



## LOCAL FOOD HUB ANNUAL REPORT 2018

HELPING FARMERS | CREATING CONSISTENT MARKETS

STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES | INCREASING AWARENESS

Dear Friends of Local Food Hub,

For almost a decade now, Local Food Hub has worked hard to improve Virginians' access to locally grown food, as well as help the small family farmers who produce it. We endeavor to strengthen the health of our community and environment through nutritious, well-grown food. Our work is made possible through the support of visionary people like you who believe that, through better food and farming, we can create a better world.

In 2018, the Local Food Hub partnered with more farms than ever before, and we grew our customer base and year-round product offerings. Our Fresh Farmacy program, which strives to supply underserved and at-risk members of our community with good food, has steadily grown. The foundation of all of our work is a community that believes in the importance of local food and small farms, and is willing to invest in a transformative vision of the future.

With gratitude for all that we have accomplished, together.

Warmly,  
Kristen Suokko  
Executive Director

## We've accomplished a lot this year.

**75**

partner farms and producers

**147**

thousand pounds of fresh, Virginia-grown produce was distributed through our partnerships.

**250**

participants enrolled in Fresh Pharmacy: Fruit and Veggie Prescription Program

**73**

percent of partner farms maintained or increased their sales

## How it Works



## HELPING FARMERS

Local Food Hub was founded 10 years ago on the belief that a community eating food from small local farms will result in healthier people, a more sustainable environment, and a more resilient economy. But, to thrive, a local food system needs a strong infrastructure underpinning it. Our Grower Services program helps local farmers understand customer needs, grow and raise consistently safe and high-quality products, and get their products to market. All of Local Food Hub's partner farms are required to comply with our Quality Assurance Program, which helps them meet the highest standards of food safety.

## *94% of partner farms want to increase their sales to LFH in 2019*

### ***Growing Safer Food***

Nationwide food-safety outbreaks in 2018 illustrated the truth in our founding belief. People turned to local food as the safe option because it comes from farms they know, and ones that produce smaller quantities and move them to market quickly. During the food-borne pathogen outbreak in romaine lettuce in the fall, grocery stores and other Local Food Hub partner buyers reported a marked increase in the sale of local products. Our sales to one buyer alone increased 35 percent over a two-week period. Partner farms also reported receiving direct requests for the sale of their safe alternatives.

Despite government regulations, food-safety breaches will continue to occur in an industrial food system. We remain committed to working with small family farmers to provide clean, high-quality and safe products that are the bedrock of a healthy local food system.

*“Appreciate the ongoing support, and look forward to our mutual continued sales growth in 2019!” -feedback from annual grower’s survey*

### **CREATING CONSISTENT MARKETS**

For the past few decades, as American farming has shifted toward more large-scale, industrial operations, farmers have seen lower returns on their products. A 2018 Washington Post article addressed this issue, reporting that the average farmer is paid only \$0.078 of every dollar Americans spend on food. But Local Food Hub pays our partner farms fair and consistent prices—on average, \$.70 on the dollar—and offers fast payment terms, allowing them to thrive, not just survive. Such consistency for our farmers is central to our mission and remains a top goal.

*“Participation in the program has been informative, encouraging and fun. My overall health has improved which has positively impacted my quality of life.”-  
Fresh Farmacy Participant*

### **STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY**

We believe all citizens deserve access to fresh, nutritious and affordable local food—the fundamental building block of a strong community and democracy. Our food access programs are designed to remove

barriers, especially for underserved and at-risk populations, that prevent people from eating well. We help them learn how to prepare and cook fresh fruits and vegetables, giving them a familiarity with and access to healthy food options.

### *308 participants in Food Access programs*

#### ***Lisa Reeder: An Enduring Legacy***

For years, one remarkable woman, Lisa Reeder, spearheaded the vision and implementation of Local Food Hub's food access programs. In October 2018 the Virginia food and farming world experienced an enormous loss with Lisa's unexpected passing. Lisa was a tireless advocate for small farms and healthy eating. She spearheaded some of our most important programming, including the Fresh Farmacy program, which in 2018 provided 250 at-risk participants with 14 shares of fruits, veggies and other local products, along with storage and preparation advice. Last year, Lisa expanded the program to include basic nutrition education and laid the groundwork for an exciting initiative serving recipients of the Women, Infants, and Children Supplemental Nutrition Program, thereby ensuring that young children are exposed to healthy eating habits.

Lisa's hallmark was building bridges with like-minded organizations. Under her direction, Local Food Hub formed valuable relationships with organizations including the PB&J Fund and City Schoolyard Garden. Through these partnerships, Local Food Hub has been able to participate in programs such as Harvest of the Month, which provides monthly samples of produce to schoolchildren throughout Charlottesville. Lisa also worked diligently on Farm to School Week, an annual initiative to get more local food into schools. Just weeks before her passing, she streamlined the ordering process to maximize ease and efficiency, and she personally participated in multiple school programs throughout the week.

An enthusiastic participant in the regional food and agriculture community, Lisa served on multiple coalitions, including Move2Health, the Charlottesville Food Justice Network and Chesapeake Foodshed Network. Lisa's legacy is one of catalytic community partnerships and a thoughtful and strategic vision for the future, one that we are proud to carry on.

*“She cared about our community, our schools, our school gardens, our kids. She cared and in doing so taught us to care, too.”*

## **INCREASING AWARENESS**

Our presence in this community is a force for change. For a decade, we have worked to increase this community's awareness of issues surrounding local food and food access. Public understanding of local

food's impact on human, community and environmental health has evolved a great deal throughout this time, in central Virginia and around the country. More and more people are becoming aware of the importance of local, and demanding changes from the food industry. We love seeing local food gain a stronger mainstream presence, and are proud to do our part to spread awareness. Below are some news highlights, both featuring Local Food Hub and the national conversations around food and farmers.

See all our features in the news here:

## FINANCIALS

**TOTAL OPERATING:** What it takes to get food from small farms to our community partners, and to you.  
\$756,991

**INVESTMENT IN FARMS:** The amount that went back into our small farms as a result of our work.  
\$1,521,271

**YOUR INVESTMENT:** Our community's support for what we do.  
\$527,756

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Local Food Hub benefits from a talented Board of Directors who provide strategic guidance and expertise to support our mission. From farmers and nurse practitioners to financial managers and gourmet food store owners, they bring a wealth of knowledge to our work.

- Kathryn Barker: Network Administrator, Peabody School
- Zooney Brown: Health Coach, Choosing Green Healthy Lifestyle Blog
- Steve Bowers: Vice President for Marketing and Communications, Apex Clean Energy
- Stephen Byrd:
- Kate Collier: Owner, Feast!
- Anna Payne Fife: Senior Manager for Board, Executive and Strategic Initiatives, Share Our Strength
- Eric Gertner: Owner, Feast!
- Robin Gilliland: Principal and Acting CFO, Keller Enterprises
- Stasia Greenewalt: Faculty Member, Mountaintop Montessori School



We distribute their food to retail stores, restaurants, buying clubs, schools, universities, and other food businesses, including hospitals and senior centers. We want to make sure that all customers have access to fresh, local food where and when they want it. All products are identified by farm and county, so customers know exactly where their food was grown, developing a relationship from farm to table.

*Your support provides healthy futures for our community.*

*The work we have accomplished together is thanks to your partnership and commitment to a stronger, more resilient food system. Thank you for supporting small family farms and healthy communities!*