Mulberry Community Garden

The board of directors of the Meigs County Farmers’ Market is comprised of a group of believers who have a mission to give back. We believe in God, love, family, and community.

While the market is only in its third year, we began “give back” projects early in the evolution of the market. Our first project was collecting produce donations from our farmer vendors and any customers who felt compelled to give. The produce was then given to Mulberry Community Kitchen, and what couldn’t be used there was given to the Mulberry Community Food Pantry. Two of our board members volunteer at the Kitchen and in doing so see first-hand both the needs of the kitchen and pantry and those of members of the community. Produce donations of just over 1,000 pounds in 2019 increased to over 6,000 pounds in 2020. In 2020, we expanded this program to include a second local food pantry.

Food insecurity is a major issue in our country. While produce donations from our vendors and others help address this issue locally, we felt we could do even more. By providing people with the opportunity to grow their own food with no initial investment or risk on their part, we felt community members would not only reap the benefits of a community garden, but they may become inspired to build their own gardens at home. In addition to having access to fresh produce on a daily basis throughout the growing season, the garden also offers the opportunity to meet others who were drawn to the garden to work in, pick produce from, or just sit and enjoy the garden. Thus, was born the idea of building community gardens throughout our county.

As our third season nears its end (the last market is October 30), we are beginning to plan next year’s projects both at the market and in our local communities. While we have gotten very positive feedback on the Mulberry Community Garden, we are considering adding community orchards to our outreach efforts. While not everyone likes to garden, we feel that orchards will provide fruit from a much less labor-intensive project. We have several educational programs planned for 2022 at the market that include growing, harvesting, storing, and preparing produce, which will go hand-in-hand with the community gardens and orchards.

Our hope is to not only provide fresh fruits and vegetables for our neighbors, but to inspire them to garden as well. If you love gardening as I do, you understand the feelings gardening bring. There is an old saying that I have on a sign in my garden:

Who plants a seed

Beneath the sod

And waits to see

Believes in God

Respectfully submitted,

Dixie Hawthorne

Board of Directors & Secretary/Treasurer

Meigs County Farmers’ Market