grew, especially over the last decade, Alice began collecting much more fresh organic fruit and vegetables than Loaves and Fishes could use.

"It was a no-brainer that we'd share it with FDN," Culver says. "It's a beautiful partnership and a great example of the spirit of both our agencies to share in the abundance of healthy food."

But when Napierski retired a few years ago from her volunteer job of picking up from the Farmers Market, Culver and FDN coordinator Meaghan Sheehan Rosen found she was hard to replace. Today, three regular FDN volunteers — and others who step in when they aren't available — are doing the pickups.

Celia Clement, who now handles the

Sunday Farmers Market pickup with her husband, Dan, arrive at the Market shortly before closing time at 3 p.m., collect the surplus food from the many vendors on their list, carry it in large "banana boxes" to their vehicle and bring it to FDN's cooler at the Just Be Cause Center. There, they sort and store it so that it's ready to be picked up by food pantry volunteers in the week ahead.

"It's really good produce, fresh lettuce heads, beautiful cherry tomatoes," says Celia. "It's time well-spent," adds Dan.

The distinctive smell of basil permeated the air when Jim Nohelty stopped by Six Circles Farm's Ithaca Farmers Market booth on Saturday, July 18, and collected the donations, which also included fresh rainbow chard, parsley, beets and purslane.

"One of our ideals at Six Circles Farm is not to waste," says Jacob Eisman. He, brother Lael and others at the farm like that FDN seeks to reduce waste as well as alleviate hunger, which is why they decided to donate.

"Working with FDN has been a great experience for us," says John Bokaer-Smith

*Continued on back page.*

### Volunteer Spotlight

"Food justice is often overlooked when people think about social justice," says Owen Zhang, dock volunteer and layout editor for FDN.



*For the full interview, visit our website.*

## Saving Summer's Bounty *continued*

of West Haven Farm CSA. "It gives us an opportunity to have our excess produce go to good use, and it's very little work for us."

"We donate the excess from our CSA because we strongly believe that healthy food should be available for all," says Sara Worden, coordinator of Full Plate Farm Collective. "We are happy it gets put to good use and thankful for the FDN volunteers who pick it up."

Buried Treasures Organic Farm and CSA donates directly to the Healthy Tuesdays food pantry at Groton's public library, which FDN also supports. And Blue Heron Farm, another area organic farm and CSA, now donates directly to the Food for All Community Pantry in Lodi.

In addition, since 2013 area gardeners have rescued more than 4,000 pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables and donated it to area

food pantries via FDN's Neighborhood Food Hub coolers.

For a full list of food donors and to find a Neighborhood Food Hub near you, visit [www.friendshipdonations.org](http://www.friendshipdonations.org). ●

— By FDN volunteer Linda B. Myers



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The newsletter of Friendship Donations Network

## News in Brief: Neighborhood Food Hubs

FDN's Neighborhood Food Hubs 2015 season is underway, July 1–October 1.

Don't let your vegetables grow up to be compost!

Have extra produce from your garden or CSA share? Here's an easy way to share it with neighbors through a food pantry in your area!

This summer, gardeners and CSA members throughout Tompkins County and beyond have a convenient way to donate their extra vegetables, fruit and eggs by dropping them off at one of 15 convenient Neighborhood Food Hub coolers in Ithaca, Danby, Dryden, Groton, Lodi and Newfield.

There is at least one active Neighborhood Food Hub on every day of the week. For more information, look for the maps on [www.friendshipdonations.org/hubs](http://www.friendshipdonations.org/hubs).

Neighborhood Food Hubs make donating garden produce easy! Volunteer "hubsters" host coolers on their front porches, which serve as the drop-off locations for your donated produce. Volunteers then



redistribute your donations to food pantries primarily within the communities where they are donated.

Gardeners gave away more than 3,500 pounds of excess vegetables, fruits and eggs through Neighborhood Food Hubs during the 2013 and 2014 seasons. At the time of printing 2015 donations are near 1,000 pounds!

A big thanks to the supporters of the 2015 Neighborhood Food Hubs: Sustainable Tompkins Neighborhood Mini-grant Program; Ithaca Alternative Gift Fair; Ithaca Sign Works; and the volunteer "hubsters" who make it all happen!

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