



PROVIDENCE
FARM COLLECTIVE

2020 Annual Report



5701 BURTON ROAD
ORCHARD PARK, NY 14127

providencefarmcollective.org



Dear Friends,

Providence Farm Collective, at its roots, weaves together the stories of its farming communities with programs for empowerment and equitable access to food and farmland. Our stories are ones of hope, resilience, food and farming traditions, family, opportunity and the need for emboldened changemakers. One such changemaker is Mahamud Mberwa, PFC's Farm Mentor. In 2017, Mahamud shared his community's need for rural farmland to grow culturally relevant vegetables and fruits. On June 3, 2017, the Somali Bantu community planted its first plots on farmland in East Aurora owned by Christopher Kerr and his family, and thus, the Somali Bantu Community Farm was born. Similarly, in June of 2020, Rachel Tarwo shared her community's need for rural farmland to grow culturally relevant vegetables and fruits. By July, Buffalo's Liberian community planted its first plots at Providence Farm Collective. In fact, this past season, over 200 changemakers from the Somali Bantu Community Organization of WNY, the Liberian Association of Buffalo, Congolese Babondo Buffalo, the Burundian, Chin and Karenni communities of Our Lady of Hope and Allison DeHonney and her urban farm, Buffalo Go Green, grew and harvested over 23,000+ pounds of produce for their families, their communities and for other Western New Yorkers impacted by food insecurity– what a season it has been!

When we launched PFC last spring, with the pandemic upending the best of our plans, we had no idea how this season would go: Would our revenue source, our cut flowers, be profitable during a down-turned economy? Would our farmers be able to afford the trips back and forth to the farm several times a week, as jobs were lost? Would PFC be able to expand to address the growing need for its programs or will funding dry up before the organization gets the chance to prove its success? What emerged were 140 PFC farmers committed to feeding their communities and doing so at a personal cost. They chose to organize their communities to farm at PFC so that traditions are preserved, culturally relevant, affordable fresh foods are grown and shared with food insecure neighbors, and health and wellness are prioritized in lives that often ironically have to sacrifice health for economic survival.

It is important for us to note that at the foundation of every PFC accomplishment is a commitment to partnership and collaboration within our greater community. All of us at PFC are truly grateful for the support we have received from foundations, donors, businesses and our Western New Yorker neighbors. As PFC changemakers continue cultivating farmer-led and community-rooted agriculture and food systems, we do so for the purpose of empowering just and equitable access to food and farmland. Thank you for joining us!

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elizabeth Leipler". The script is fluid and cursive.

Elizabeth Leipler
Farm Director

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kristin M. Heltman-Weiss". The script is cursive and somewhat stylized.

Kristin M. Heltman-Weiss
President, Board of Directors



Karibuni Marafiki:

I work with Providence Farm Collective (PFC) and am a founder of the Somali Bantu Community Farm (SBCF). The SBCF started in 2017 as a garden and expanded in following years. The SBCF offers an opportunity to fulfill the community's desire to reestablish its agricultural roots, as well as provide affordable produce to lower income families on Buffalo's West Side. Geographic transition for Somali Bantu refugees has had a significant impact on their traditional crops and cultivation practices. In Africa, we have different growing seasons and weather than in Western New York. Adapting has created a need for a way to facilitate growing the fruits, vegetables and grains that the Somali Bantu would be raising in Africa but are not easy for Somali Bantu community members to get in the supermarket. For example, we grow amaranth, African maize, cow beans, and other fresh vegetables. When we first started, it was really hard for the community and me to farm, but every year we learn more about farming in America.

In 2020, PFC started and more farming communities joined the Somali Bantu on the farm. I began working full-time as a Farm Mentor supporting different communities farming at PFC. The benefits have been tremendous: getting fresh vegetables for our community and earning money to support the Somali Bantu Community Organization's afterschool program. The health benefits have been important for our community, too. Many of our elders work at the farm. They do not stay home but now spend time outside farming. Everyone is eating fresh vegetables that are important to our traditions. In addition, our teenagers are learning our farming traditions and culture, which is very important to their parents and grandparents. The other organizations at PFC get the same benefits as the Somali Bantu: growing traditional foods that are important to culture and diet; working outdoors farming; networking with each other, as we share similar problems in the city. When we come to PFC, we meet, talk and try to figure out ways that we can solve problems together. All of the farming communities take great joy and pride in the work we are doing at PFC. Next season, I will begin raising chickens as part of a pilot project for PFC that all of the community organizations will benefit from. My dreams are to have my own land, farming livestock and crops and bringing back food to my community.

We have worked our best for four years, and now we need supporters for this project so more people in WNY can benefit from it. Fresh vegetables, chickens, farmer education, teen employment, and youth educational programming-- these are the things you support when you support PFC. There are more people who need the benefits of this project, and you can help.

Asante,

Mahamud Mberwa
Farm Mentor and Founding Member of Somali Bantu Community Farm

The Farm



VISION

Empowering Just and Equitable
Access to Food and Farmland

MISSION

Cultivating farmer-led and
community-rooted agriculture
and food systems to actualize
the rights of underserved
peoples.



Participating Communities

Somali Bantu Community Organization of WNY
Buffalo Go Green
Burundian Community of Our Lady of Hope
Chin Community of Our Lady of Hope
Congoese Babondo Buffalo
Liberian Association of Buffalo
Karenni Community of Our Lady of Hope

Advisory Board Members:

Mahamud Mberwa – Somali Bantu Community Organization of WNY
and Incubator Farmer
Ali Macheremo – Somali Bantu Community Organization of WNY
Allison DeHoney – Buffalo Go Green /Urban Fruits and Veggies
Dao Kamara – Liberian Association of Buffalo
Nelson Nagbe – Liberian Association of Buffalo
Etando Omari – Congoese Babondo Buffalo
Dunia Mchindewa- Congoese Babondo Buffalo
Gabriel Khoon – Karenni Community of Our Lady of Hope
Faz Niyigoba – Burundian Community of Our Lady of Hope

PFC Employees:

Beth Leipler – Farm Director
Mahamud Mberwa - Farm Mentor
Bari Zeiger - Director of Development and Administration

Board of Directors

Current Board Members

Kristin Heltman-Weiss
Eileen O'Brien-Scannell
Heather Chudzik
Melissa Milch
Etando Omari
Dao Kamara

2019-2020 Board Members

Richard Brooks
Sheila Conboy
Patrick Flynn
Chris Kerr

Programs & Features

Incubator Farm Program

PFC's Incubator Farm Program provides farmers with the opportunity to start their own farm and develop a farm business. In 2020, six incubator farming teams each received a 1/4 acre turnkey plot of plowed, fenced and fertilized farmland. In addition, farmers receive access to 1-on-1 technical assistance, marketing opportunities, tools, seeds, plants and the opportunity for land tenancy upon completion of PFC's three-year program.

Mgambo Farm	Mageney Mukomo
Jamame Farm	Oro Jelle
Bwedo Farm	Mahamud Mberwa, Ali Macheremo and Nurta Abdullahi
Kwachinyika Farm	Osman Chivala
Boolo Barwaqo Farm	Hussein Mabruk
Muktar Farm	Salat Salat

Community Organization Plot Program

PFC's Community Organization Plot Program provided five community organizations with 1 acre plots of prepared farmland this season. Participating organizations also received access to agricultural resources and technical assistance. In 2020, all organizations farming at PFC focused on building food security and increased access to traditional foods within their communities. While most food grown in community plots was returned to the community farmers for free, some organizations earned income by selling their products to the community at affordable prices. All community organizations plan to return to farm at PFC next year and grow the size of their farms!

Demonstration Farm Plot

PFC runs a small demonstration farm plot for training purposes and program income generation. Hands-on training takes place on the demonstration plot throughout the growing season. PFC's demonstration plot promotes food security by selling to wholesale outlets focused on serving communities in need of fresh food access.

“If you grow what the community likes and wants, then they will want to buy and eat it.”

**ROSA MEH - OUR LADY OF HOPE
KARENNI COMMUNITY**



FARMER SPOTLIGHT:

NURTA ABDULLAHI

The reason why I started farming with SB and PFC is that, though I am working, I cannot get the food that I want. For example, organic food is very expensive at the market. The African corn or maize I eat back home is not available. At the farm, I can grow these foods and help my family and my community.

I get a lot of experience from PFC, especially farming at the incubator. Here we can use the walk-behind tractor and we have different ways to cultivate, weed and plant seeds. Irrigation is also different. Here we can run lines, so we can have irrigation right away. Back home, we have to expect the rain for irrigation.



Programs & Features



Joed Viera, Business First

FARMER OF THE YEAR:

DAO KAMARA

Liberian Association of Buffalo • 75 Visits • 334 Hours

Dao Kamara is an incredible leader in all he does. Throughout the growing season, Dao worked tirelessly on the Liberian Community Farm, often before and after his full-time job as a Social Worker at Independent Living. Besides committing to a whopping 334 hours of farm work this summer, Dao is also the Chairman of the Liberian Association of Buffalo (LAB), a Pastor at the Buffalo Temple of God in Christ Church, a member of Providence Farm Collective's Board of Directors, and a dedicated husband and father. Dao shares, "Sometimes I come to the farm to do my farm work and work for my job. Sometimes I'll have a medical application and I'll come to the farm and do it. My kids would say, 'Dad, how are you doing this?' I reply, 'I don't want to miss this day and I don't want to see my crops destroyed, so I do it!'"

Despite the challenges to get it all done, Dao is very glad for the opportunity that his community has to farm again. "We farmed for a living in Liberia, that is our primary job in our country." Dao

had a farm in Liberia where he farmed with his mom from ages 15 to 19. After fleeing the civil war in Liberia, Dao continued farming as a refugee in Ivory Coast. There, he and many others provided free labor to landowners in return for a plot of land to grow food on for subsistence. Now, Dao is excited to share his agricultural traditions with his children. Dao's son, Daoda Kamara, often came to the farm to work. "Every time I went, he wanted to go with me – every evening, every morning, every afternoon I went, he wanted to go with me." At first, Dao would give his son \$20.00 a week for helping out on the farm, but when Providence Farm Collective helped him sign up for Erie County's Summer Youth Employment Program, Daoda was able to receive full pay for his work at the farm. "I was trying to teach my son what we would do at home to get food and get an income to send our kids to school... It was a very good experience with the Summer Youth Program," Kamara shared.

Dao is looking forward to LAB growing the Liberian Community Farm next year. "We want to be with PFC for the long term. We can farm every year. We want to have a permanent place to grow what we are going to eat." As a board member of Providence Farm Collective, Dao is focused on finding transportation to get his and other PFC community members to and from the farm – especially those who do not drive or cannot afford the travel back and forth. He sees the need that the farm serves for the members of the Liberian community and he is committed to making sure that all who want to work the land and grow crops at the Liberian Community Farm are able to do so.



John Fiege



Youth Programs



Summer Youth Internship Programs

In partnership with the Buffalo Urban League/Erie County Summer Youth Employment Program (ages 14-20) and Mayor Brown's Summer Youth Internship Program (ages 14-21), PFC teens have the opportunity to develop leadership and communication skills on various projects, while also serving their communities. Students are supported in their application for participation. Teens participate in farm to table responsibilities in the food system and tutoring responsibilities to promote the learning of younger siblings over the summer recess.

Concentric Circles of Learning

Concentric Circles of Learning (CCL) is a new STEM education initiative for elementary and middle school-age students. The initiative is led by Providence Farm Collective (PFC) in collaboration with the Center for Excellence in Urban and Rural Education (CEURE) at Buffalo State College, Firsthand Learning Inc (FHL) and Learning Triangle Labs LLC (LTL). The program aims to partner younger siblings (Learning Buddy) and older siblings (Learning Partner) and, with the support of CEURE college tutors, to provide hands-on learning experiences.

Summer STREAM (Science, Technology, Reading, Engineering, Arts and the Humanities and Mathematics)

At PFC, summertime is the perfect time for exploration! Using Firsthand Learning's Inquiry Summer STREAM Kit and Journals, students of all ages explored their home environments, made observations, drew pictures, collected data and wrote weekly journal entries. A list of suggested explorations was provided in the journal, but activities were not limited to the list.



By the Numbers



Beneficiaries

2,200 Individuals benefited from produce harvested this season

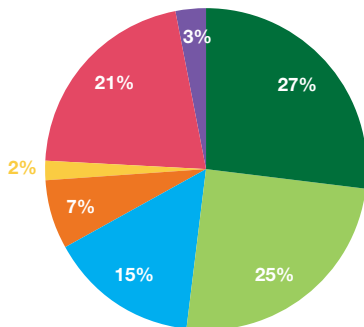
“I’m really proud this year farming at the incubator. I got a lot of vegetables there to bring home to my family. I farmed for myself and my family, I’m proud of that and happy for myself.”

ORO JELLE - SOMALI BANTU COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION & INCUBATOR FARMER



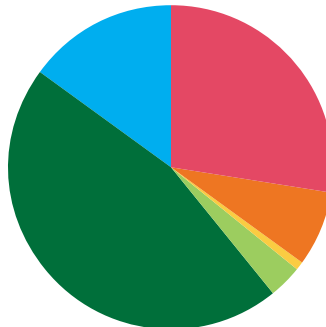
Participating Farmers by Community

Total: 190



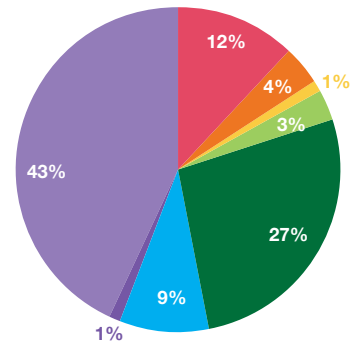
Number of families that receive food from the farm

Total: 217



Est. people who received food from the farm

Total: 2,231



- Our Lady of Hope - Karenni
- Our Lady of Hope - Burundian
- Our Lady of Hope - Chin

- Liberian Association of Buffalo
- Somali Bantu Community Organization
- Congolese Babonda Buffalo

- PFC- Sales (1 person per \$5)
- Buffalo Go Green

Harvest

>22,273

Pounds of Fresh Produce Harvested

>182

Farming Participants

>90

Participants Summer Youth Programs

1617 hours: Erie County Youth Internship Program

>7,500

Hours participation

1,695

Registered Visits

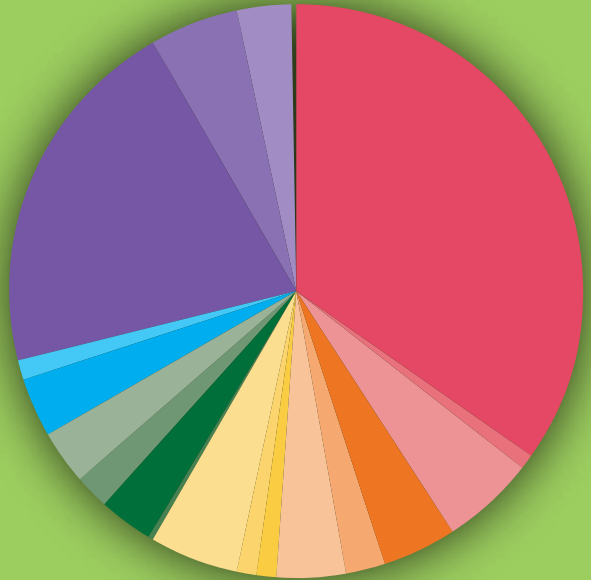
3.89

Hours Average Duration Time

27

Variety of Crops Grown

Culturally Relevant Crops



Markets

- Massachusetts Avenue Project
- Buffalo Go Green
- Community Action Organization
- Feed Buffalo
- West Side Community Services
- Providence Farm Collective Market Stand
- Produce Peddlers
- Elm Street Bakery
- East Aurora Co-op Market
- Hospice Buffalo

Participants



Somali Bantu Community Organization Participants

Abdi Mumin
Abdishakur Luhizo
Abdullahi Sundi
Ahmed Hassan
Ahmed Muktar
Ali Hassan
Ali Macheremo
Ali Mganga
Ali Sadik
Amina Mukoma
Bahati Abdi
Bishara Sadik
Fardowsa Luhizo
Farhan Burun
Fato Lungundi
Fatuma Mukoma
Halima Mukoma
Hamadi Mganga
Hassan Mwina
Hawa Haji
Hawa Mberwa
Hawa Mukumbira
Hussein Mabruk
Hussein Mberwa
Ibrahim Iftin
Issa Mussa
Jama Mkoma
Kabirow Kaboke
Khadija Hassan
Khasim Mberwa
Lugundi Hassan
Lule Mganga
Mageney Mukoma
Mahamud Mberwa
Mariamo Mganga
Msekwa Mbenana
Murjan Issa
Mustaf Sadik
Najib Omar
Nurta Abdullahi

Nurto Abdi
Omari Mukoma
Oro Jelle
Osman Abdi
Osman Chivalla
Owliya Kuow
Sadik Sadik
Said Lugendo
Salat Salat
Sharif Abdi
Zenaibu Shego

Liberian Association of Buffalo

Jerome Suah
Adam Davies
Alexis Dweh
Alice Nowlin
Allen Suah
Ariel Suah
Austin Tarwo
Benetta Togba
Rachael Tarwo
Blessed Tarwo
Comfort Toe
Daliah Tarn
Dao Kamara
Daode Kamara
Dior Kamara
Dorris The
Elisa Nyonoon
Betty Toe
Tracy Davies
Angel Nagbe
Elizabeth Toe
Elvis Cooper
Emmanuel Toe
Eunice Soussou
George Toe
Grace Bashizi
Hussein Tarwo
Jackal Kamara
Jackson Nagbe
Jemima Taylor

Kuban Yao
Mamakon Kamara
Marjah Quito
Micheline Tho
Nelson Nagbe
Olive The
Peter Waplo
Rosedale Dedee Kamara
Victor Tarwo
Victoria Tarwo
Makula Chelley
Agnes Thomas
Roseda Brown
Elizabeth Camara
Rebecca Saylee
Patricia Saylee
John Dolo
Anthony Saysay Sr.

Congolese Babondo Buffalo

Abdallah Kashindi
Abedi Asenga
Anna Enyonyi
Asia Mambo
Aziza Fikirini
Balokwa Kashindi
Bienfait Kandolo
Byaombe Joseph
Byaombe Swedi
Chamoneka Ishipunda
Christian Ntochibwa
Collette Kabika
Dunia Mchindewa
Etando Omari
Feza Ndanga
Furaha Echasa
Furaha Ishipunda
Hussein Alimasi
Janeth Wanyambwe
Kandolo Makongo
Kiza T. Damas
Mmonga Assani
Msemewa Dunia

Mwajuma Kashindi
Niha Fazili
Nyota Winyemya
Pela Abomba
Washikala Amani
Zabibu Byocinda

Buffalo Go Green

Allen Smith
Allison DeHonney
Billy Stanton
Brandan Berry
Sean Cruz

Burundian Community of Our Lady of Hope

Anastasie Habonimuna
Andoneth Shimimana
Colette Nteziryayo
Faz Niyigaba
Florence Ndayishimiye
Gloria Niyokwizigira
Jacqueline Nahimana
Joselyne Irakiza
Moise Bukuru
Nininahazwe Agnes
Raphael N.
Therence Irakoze
Therence Ntizimpa

Chin Community of Our Lady of Hope

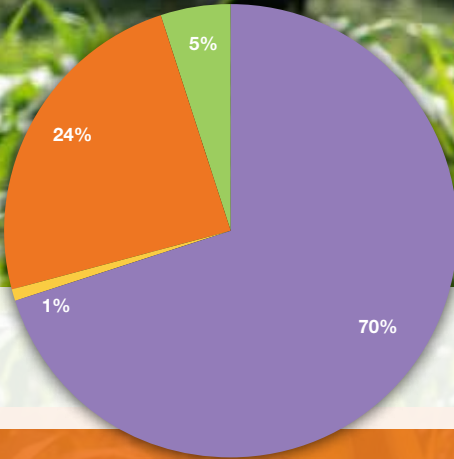
Joseph Saun Tun
Lucy Saun Tun
Mang
Sae Aung

Karenni Community of Our Lady of Hope

Bear Reh
Beh Meh
Beh Reh
Boe Bo

Boe Meh
Dah Meh
Oo Meh
Gabriel Khoon
Jae Meh
Jerome Win
Joseph Mumeh
Julie Win
Kee Reh
Kyaw Reh
Law Meh
Lee Reh
Lu Reh
Ma Meh
Me Reh
Mya Meh
Nay Reh
Nga Reh
Ngay Reh
Oo Reh
Ooay Reh
Pa Reh
Papiya
Par Meh
Phyar Meh
Plu Meh
Poe Meh
Poe Reh
Regina
Rosa Meh
Shar Meh
Soe Meh
Soe Reh
Su Meh
Twa Reh
Win Aye

Friends of PFC



● **Grants - \$332,300.00**
● **Corporate Donors - \$115,100.00**
● **PFC Harvest Sales - \$12,034.34**
● **Individual Donors - \$24,409.82**

John Fiege

Thank You to Our Generous Donors

Businesses

4Front Consulting Group
 Amos Zittel & Sons/Terry Zittel
 Baker Creek Heirloom Seed Co.
 Bartlo, Hettler, Weiss & Tripi
 Benchmark Group
 Buffalo Go Green/Urban Fruits & Veggies
 Community Action Organization
 Congolese Babondo Buffalo
 Cornell Cooperative Extension
 East Aurora Co-op Market
 East Aurora Rotary Club
 Farm Credit East
 Feed Buffalo
 First Niagara Foundation in partnership with KeyBank
 Firsthand Learning Inc.
 Harris Seeds
 Harry Chapin Foundation
 High Mowing Seeds
 Hospice Buffalo
 Hudson Valley Seed Company
 John R. Oishei Foundation
 Kreher Family Farms
 Learning Triangle Labs LLC
 Liberian Association of Buffalo
 Lori Joyce Photography
 M&T Charitable Foundation
 Massachusetts Avenue Project
 Moog Inc.

Northeast SARE Grant
 Our Lady of Hope
 Partnership for the Public Good
 Philipps and Brooks CPA
 Planet Love Designs: Tanya Zabinski and Joe DiPasquale
 Rich Family Foundation
 Rich Products/Rich's
 Robert J. and Martha B. Fierle Foundation
 SaveonSP
 Sisters of St. Mary of Namur
 The Somali Bantu Community Organization of WNY/Somali Bantu Community Farm
 United Way of Buffalo and Erie County
 Upstate New York Health Foundation
 USDA Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Grant
 W. Atlee Burpee Co.
 WEDI/West Side Bazaar
 Wesleyan Watermark Church Members
 West Side Community Services
 Western New York Land Conservancy
 WNY Covid-19 Community Response Fund
 WNY Foundation
 WNY Sustainable Business Roundtable

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ProvidenceFarmCollective@gmail.com

Inherit in PFC's mission and vision is equitable access to and ownership of farmland. Toward that goal, two generous donors have purchased 37-acres of prime agricultural farmland located at 5701 Burton Road in Orchard Park, with the intention of selling it to PFC upon the completion of a capital campaign in coordination with the Western New York Land Conservancy. PFC will relocate the farm to Burton Road in April of 2021.



Please visit ProvidenceFarmCollective.org for updates on the move, information on the forthcoming capital campaign and the stories of our farmers and their farms!