



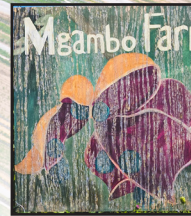
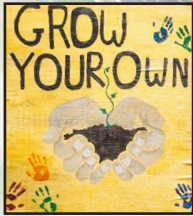
PROVIDENCE  
FARM COLLECTIVE

2024

# Annual Report







Dear Providence Farm Collective Community,

The story of Providence Farm Collective (PFC) began over 20 years ago when the Somali Bantu community sought access to farmland to grow the foods they had once enjoyed back home. This desire sparked a grassroots movement aimed at reconnecting people to the land and empowering them to cultivate the foods they love. However, the Somali Bantu faced significant barriers, as they lacked the necessary networks to secure farmland. Despite their deep-rooted agricultural knowledge and skills, they struggled to bring their expertise to life due to these obstacles.

In 2019, the formation of Providence Farm Collective marked a pivotal moment, not only for the Somali Bantu, but also for seven other diverse communities. United by our shared vision of creating equitable access to food and farmland, we came together to work across sectors and build a community. This collective effort led to remarkable strides, with farmers returning to the land to grow food for themselves and for the entire Western New York region.

In 2023, we reached a significant milestone when we purchased our land, providing our farmers with greater agency and self-sufficiency. Owning the land meant we could invest with confidence, no longer fearful of putting our resources into something we would never truly own. This year, we closed an important chapter in our journey by completing the construction of a new barn and facilities—a symbol of the hard work and dedication that has brought us to this point. Our barn represents not only the culmination of our efforts, but also the beginning of a new phase of possibilities for our farmers and community.

As we reflect on the progress made since the inception of the Somali Bantu Community Farm, we are filled with immense gratitude and pride. The achievements of the past year stand as a testament to the hard work and determination of everyone involved. We are deeply thankful for your vital support and partnership in making all of this possible.

Thank you for being an integral part of Providence Farm Collective's journey and success.

With gratitude,

Hamadi Ali  
Deputy Executive Director & Markets Manager

Kristin Heltman-Weiss  
Executive Director

# 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 under-resourced peoples.**



## OUR TEAM

### Board of Directors

Zelalem Gemmeda, Co-President  
Karen Prendergast, Co-President  
Mike Szymkowiak, Treasurer  
Rebecca Redwood, Secretary  
Halima Muhina  
Tom Petrocelli  
Tamar Rothaus  
Emmanuel Frimpong Boamah  
Eileen O'Brien-Scannell, Board Member Emeritus

### Staff

Kristin Heltman-Weiss, Executive Director  
Hamadi Ali, Markets Manager  
Laura Sweat, Finance & Operations Director  
Beth Leipler, Farm Director  
Mahamud Mberwa, Farm Mentor & Liaison  
Isaac Frisina, Facilities & Equipment Manager  
Hamadi Mganga, Marketing Coordinator  
Lianne Novak, Office Manager/Bookkeeper  
Deanna Garwol, Community Impact Coordinator  
Abdullah Sundi, Farm Crew  
Sharif Abdi, Chef  
Elizabeth Thida Htway, Community Engagement Coordinator

### Committee Members

#### Farmer Advisory

Gabriel Khoon, Karenni Garden of Hope  
Rosa Meh, Karenni Garden of Hope  
Faz Niyigoba, Ak'iwacu Farm  
Kuban Yao, Liberian Community Farm  
Ali Macheremo, Somali Bantu Community Farm  
Halima Muhina, Somali Bantu Community Farm  
Allison DeHorney, Buffalo Go Green  
Kandolo Makonga, Congolese Farming Project  
Etando Omari, Congolese Farming Project  
Sawhla Set, BMICF Plants  
Helen Rojek, BMICF Plants  
Zelalem Gemmeda, Ethiopian Community Farm

#### Marketing & Community Engagement

Cody Switzer  
Hamadi Mganga  
Rebecca Redwood  
Maria Testa  
Deanna Garwol  
Paul Maurer

#### Finance & Development

Laura Sweat  
Tom Petrocelli  
Hamadi Ali  
Kristin Heltman-Weiss  
Tamar Rothaus  
Mike Szymkowiak  
Karen Prendergast

#### Governance

Kristin Heltman-Weiss  
Susan Czynry  
Hamadi Ali  
Tamar Rothaus

#### Farm

Beth Leipler  
Mahamud Mberwa  
Isaac Frisina  
John Glenn







COMMUNITY FARM OF THE YEAR  
Somali Bantu Community



INCUBATOR FARMER OF THE YEAR  
Asiya Mambo

## OUR FARMERS

### WHO ARE OUR FARMERS?

Our strength lies in the diversity and dedication of our farmers, a vibrant tapestry of individuals and communities united by the love of the land and the passion for cultivation.

With 27 farms and 200+ farmers, our collective effort is not just about growing crops — it's about nurturing community and preserving cultural heritage.

### 8 COMMUNITY FARMS

Somali Bantu Community Farm	Ak'iwacu Farm
Liberian Community Farm Project	Karenni Hope Farm
Buffalo Go Green	Be Emnet Ethiopian Farmer Group
Congolese Farming Project	
Buffalo Myanmar Indigenous Christian Fellowship Plants	

### 19 INCUBATOR FARMERS

Boolo Barwago Farm	Niagara Harvest	Maendeleo Farm
Kwachinyika Farm	Mkomeni Farm	Thu's Farm
Bwedo Farm	Kandolo Family Farm	Ferme Asiya Mpajin Jehovah
Jamame Farm	Kilozo Farm	
Mgambo Farm	Boaz Farm	
Uamani Farm	Mtange Family	
Mitemo Farm	Adam's Farm	
Bulyaga Farm	TJ Farm	

"Being able to see the fruits and veggies growing warms our heart. Being able to sell it to the community is wonderful because we get to see our hard work being appreciated by other people. We are proud of our work."

-JEROME, KARENNI HOPE FARM





# LETTER FROM THE FIELD

Karibuni Marafiki:

At Providence Farm Collective (PFC), we are proud to support a vibrant, resilient community of farmers who are deeply committed to growing food and practicing their agricultural heritage. Through our incubator program, we offer resources such as tools, seeds, and plants, along with hands-on workshops in crop production and small business development. Every day, we witness the dedication and entrepreneurial spirit of our farmers as they build sustainable farm businesses and strengthen our community.

Empowering farmers to navigate the challenges they face and unlock their full potential is key to our roles as Farm Director and Farm Mentor. From overcoming language barriers to securing affordable farmland, we are dedicated to addressing these obstacles. As American Farmland Trust Regional Navigators, we collaborate with partner organizations to create pathways to success for new and beginning farmers, especially New American farmers, who bring rich agricultural knowledge and cultural diversity to our region.

Starting over in a new country can be difficult, even for experienced farmers. That's why PFC has become a place of support and guidance for many. It's not just about providing the tools to grow food—it's about fostering a sense of community and belonging. Here, farmers find the strength and resources they need to succeed and build a future for themselves and their families.

Kandolo, a seasoned incubator farmer at PFC, shares how the workshops at PFC help him expand his knowledge of farming and managing a small business: "The workshops really help me to increase my knowledge of farming and also raising livestock. Please continue these! I got a lot of benefit from the small business education meetings. Right now, I have a lot of customers in Buffalo because of the knowledge I have learned through PFC. The education is really helping me to better run my business."

This year has been one of remarkable growth and self-sufficiency for our farmers. Many are taking the next steps to secure their own land, expand their businesses, and provide fresh, local food to Western New Yorkers.

Asante,



Mahamud "Mo" Mberwa  
Farm Mentor & Regional Navigator



Elizabeth Leipler  
Farm Director

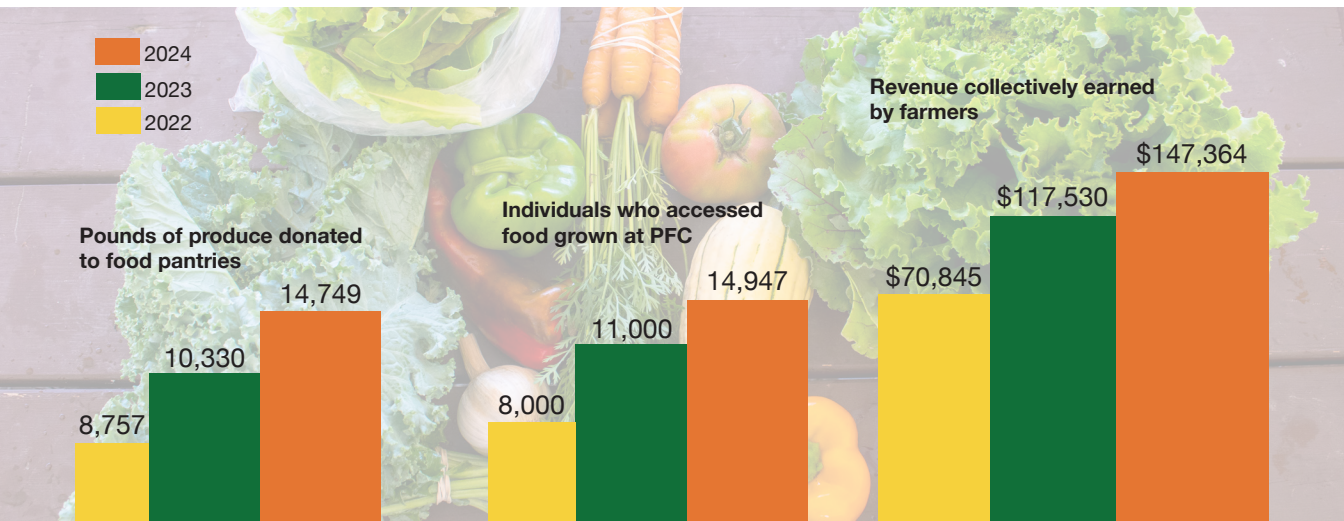




Our programs supply fresh produce to food pantries, wholesale markets, and farmers markets, helping communities in need. We've donated more produce, reached more people with farm-grown food, and increased sales for our farmers.



### Nourishing Numbers: 2024 Impact & Statistics





# Cultivating Community

At Providence Farm Collective, we are proud to foster partnerships that amplify the voices and dignity of our farmers. From wholesale buyers to food pantries and cross-sector partners, we work together to ensure equitable access to food and farmland. Together, we share knowledge, build connections, and grow stronger as a community.



## OUR PARTNERS

Provisions 139  
Salvation Army of Buffalo  
Friends of Night People  
The Tabernacle Food Pantry  
Lexington Co-op Markets  
Hearts Harvest Food Pantry  
Upper Room COGIC Food Pantry

Bread of Life Outreach Center  
Big Big Table Community Cafe  
Massachusetts Avenue Project  
East Aurora Co-op Market  
FeedMore WNY  
Buffalo Public Schools  
Healing Grounds

716 Share WNY  
Nardin Academy  
CAO of WNY





# Awards & Recognition

Looking back on the past year, we're proud to be recognized for our grassroots leadership and trailblazing efforts to help under-resourced individuals access farmland. Led by our farmers, this work reflects a shared commitment to equity and sustainability within our community. Their leadership has driven meaningful change, strengthened local connections, and captured the attention of media platforms.



**Springboard Award for Farmer Leadership Circle Program**



**New York State Ag & Markets Empowerment Through Ag Award**



**Women in Leadership Award by NYS Women Inc. Buffalo Niagara Chapter**



**New York State Senate 2024 Empire Award**

**Learn More about Leadership at PFC**





# Project Spotlight: Our New Barn

## IMAGINE THIS...

- A fully enclosed wash-and-pack area for up to 10 farmers at a time.
- Two cold storage units to keep produce fresh.
- A cozy farm store for CSA pickups and neighbors to grab their weekly produce.
- A kitchen where farmers can create value-added products.
- An office space—no more working in ski pants in the cold!
- A pavilion to gather, connect, and share ideas.
- Two bathrooms with hot water—yes, hot water!

**THIS ISN'T JUST A DREAM—IT'S  
OUR BARN!**





# Program & Market Highlights



## COMMUNITY FARM PROGRAM

8 community organizations accessed farmland and resources to support regional fresh food security.



## INCUBATOR FARM PROGRAM

In addition to farming and business workshops and personalized instruction, 12 farmers were supported in making grant applications for new farm equipment and needed resources for their farm operations.



## FARMER & YOUTH LUNCH PROGRAM

More than 10,000 farm-to-table lunches were served to farmers, youth, visitors and staff thanks to the generous support of the Providence Fund and through sponsorship by Wegmans.



## SUMMER VIBE YOUTH PROGRAM

50 PFC teens earned \$128,000 while working on their community farms. They also participated in workshops provided by Jewish Family Services and Second Generation Theatre.



## COMPOST PROGRAM

PFC's composting project grew to include a weekly drop-off of food waste by partner Farmer Pirates.



## CSA & MARKETS

76 CSA members picked up 18 weeks of fresh produce at the Monday Market Stand. New this year was an option to pick up shares at the PFC Farmers Market.





# Thank You For Your Partnership!

### Grantors

Anonymous  
Alice Say Family Foundation  
American Farmland Trust  
Buffalo Public Schools  
Churches in Action  
Clif Family Foundation  
Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo  
Daniel C. Jackson Charitable Fund  
Dedrick Family Foundation  
Health Foundation for Western & Central NY  
Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield  
Blue Fund (Western NY)  
Key Bank Foundation  
King Family Foundation  
M&T Charitable Foundation  
Orchard Park Presbyterian Church  
Providence Fund

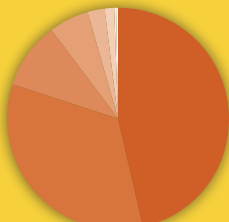
Robert J. and Martha B. Fierle Foundation  
Springboard  
St. James UCC  
St. Peter and Paul Church Social Ministry  
The Buffalo Bills Foundation  
The Margaret L. Wendt Foundation  
The Spread Compassion Foundation  
USDA  
WNY Foundation

### A Special Thanks to PFC's Recurring Donors

Emily Altschul  
Sheila Balke  
Ann Bischof  
Jerry Callaghan  
Barbara Carr  
Nancy Cimbale  
Janet Coletti  
Abigail Cooke  
Gail Cristantello  
Warren Davis  
The Deck Vukelic Family  
Maryann Didas  
Mary & Edmund Egan  
Patricia Farrell  
Margaret Fletcher  
Joanne Goldfarb  
James Granville  
Patricia Gurney  
Ronald Huefner

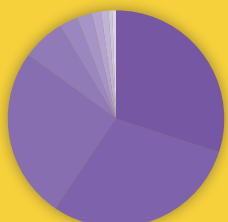
Jean Hughes  
Alison Hyde  
Judith Jackson  
Susanne Kelley  
Bethany Kloc  
Robert & Gina Klick  
Faith Koch  
Erin Kopf  
Rachel Krajna  
Jack Lemkuil  
Mary Lou Lemkuil  
Laura & Paul Loehr  
Jeffrey Mahon  
Jeffrey Markello  
Judith McClelland  
Lynnette Mende  
Denise Mills  
Ellen Neumaier  
Barbara Ochterski

Susan Painter  
Joan Parks  
Catherine Pilarz  
John & Betty Preble  
Thomas Reigstad  
Jajeane Rose-Burney  
Leonardo Sette-Camara  
Emma Smalley  
Virginia Spaeth  
Steve & Sarah Tasker  
Charlotte Tay Tahk  
Maria Testa  
Paige Thompson  
Jenine Trzewieczynski  
Kristin & Paul Weiss  
Brenda Young  
Elizabeth Zeiner



Operating Revenue

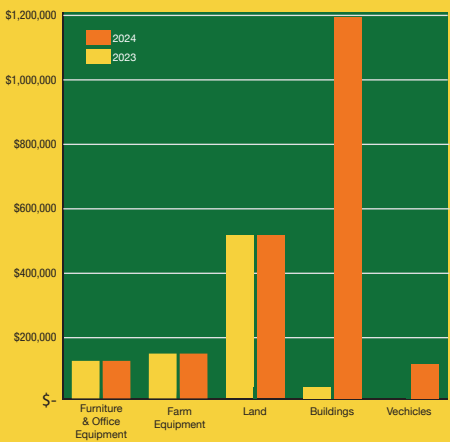
- Foundation & Trust Grants: \$715,452
- Government Grants: \$515,469
- Farm Sales: \$150,747
- Individual Contributions: \$88,376
- Earned Interest & Other Revenue: \$36,692
- Farm Tours & Events: \$22,440
- Corporate & Business Contributions: \$4,532
- Other Public Support: \$2,599



Operating Expenses

- Program Staff: \$355,507
- Admin Staff: \$350,306
- Farm Operations: \$301,228
- Fundraising Staff: \$76,537
- Office Expense: \$32,389
- Facilities & Insurance Expense: \$23,554
- Farm Leadership: \$17,647
- Lunch Program: \$12,441
- Fundraising Fees & Costs: \$8,465
- Summer Youth Program: \$4,015

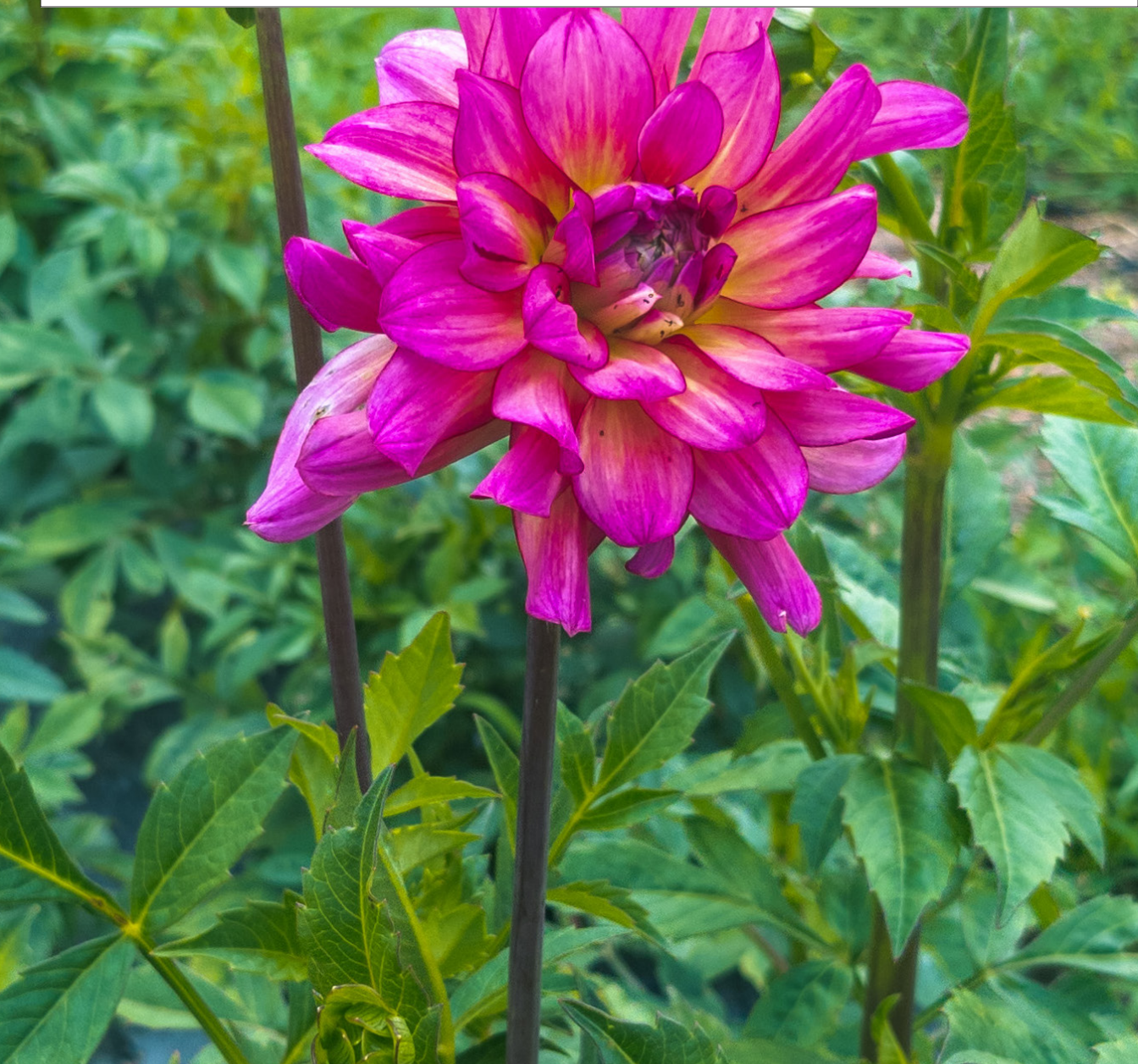
### Fixed Assets





**PROVIDENCE FARM COLLECTIVE**

5701 BURTON ROAD  
ORCHARD PARK, NY 14127



**PROVIDENCE**  
FARM COLLECTIVE

For more information, visit [providencefarmcollective.org](https://providencefarmcollective.org)

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