

UPCOMING EVENTS

December 7 - Year Round Production with Pam Dawling. 6-9PM. \$10. Jonesborough Visitor's Center. Pam Dawling is a brilliant presenter and author of Sustainable Market Farming, and is manager of a farm that feeds 100 community members year round.

December 12 - Open House Holiday Party, for all RC&D volunteers and supporters, 3:00-5:00pm, 142 Matthews Mill Rd Telford. RVSP at (423) 979-2581

December 14 - Poultry 101 Workshop for the Field School. 6-9PM at the Jonesborough Farm Bureau. \$10. Limited space.

February TBD - Tricities CSA Fairs. (Free) Meet your local farmers offering CSA, or farm "subscriptions" for produce, meat, dairy, and more. Will will organize these on behalf of our area farms and customers in 3 locations TBA.

www.ARCd.org | 423-979-2581
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Appalachian RC&D Council
3211 N. Roan St.
Johnson City, TN 37601

2017 Annual Report



Appalachian Resource Conservation & Development Council. 501(C)(3)
3211 N. Roan St. Johnson City, TN 37601. 423-979-2581.
apprcd@gmail.com. www.ARCd.org

The Biggest Compliment

By Emily Bidgood

The biggest compliment I received after our November 3rd fundraiser dinner in downtown Johnson City (Appalachian Fusion) was from my friend Rucht. Rucht came with his wife McKenna, of a downtown law firm, not knowing much of anything about the event or menu or cause. While waiting in line he curiously observed what was unfolding underneath the farmers market pavilion, trying to figure out if he could tell what was going on before hearing directly from the MC or organizers. There was Eva Becerra and Raul Rendron serving pozole out of a big cauldron. High School age attendants in bright tie-dye uniforms were serving tamales, salsa, and flan. Other high schoolers, and elementary age children too, were in a separate area selling fall-theme crafts and more tie-dye apparel. Next to their merchandise was an old fashioned wooden press where kids and adults were grinding and giving out fresh-pressed apple juice. Adult volunteers worked side-by-side with the kids at all the stations under the pavilion. Two long rows of colorfully decorated tables offered family-style seating to eat and listen to Amythyst Kiah play and sing. After several minutes there was a pause at the mic for a young woman farmer to share how her farm business and planning was improved by being a part of the cause. Ruscht later told me, **"Suddenly it all clicked and I was very impressed. This was an event where you were telling a story and it all fit together. The story is that food and farming build community, and community is especially important for at-risk kids."**

Rucht saw what we're working towards. You see it too. You are receiving this annual report because you are a part of building this food and farm community and that's one reason that you keep on with us. Inside there are more stories on this theme that we hope will resonate with you. Compliments feel good, but what you do to sustain this work is all the more important. Thank you for how you shared your time---in the form of attendance or volunteering or teaching at our events. Join us again next year. While we are so proud to have been awarded, or co-awarded, two large scale federal grants this year to further strengthen food and farm community, it's still your financial gifts that keep the organization going and growing. More than a compliment, your "time, talents, and treasure" are sustaining.

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Main Street Pizza
Mountain Empire Literacy Outreach
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Niswonger Children’s Hospital
Pleasant Valley Farm
River Creek Farm
Rural Resources
Serenity Knoll Farm
Sunset View Farm
Tennessee Quilts
TN RC&D Council Assoc.
Topper Academy
TriCon Builders
Washington County Ag Partnership
Yee Haw Brewing Company

Field School

by Lexy Close

It’s fall again, and many farmers are putting away their tools and tractors in the barn and getting out...their pencils and books! On November 9th, we launched the 3rd year of the Field School, a beginning farmer training program that meets regularly for a year of classroom workshops and field days. The Field School is overview of the business of farming in Northeast TN and gives ample opportunities to learn directly from seasoned mentor farmers and from beginning farmer peers.

“I was so inspired after the first session that I filled out my business plan objectives that night. But things changed a lot during the year. My plan is now more realistic for what we are able to do”

- Steven Mallory (Hope Farms)

“I joined the Field School just to research and learn. But I was so inspired that I jumped right in with growing vegetables for the farmers market on a half-acre.”

- Susan McKinney (Small Batch Farm)

When we first started this educational program three years ago, we wondered if we would find enough people to keep the Field School going for more than two or three years? Are there really that many people with a desire to evaluate if farming is right for them? We didn’t have to wonder much this year! We had to close our application three weeks earlier than planned because registration and the waiting list filled up. On November 9th we finally met the 40 students for 2017-2018, ranging in ages from 16 to 65, from all kinds of backgrounds and farming experiences. All of them feel strongly that local food is important for themselves and the greater economy. Follow along online with our Field School content, teachers, and the students’ progress at our blog at www.arcd.org/newsroom. Your end of year donations directly help us carry out this high caliber educational programming.



TN Farm Link

by Rachel Wheeler

Helping farmers and farm seekers find each other. Tennessee Farm Link is a new state-wide program and website (www.tnfarmlink.org) aimed at connecting beginning and expanding farmers with landowners and the resources they need to negotiate successful land transfer and tenure agreements. We hear time and again that the biggest hurdle beginning farmers face is land access. After many hours of research and seeing the success of North Carolina’s Farm Link program, we proposed the idea to the TN Department of Agriculture. They agreed that Tennessee should also pilot a program and awarded up a grant to take it statewide! TN Farm Link serves all 95 TN counties free of charge. The website is easy to list yourself and your land on, and is similar to Craigslist but more secure with an Appalachian RC&D staff member acting as moderator. Interested farm seekers and landowners simple go online and fill out the appropriate questionnaire, creating a listing. For non-internet users, the questionnaire can be filled out over the phone. In the first month we have seen several young farmland seekers sign up for land needs. Amy Davis, AmeriCorps VISTA, will be beating the bushes for landowners who want to see new people work the land. With so much positive support for the program so far, we hope that TN Farm Link will make a positive impact on Tennessee’s agricultural economy.

ETSU has been integral to our programs this year in many ways and we are so thankful for this institution’s strong work in our community! Dr. Lindsey King and her undergraduate **Anthropology** students volunteered over 250 hours documenting stories from local quilts to launch a new YouTube Quilt Stories channel. Kelly Porter’s graphic design class in **Art & Design** painted a quilt square for a Carter County farm. Dr. Deborah Slawson and graduate students Beenish and Munene from the **College of Public Health** are evaluators on the Appalachian Pharmacy program, responsible for gracefully and professionally evaluating how 135 families in Washington County have benefited from eating more fresh fruits and vegetables this year. **College of Nursing** through their Community Clinic and numerous nurses, faculty and staff, embraced the Pharmacy program and been central for recruitment and participation. Michelle Johnson has overseen several undergraduate and graduate **Nutrition** interns with the Food Forest component of the Sowing Seeds youth program. Also with Sowing Seeds, Elaine Evans of the **Medical Library** is a teacher and an adviser along with Randy Wykoff of Public Health. Dr. Kelly Foster and the Applied Social Research Lab in **Sociology** just came on the team as evaluators for the three-year Beginning Farmer grant held by Appalachian Sustainable Development.

Sowing Seeds

By Emily Bidgood

“It’s really helped me out. It’s a blessing, my dad told me. I was sent to Topper because of bad grades and not coming to school. This wraps my head around earning your money right and honest living. I like working on Sunset View Farm and cooking in the kitchen. One time I was going to get in a fight and someone told me to stop because I needed to keep the internship.”

-Axel

Every year the East Tennessee Foundation’s Thank You card arrives in my mailbox and warms my heart. The theme this year was a table of produce and a quote that reads “inside every seed is the potential for a bountiful harvest.” The hopeful quote instantly reminded me of our close work with a subsidiary fund of ETF, the Washington County Community Foundation. We are entrusted with a significant two year grant for a program that is also driven by hope: “Sowing Seed, Helping Feed, Inspiring Youth to Take the Lead”. Through the ARC&D, the grant invests in youth ages K-12 at three Johnson City program sites (Topper Academy; Girls Inc; the Mountain Home neighborhood) thanks to a team of phenomenal teachers. The curriculum brings weekly nature, nutrition, artistic expression and social awareness to at-risk youth. Every month our teachers document how lives are changing: more patience, better listening, making good food choices; helping their families cook; planting seeds at home, etc.

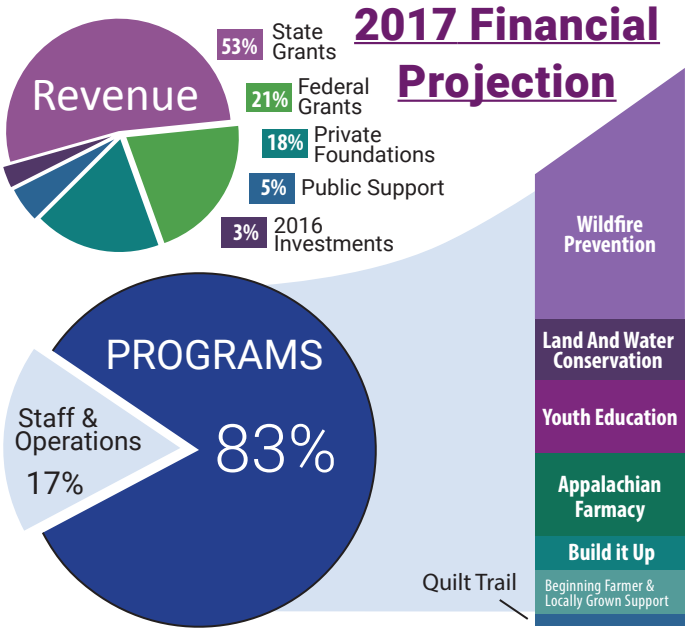
-Hannah

And At Topper Academy, under the tutelage of Counselor Sheri Cooper, teens learn business skills on top of regular nature and nutrition programming. Teens harvest from their school garden as well as from other farm plots, to sell to restaurants like Main Street Pizza and Gourmet & Company. From the student body, Counselor Cooper recruits the dozen most dedicated and academically-improving teens to become paid interns. We have so far directly invested over \$17,000 in paying teens to work in the local food movement: cashier register at Boone Street Market; picking peppers or stacking hay at local farms; mentoring younger children in the Sowing Seeds program; planning, budgeting, and cooking for 100+ guests at a special school meal.

“I really enjoy working on Pleasant Valley Farm. I came to Topper last year because my attendance was not good but this year I chose to stay because of the environment here. Before I didn’t like school but with Ms. Copper and the internship there is a cool side to it. Before I didn’t care about school. But this has been wonderful.”

-Dylan

“The internship makes me look forward to coming to school so I get to do something other than sit all day. I have ADHD so I can’t just sit. Plus when I cook for the school I am learning. It makes me happy. When I don’t burn it and it’s good I say I did that and it makes me feel good.”



STAFF & SUPPORT 2017

- Emily Bidgood, Executive Director
- Lexy Close, Beginning Farmer Support
- Rachel Wheeler, AmeriCorps VISTA ‘16-17 Farmers Market Promotion Coordinator
- Amy Davis, AmeriCorps VISTA ‘17-18
- Megan Gauck, Summer Quilt Trail Intern
- Wenny Elrod, Sowing Seeds Leader
- Shae Keane, Sowing Seeds Leader
- Sheri Cooper, Build It Up Leader
- Taylor Malone, Build It Up Leader

Sowing Seeds Interns from Science Hill:

Aaron Kindziera, Abi Cowden, Axel Lara, Caleb Lane, Dakota Miller, Dezmon Carpenter, Dylan Miller, Fabian Salts, Hannah Bennet, Jade Baker-Harris, Kobalt Cooper-King, Madison Carter-Wallace, MJ Rost, Michael Brock, Nakyla Brady, Natalie Hyatt, TJ Sanders, Toby Cornett, Tristan Lane, Tristan Slough