



SOUTHSIDE COMMUNITY LAND TRUST

Growing for Good

Fresh news from Southside Community Land Trust

SPRING 2023

Farmers add new flavors to beloved farmers market



Chai and Christina (standing), Blia and Charlotte, inside one of the greenhouses at Urban Edge Farm.

With the outdoor farmers market season already underway, we wanted to share that one of the most successful markets in the state, the Hope Street Farmers Market (HSFM) in Providence, is bringing on six new farms for its 2023 season. Four are run by SCLT-network farmers growing at Urban Edge Farm in Cranston.

The new additions are Charlotte Uwimpuhwe (Charlotte's Farm), Blia Moua and his wife Mai Lee (Wilson Community Farm), Chai Thao and her husband Leng Yang (Daily Farm), and Christina Dedora (Sanctuary Herbs). Each is eager to connect with new customers at this well-run, well-attended market and sell their produce, including amaranth, Thai peppers, butter ball and bitter melon, as well as more familiar vegetables, herbs and teas.

The HSFM was named one of the 10 best farmers markets in the country by *USA Today* in 2019, and regularly wins in the "Best of" category in *RI Monthly's* annual competition. It draws large crowds

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Look for new varieties—plus old faves—at this year's Plant Sale

City Farm staff pride themselves on choosing seeds that will grow well in our climate and using organic growing practices resulting in beautiful, healthy plants for the annual Rare & Unusual Plant Sale. In 2023, they added some drought-resistant varieties of tomatoes and other vegetables in response to last summer's record-breaking heat. According to City Farm Steward Rich Pederson, these plants will help growers, whom he refers to as "citizen scientists," adapt to climate challenges while enjoying a delicious harvest.

There will be 65 varieties of tomatoes, a Plant Sale specialty, along with an array of other favorite veggies, fruits, vines, medicinal herbs, and perennials. The Sale will take place Saturday and Sunday, May 20 and 21, from 10 am to 2 pm at City Farm (168 West Clifford Street in Providence's South Side). Current SCLT members will be able to enter the Sale during the members-only preview on Saturday at 9 am.

Growing, eating, and sharing food from your garden provides remarkable benefits for your physical and mental health, and is why we bring the Plant Sale back year after year. According to Rich, helping people grow their own food also encourages us to explore and act on ideas for improving ourselves and our shared natural environment.

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Growers, and customers, find sweet spot at SCLT-founded farmers market

Dear friends,

So many things determine a farmer's success, including healthy soil, predictable temperatures, and plentiful rainfall. Just as important, farmers need reliable access to customers. Our story about four farms in SCLT's network joining a sought-after outdoor market in Providence shows how much this kind of opportunity means to small business owners. If the Hope Street Farmers Market is in your orbit, we hope you'll support them and the other farmers and vendors who sell there, every Saturday rain or shine, May through October.

Our other feature story is about Michael Gaffin, owner of Kitchen Guys, who carefully chooses where to give his time and in-kind donations. We're grateful to be one of many nonprofits to benefit from his generosity.

SCLT is fortunate to have countless supporters without whose time and insight the organization wouldn't be where it is today. They show up in numerous places, including planting, tending

and harvesting crops at City Farm; helping to deliver children's programming; and planning the perennial section of the Plant Sale every spring, to name just a few.

What do they get out of it? They learn growing tips, develop a network of interesting people to call on for advice, and often get to share great food with them. If you'd like to get involved with SCLT, let us know about your interests and talents on our Volunteer form found in the Support section of our website (southsideclt.org).

With gratitude,



Margaret DeVos
Executive Director



Rochelle Bates Lee
President, Board of Directors

Farmers add new flavors *Cont'd from front page*

(and dozens of friendly dogs) on Saturday mornings, and features live music, food trucks, and the Providence Artisans Market along Blackstone Boulevard. Its festival vibe can obscure that, for farmers, selling here can significantly affect their earnings.

Many people don't realize that the 32-year-old HSFM was founded by an SCLT Board Member, Sandy Parsons. It began as the DownCity Farmers Market Cooperative with a handful of farmers in Kennedy Plaza before relocating to the grounds at Hope High School. It moved again, a couple of miles up the street to Lippitt Park, in 2008. Despite the moves and the increase in participating farmers over the years, some changes were gradual.



Live music completes the scene at the Hope Street Farmers Market.

Getting a spot at the HSFM hasn't been easy because farmers tend to stay for years. But, attrition caused by the pandemic created several openings. SCLT staff urged farmers we work with to pursue this opportunity for them to grow their businesses and for the HSFM to better represent the BIPOC farmers in the state.

"In the early days, all the farmers at local markets were white," said longtime SCLT volunteer and market-goer Elaine Cali. "The farmers from Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean have brought a richness by introducing customers to produce from their home countries. And, they love to talk to customers about how to prepare and enjoy them."

While the juried market will have more farmers and vendors this season than ever (48), Market Manager Rui David describes the growth as "thoughtful, manageable, and sustainable." The HSFM accepts only "farmers and food artisans" from Rhode Island, Connecticut, and Massachusetts. One of the criteria is that a participant's "product will add to the overall diversity of the market without negatively impacting the financial success of current full-time vendors." After applications are reviewed by a committee of current farmers and vendors they are voted on by all market association members in the spring.

The new farmers from Urban Edge Farm will join several others over the years with connections to SCLT. Besides City Farm, these include Par's Pastured, Zephyr Farm, and Greenleaf Farm. Stop by and ask any of them about their products. You may very well bring home something that adds fantastic new flavors to your next meal.

—Jenny Boone, Grants & Communications Manager

Passion for food insecurity keeps this supporter coming back

For more than a decade, Michael Gaffin has been a loyal volunteer and member of SCLT. If you haven't encountered him at our events, you might recognize him as one of the Plant Sale super fans who arrive at least an hour early every year to be among the first in line outside City Farm for the members-only preview on Saturday morning.

Michael and his daughter got involved initially by volunteering at the Farm through a program at Temple Beth-El in Providence.

It was there that Michael developed a friendship with City Farm Steward Rich Pederson. Swapping gardening tips and life stories, Rich introduced Michael, a regular farmers market shopper, to other ways he could contribute to SCLT's mission.

During the planning and construction of our 404 Broad Street headquarters, Michael brought his expertise as the owner of Kitchen Guys, an emporium of eclectic and curated kitchen appliances and inspiring finds in Pawtucket, to advise on the layout and design of the first floor commercial kitchen, the wash-and-pack area of the Farm-to-Market Center, and the second floor kitchen, used by SCLT staff and community members. He sold SCLT a few discounted kitchen items, and graciously donated the state-of-the-art range, dishwasher, and refrigerator for that space. (Anyone who cooked or joined us for a meal in our old office kitchen can appreciate the ample storage and counter space, and the modern conveniences of our gleaming new kitchen!)

Michael's passion for organizations working to address food insecurity led to his interest in SCLT. He says having faced challenges in his early years shaped his philosophy on giving. While he has contributed significantly to SCLT's work over the last decade, his history of philanthropic involvement in the community is long and far-reaching.

"I give to the people and organizations I see doing good for the community," he says. Michael gives in-kind, with his time and materials, to causes he sees making positive impacts on people in his community, and finds this a mutually rewarding way to support them.

Through his volunteerism with SCLT, Michael gained a deeper appreciation for the impact of the organization's programs and services, citing the culturally diverse food grown by SCLT network farmers now easily available to BIPOC and other community



From left, Michael Gaffin going over plans for 404 Broad Street's commercial kitchen with SCLT's Margaret DeVos and Anne DaSilva, senior project manager of The Peregrine Group.

members. He also recognizes the power of SCLT's work with youth in shaping the next generation of local farmers, and in creating an affordable, healthy, local food system.

"An investment in kids is an investment in all of our futures," Michael says. In addition to his donations of equipment and time, he has given dozens of backpacks filled with supplies to school children at SCLT fall community events.

When he's not running his businesses, being a generous donor, or browsing farmers markets, Michael enjoys getting his hands in the dirt in his backyard garden, growing Sungold tomatoes, lettuces, and his all-time favorite: sour gherkins.

We look forward to future collaborations with Michael, and to him upholding his record of being among the first in line for the Plant Sale, at 9 am on Saturday, May 20.

– Sam Shepherd, Grants & Communications Coordinator



SCLT's Ellen Asermely with Congolese refugee Dolly Byanya and Women's Refuge Care interpreter Sawa Sawa Mulao during a cooking demonstration in the second floor kitchen.



Annual Plant Sale *Cont'd from front page*

Once again, City Farm will be donating thousands of plants, including at least 1200 to Hope's Harvest, as well as to South Providence and Olneyville Community Libraries, community events, and to our youth program. As always, all proceeds from the Sale support SCLT's work to build and sustain a local, affordable, healthy food system in Rhode Island.



2023 PLANT SALE

May 20 and 21, 10 am to 2 pm at City Farm
Members-only preview May 20 at 9 am

City Farm in spring is a magical place to meet up with plant people.

Thank you to our corporate, foundation, and government funders

(contributions of \$2,000 and above to SCLT's programs & operations, July–December 2022)

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SOUTHSIDE COMMUNITY LAND TRUST

Southside Community Land Trust's mission is to provide access to land, education and other resources so people in Rhode Island can grow food in environmentally sustainable ways and create community food systems where locally produced, affordable and healthy food is available to all.

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Southside Community Land Trust
404 Broad Street, Providence, RI 02907
401.273.9419 | www.southsideclt.org



@southsideclt