



2020 FRESH ANNUAL REPORT



2020 FRESH IN NUMBERS

33
**BACKYARD GARDENS
INSTALLED**

We began building backyard and container gardens for New London families during the pandemic

157
**PEOPLE IN OUR CSA
HOUSEHOLDS SERVED**

two-thirds of the families in our CSA were on sliding-scale payment plan

446
**PEOPLE SERVED
WEEKLY BY FOOD
MUTUAL AID PROGRAM**

FRESH worked with partners to develop the "Food to the People" delivery program to respond to increased food insecurity during COVID-19

37
**COMMUNITY
GARDENERS**

We had fewer gardeners this year due to COVID-19 precautions but were able to provide garden beds for dozens of gardeners



2020 FRESH IN NUMBERS

7,536
LBS OF FOOD
HARVESTED

over 20 weeks of harvesting from our different garden sites, not including what community members grew for themselves on FRESH sites

9
FRESH GARDEN SITES

We continued to grow throughout New London and developing our Cottage St urban farm site

10
YOUTH IN OUR SPRING
AND SUMMER
PROGRAMMING

we had less youth due to COVID-19 precautions but continued our programming

COVID-19: WE ARE ALL FARMERS NOW



"Gardening is healing and human interaction... even if we are wearing masks and staying 6 feet apart." (Julie Garay)

GROWING FOOD

Due to the pandemic, there had to be many changes in how we grew and distributed food and crops to New London.

This year we cancelled all in person events and moved the plant sale online, with pre-order and timed pick up.

Despite a shift in our process, 181 families placed an order at one of our online plant sales!

We usually serve 200-300 families between the April and May events.



This year we are still growing in 7 pre-existing location, 2 partner gardens and started growing at Cottage Street! In partnership with Sprout Garden at Connecticut College, we were able to grow enough food for our CSA. We had a CSA of 35 families (2019 we had 12), with 11 market rate payers and 24 mission based members. Mission based members paid on a sliding scale from \$0 to whatever they could pay, with an optional \$5 a week for some families. Market rate was \$400 (½ share), \$650 (large). With a delivery and pickup system we were able to feed over 140 people through our CSA Program.



Once COVID-19 began to affect New London, our priorities changed so staff grew as much food as possible to feed as many families as we could. We facilitated 4 distributions between late April and early June to 93 total people. We grew crops at 13 public snack beds all around New London. 10 hydroponic gardens were installed at cottage street and 2 at Broad St. We helped 33 community members grow food at home by building and installing garden beds or supplying them with other supports. 47 people attended at least one online workshop, and we were able to support with gardening tips/videos to help with growing food on their own.

CONNECTING COMMUNITY

Our Connecting Communities work also looked different from what we planned when we submitted our proposal in 2019. We had planned to run a series of workshops, bring on more volunteers and be intentional about connecting more neighbors with FRESH sites. But again COVID-19 changed this bucket as well.

We cancelled all of our in-person events but were able to host a garlic planting party in October!



We came together with different groups, across different missions, to support New London during the pandemic and were more focused on coalition building than building membership. We reinforced our connections with Hearing Youth Voices, Step Up New London and the Hispanic Alliance through an informal mutual aid project. Though grants, financial support and organizations such as Fiddleheads, we were able to serve up to of 146 families a week with boxes of food (as of Nov 2020). We continue to be involved with the Health Improvement Collaborative of Southeastern Connecticut (HIC), as they declared racism a public health issue and made this the focus of their upcoming work.



Since November 2019, Alicia and Julie have participated in a State of Connecticut funded HIC project to reach out to local residents, identify upstream health equity issues impacting our community and recommend systemic solutions. We helped coordinate a talk with Adolpho Cuevas from Tufts University to share his research on the impacts of racism on health. This led us to hiring new staff members, based at FRESH New London, to support the work of the Collaborative and to meet FRESH's specific community organizing goals.



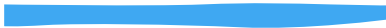
EMPOWERING YOUTH

Because of COVID-19 there was a big change in the youth program pathway.

Our spring program is our biggest season for young people to start and get a good introduction to us.

Instead, we continued to work with youth from the winter program, 6 high school students, meeting regularly on Zoom just to check in and stay connected.

Young people had conversations about inequities in our community and how COVID-19 made them stand out more; how COVID-19 impacts people of color more than whites and that racism, not race, is the reason. In the spring, Chloe Murphy was able to join us as Food Justice Educator. She has been a part of the youth program for over 7 years. In the summer we were able to hire (minimum wage) 10 youth to help us work mostly in the growing and preparing the food we were using for CSA. All of the young people that joined us this summer had at least 1 year at FRESH prior to 2020.



Chloe and Julie also started working with two other youth organizations in New London, Hearing Youth Voices and Writers Bloc, to form Youth Power New London (YPNL).

The vision is a collaborative of youth organizations that share information, support each other, build power and access for youth of New London and where young people can meet peers working to build social justice.



ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGES AT FRESH: NEW OFFICE, NEW FACES

Change has definitely been the theme of 2020! FRESH also experiences some changes in the administrative realm. We are happy to announce that we moved into our new office! Hopefully this new office at 26 Broad St will be a long-term home for FRESH and our programs.

As we all learn to stay safe during the pandemic, FRESH staff have begun to work in our office again. Having a larger space has been very important to making this shift. Our current protocol is to be wearing masks and to not share surfaces.



Saying goodbye to Frida at our garlic planting party was bittersweet. We are sad to see her go but are excited to see what she will accomplish next!

FRESH has also experienced administrative changes this year. Frida has sadly stepped back from her role at FRESH but will continue to support and help when she can. Davana and Grace have joined our team to support with office management and social media capacity.

We also hired Nicia and Lizbeth part-time to support with community connections and other office work that relates to community organizing. Additionally, Makeeda will work remotely in a paid internship on the connection between race and public health.

Sharms, who has worked with FRESH in the past, has been working as the farmer's assistant. As mentioned earlier in the report, Chloe has also gained a new role at FRESH as our food justice educator.

We are excited to welcome these new faces to FRESH!