



*In this issue:*

- Reader Survey: What do you want to read in 2013?
- A year end look at food movement in Kansas City
- One city dweller shares how he started keeping bees
- Lessons from *Sacred Agriculture*, a recent biodynamic conference
- Annual Farmers & Friends Meeting promises pie, peer-to-peer learning
- Field Notes from the Gibbs Road Community Farm
- Students show future doctors importance of good food
- Are you a hero for local food?
- Calendar of Events



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**What do you think?**



If you have two minutes and have an opinion about Urban Grown, the newsletter of Cultivate Kansas City, then you should take our survey! Click here to take the survey and share your ideas with us! Thank you.

## **Kansas City Food Movement just keeps growing**

By Katherine Kelly, Executive Director, Cultivate Kansas City



Urban homesteader and farmer Nicolas Garcia gives a tour of the farm he manages at The Westside Local. Photo by Ami Freeberg.

I think we're at a tipping point in Kansas City around urban food systems and local food. A tipping point is the time period when something that was unusual becomes common, where rapid change has accelerated to the point where you can reasonably imagine the exception becoming the norm.

In 2005, "urban agriculture" wasn't the norm. It was a phrase that boggled people's minds, that made urban planners and elected officials twitchy, that worried neighborhood associations and made rural farmers chuckle.

Today, we are living in a metro area where more than 300 acres of urban land are in food production in Kansas City; there are some 100 growers selling produce grown in the city; there are 48 farmers markets; there are more than 200 community gardens and food project gardens; there are urban orchards planted and more on the way.

Today, municipalities and counties are getting organized around food production and access. We're working with the Johnson County Health Department on a Healthy Food Johnson County planning process, we're part of Healthy Communities Wyandotte, and, as a coalition member, we're part of the Kansas City, MO Healthy Food Access Team. Each of these programs is taking a big picture look at food production,

distribution, and access as one of the factors that makes for a healthy, high quality community; urban agriculture is one of the strategies they include to create change and they are reaching out to the practitioners and educators who can help them.

Today, we get inquiries every month from organizations wanting help in addressing their constituents' food access, food health, and food production needs. We started this type of work with community-based organizations in 2005 with Catholic Charities; we're in our seventh year now of helping their refugees grow, sell, and access healthy food. We're in our third year of working with Mattie Rhodes Center. We started by helping them figure out what they wanted to do in relationship to healthy food access and production and today we're planning a series of workshops for an entrepreneurial farming project they're spearheading in 2013. We're in early conversation with the Marlborough Neighborhood Coalition on how to support them in a community planning process that incorporates food production and access. Neighborhoods and constituency-based organizations are seriously beginning to consider food access as part of their work and are pulling on the expertise of organizations like ours as they learn how to do this.

Today, every market in town has an urban farmer and some of those farmers are grossing as much or more than rural growers. We've seen some striking changes over the last five years. The knowledge and how-to on accessing and developing urban lots has become much more widespread, if a grower wants to get and find land, the whole process is clearer and easier than it used to be. For growers starting today, they have peers and networks of support to plug into, their goals and ambitions now have a social context and framework. Our early farmers included Sherri Harvel (now on the Get Growing team,) Bev Pender, Joe Jennings, and others. Those folks are still farming, still benefiting from Cultivate programs, and they've been joined by a long list of others, including Nicolas and Sarah Garcia, who are at the start of an exciting urban farming and food venture that builds on Nick's unique Westport Local model. The list includes Marilyn Baker, who is working land owned by Joe Jennings and learning fast from everyone she meets.

We continue our initial model of one-to-one work with farmers to help them get started and do what they do better. Over the years, we've added to the tools available to help them become successful with programs like the Community Greenhouse, Beans&Greens, and an ever-expanding Urban Farms & Gardens Tour. Each one of these raises the visibility of urban farmers and connects them to potential volunteers, customers, and supporters. Urban agriculture is growing exponentially to meet a broad spectrum of needs for an increasingly urban world.

As more people and organizations have joined the urban agriculture movement, we're starting to see the critical mass, or the tipping point, that gives us solid ground for optimism. There are more good minds working on key problems; more creativity and energy. The network of gardeners, farmers, farmers markets, grocery stores, chefs, restaurants, food activists, policy makers, funders, and nonprofit organizations can tackle all kinds of problems, see and act on all kinds of possibilities, and make some serious change happen.

Looking forward to a new year, we can imagine continued growth, deep rooting, and a healthier and more food productive Kansas City.

Reach [Katherine@cultivatekc.org](mailto:Katherine@cultivatekc.org)

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### **Bee keeping is rewarding hobby for city dweller**

By James Reimer

I am a Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA) at Shawnee Mission Medical Center. But I've always been interested in how someone lives "from the land" because I grew up in a farm based community. I have three boys who are 12, 16 and 18 years old. I have a great wife, Piper, who loves preparing healthy meals for us. She has been a great teacher in eating healthy and understanding the importance of using only what you need from this earth--recycle what you don't use.

For me, unearthing a carrot or beet is like opening a present on Christmas. Ten years ago, I read about a bee keeper experiencing that same feeling when cracking open a bee hive after a late spring and summer to collect honey. I knew I had to give it a try.

I learned if you want bees, all you need is a hive and I learned that I could order or put such a hive together myself. It would require relatively little space and I could order a package of bees and have them shipped to me. The only other thing left is something that all farmers need and that was adequate rain and sun. I decided to give it a try. Today I have seven hives. I always want to have a least one hive at my home to enjoy observing every day.



James Reimer has one honey bee hive in his backyard. Photo by James Reimer.

I had a GREAT teacher. One day I asked my barber about a jar of honey he had on his mirror. He told me about Robert Dye, who is now in his late eighties and has kept bees since he returned from serving abroad in World War II. Back when I was just learning the ropes, Bob sold bee keeping equipment out of his garage. He answered unlimited questions for any bee keeper that needed his advice or vast experience. The internet has also been a great resource for me, offering many clubs and other references to answer questions.

I've loved bee keeping and I know others would also if they just got over the "unknown" and give it a try. My 18-year-old son has two hives and my twelve-year-old is still not sure if he is a bee keeper or not. I have helped numerous people over the years get started, but I don't keep bees for anyone. I just hold their hand in the process as long as they need, much in the same way Bob Dye did for me all those years ago.

I would say to beginners, don't get discouraged. I'm always still learning and experimenting at times. There are many ways to care for bees and you have to find what works best for you personally. In light of your best efforts, sometimes a hive of bees is lost. The hive's success is tied directly to the queen. She controls the hive in every way. You can't control how good or weak your queen is in the hive. You can only provide a stable environment and let nature take over, as most farmers do. Bee keeping is really "hands off" in my opinion. I found that the more I tried to manipulate the bees' environment, the worse the yield of honey.

I think people interested in keeping bees should know that there is not much money to be made unless you decide to have many, many hives and "re-queen" your hives every year. This keeps egg-laying at a premium and results in a large army of bees for nectar collection. A queen usually lives three to five years and she will slow her egg laying over time until she gives the signal that a new queen needs to be raised and when that queen emerges the old queen meets her fate at the hands of the new queen.

To get started one hive will set you back between \$300-\$400, including the bees. Additional hives will cost less because you will not need to purchase as much of the initial equipment. A package of bees including a queen and enough workers to get started is approximately \$110. Queens cost approximately \$20-\$25. Swarms only cost your labor.

Some of the basic things you will need if you are interested in bee keeping are a hive and its additions for honey collection. I also recommend you invest in some initial equipment including gloves, a veil, a smoker, and basic hive tools. I recommend you choose a piece of ground for the hive that allows the bees to fly straight in and out of the hive unobstructed. Be sure to locate the hive near a water source, like a bird bath. I recommend you choose a spot that offers a combination of sun that can warm the hive in winter, but that also offers some shade to keep the hive cooler in the hot afternoon sun. Of course you will also need a package of bees or a captured swarm of bees. Once you have established a strong hive, you can start to split your strong hives into two. You will need to add a new queen and "workers" from the strong hive to a new, empty hive.

It seems one of the biggest obstacles to keeping bees in the city is the public's misconceptions about honey bees. Honey bees are not aggressive unless you open their hive. A bee keeper uses smoke to help calm that aggression. If you are sensitive to bee stings you may want to reconsider this hobby. I get stung two to three times a year by crafty bees finding an opening in my armor. Yet, bee stings are very mild compared to wasps and hornets. And no matter how comfortable you are around bees, don't ever think you can just peek into their hive for a second without smoking them first. I swear I would have gotten a Gold medal in the 100-meter dash from that lesson.

You will need to commit the most time during the first year of a hive, but then very little time other than maintenance is needed once the hive is established. You can be as busy as you want. If large honey production is your goal then adding a new queen every season is a must.

The rewards of keeping bees for me have been many, obviously honey for one. On average, a strong hive can yield 40-80 pounds of honey. I usually have enough to sell 150 to 200 pounds in a season. (My coworkers and friends have grown to depend on me for their honey every year!) Seeing the reaction of giving away a bottle of your harvest to someone is priceless. I'd also like to believe my bees are helping pollinate nearby flowers, fruit trees and clover fields.

The reward of opening the “Honey Gate” on my hand extractor and seeing the flow of clear, golden, sweet honey leaves me speechless every year.

Thank you Bees!

If you would like to contact James, email [Jill@cultivatekc.org](mailto:Jill@cultivatekc.org).

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### **Time away from the farm provides fresh perspective**

By Alicia Ellingsworth, Gibbs Road Farm Manager

Farming is labor, craft and art. The farmer is encouraged not to labor too much, but to take time to practice the craft of listening, observing and feeling. Some years ago, I marveled at the wonder of a tiny tomato seed. How amazing was this seed that it would transform into a huge plant, produce so much leaf, flower, fruit and more seed for the future? I commented on my wonder to my mentor farmer, asking him how this could be. How, I asked, could all that be in this tiny seed?



Buckwheat seeds are beautifully three sided. Grown at Gibbs Road Farm as a cover crop it also feeds the bees and makes people smile. Photo by Alicia Ellingsworth.

In his expression I could see that I was really missing the point. Very bluntly he answered that it's not all in the seed; the magic happens when the seed is enlivened by water, warmed by sun, touched by air, fed by the soil and cared for by the farmer.

In that instant I was drawn into the possibility of possibility. I could see the seeds that came before and could imagine the seed that sits in a jar on a shelf waiting for its opportunity. As I began to awaken, I felt powerful and I felt humble simultaneously.

Last month, I attended a biodynamic conference entitled, “Sacred Agriculture.” Although it was primarily about growing food to sustain the new generation of life on the planet and all the wonder, possibility and challenge the future will bring, the conference was beautifully designed and energized the participants with time for thought and sharing of feelings. Most strikingly, I was surrounded by young people coming to farming with reverence I had not before witnessed.

The conference provided good soil where we could grow and develop relationships amongst one another. It was companion planting at its most elemental and most universal. I remembered that tomato seed, and that we stand on the shoulders of the grandfathers who came before us as we care for the mother. All the help we need surrounds us each day. We are never alone to accomplish the tasks at hand and yet we are always responsible to honor the aid and the work that has gone on before us as we tend to our needs and desires. Living and moving within the fabric of time and space calls us to respect each participating element. This interconnectedness not only with what we can see, but with the unseen, brings me to a new place on the farm and creates new opportunities for a layering of growth within myself.

Recently I was visited by two young Kansas City farmers and was reminded of the reverence and passion I observed at the conference. They have set themselves toward some very ambitious work. They came to ask questions and to share. While listening, I learned of their mission. Their desire to repay the help they've received honors the grandfather and was stated very simply, though insightfully, to give back 'multiplies the force' of each effort.

People are hungry in this town and at this time. We have work to do. We are hungry for more than food; we seek to participate and to connect. In laboring, we have help from those who have come before us, are helped by those we walk alongside and undoubtedly we will be helped by those to come. We have good soil here.

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### **“Dreamers and Doers” gather for Eighth Annual Farmers and Friends Meeting**

By Ami Freeberg, Cultivate Kansas City

Mark your calendars for Saturday, January 26 for the Eighth Annual Farmers and Friends Meeting. Cultivate Kansas City invites farmers, gardeners, food advocates and friends to attend and learn from peers, share ideas and resources, and eat homemade pie! The event will be held from 9AM – Noon at Second Presbyterian Church, 318 East 55th Street, Kansas City, MO 64113. To RSVP please email Mollie Gunnoe at [mollie@cultivatekc.org](mailto:mollie@cultivatekc.org).



Farmers and friends are encouraged to bake and bring along a pie to share at the Annual Farmers & Friends Meeting. Photo by Ami Freeberg.

The Annual Farmers and Friends Meeting was created to provide an opportunity for peer-to-peer learning in the urban agriculture community in Kansas City. Cultivate Kansas City hosted the first Annual Farmers Meeting in 2006 at which 15 urban farmers gathered to discuss growing food in Kansas City. Last year, 150 farmers and friends attended. We invited three growers to share a project with us they were each getting launched and developed.

This year we continue this look at some local “Dreamers and Doers” with a formal presentation followed by two rounds of discussions where you can network, learn and grow together with the urban agriculture community. As in the past, we will hold breakout discussions on topics chosen by meeting attendees and led by local experts. If you have ideas for discussion topics, please fill out this quick survey to share your thoughts: <http://bit.ly/SIWbt0>

The formal presentation will include three new panelists who will again share their work, goals, and challenges to inspire and motivate others to get growing in their neighborhood. At the same time, we can recognize them for their courage, creativity, and vision.

This year’s panelists will include Theo Bunch of the Gillis Center’s Growth Grove; Nicolas Garcia of Anti-Hero Farms, and Lay Htoo, a graduate of the Juniper Gardens Training Farm and New Roots for Refugees program. These dreamers are digging in, getting their hands dirty and cultivating big changes in our city. We look forward to these presentations by newcomers to the food and farming community and hope they help educate us about new models and approaches to achieving a healthy food system.

We are building this movement in Kansas City one person at a time. This is an opportunity for you to help bring someone on board. This year we encourage you to bring a friend, family member, colleague, or acquaintance who is “new” to the urban agriculture and food community. The Annual Farmers and Friends Meeting is the perfect entry point for people to connect, get inspired and get growing! Maybe you or your guest will be one of the 2014 Dreamers and Doers?

## Update on 2012 Dreamers and Doers



Craig Howard shared his dream at the 2012 Annual Farmers & Friends meeting; he was open for business on June 1. Photo by Ami Freeberg.

At last year's meeting, Craig Howard shared with us that he was remodeling the front office of the old City Ice building, and was just getting ready to launch **Howard's Organic Fare and Vegetable Patch**. Howard's celebrated its grand opening on June 1, 2012. It is a membership-based, retail grocery that supports relationships between local producers and consumers with a commitment to organic, fair trade and humanely raised goods. Today, Howard's boasts 73 memberships that allow folks 24/7 access to the store, allowing for good food, every day and anytime. Learn more: <http://www.facebook.com/howardskcmo>

At our last meeting, Rob Reiman and Ray Makalous also shared with us about the **Giving Grove** project. The Giving Grove aims to help at-risk communities grow, harvest and share healthy food by providing the resources needed to plant edible tree gardens in school grounds, church land, community grounds, and unused vacant land. Early this year, Giving Grove finalized a name for the organization and on October 13, The Giving Grove launched its inaugural edible tree garden project at Hale Cook Elementary, in partnership with Kansas City Community Gardens, Friends of Hale Cook Elementary, and the Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce Centurions program. This month, the Giving Grove and Kansas City Community Gardens are also officially announcing a formal affiliation. Beginning in January, the Giving Grove staff will be moving into the Kansas City Community Gardens facilities at 6917 Kensington, Kansas City, MO. Their next project involves planning an orchard for St. Paul's United Methodist Church in Lenexa, Kansas and will direct the harvest to local food pantries. Learn more: [www.givinggrove.org](http://www.givinggrove.org).

Last year we also heard from **Karlean Kramer**, a resident of Kansas City, Kansas, who explained that she was tired of seeing trash, tires and junk pile up on the empty lots around her house. In 2011, she bought one of those lots and made arrangements to grow on a second lot. She borrowed some equipment, and started hauling away the debris. Her neighbors thought she was crazy, but soon started coming around to see that she was growing good food. Despite the drought this summer, and with the help of a neighbor who helped her access water, Karlean increased vegetable production and worked on building her soil. She produced enough to feed her extended family all summer, and canned enough to feed them through this winter. She had food leftover to sell and share to some of those neighbors who thought she was crazy to tackle this project. This past fall, Karlean began working on a plan for a third lot and planting an orchard.

Thank you to each and every one of you for dreaming of a healthy food system for Kansas City. We hope to see you at the Annual Farmers and Friends Meeting and can't wait to hear what you are doing with your dreams.

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### Notes from the Field

By Sarah Dehart, Gibbs Road Farm Crew

With no experience save for childhood memories working next to my mother in our garden, I first walked onto the Gibbs Road Farm as a volunteer in late November of 2010. I had no idea what to expect, nor did I know at that moment that I would spend the subsequent two years learning more than I ever thought possible. On that cold day I met the Farm Manager, Alicia Ellingsworth, and we walked to a spinach bed in the west field to begin harvesting for the weekly winter veggie bags.

“We are known for our superior quality, so it is important that you not harvest anything with holes, that you handle the leaves as little as possible, that you harvest them into a tote of water in order that they not wilt,” she explained as we knelt down and began to work.

I remember thinking at the time that her instructions were clear and the task seemed doable. Harvesting spinach should be simple enough.



2012 Gibbs Road Farm Crew member Sarah Dehart proudly poses her winter carrot harvest. Photo by Anu Freeberg.

“It is also important to work as quickly as possible while maintaining a high standard of quality,” Alicia continued to explain. “We need to harvest three totes of spinach today.”

Alicia spent about 45 minutes with me harvesting. As we worked across from each other, her fingers moved effortlessly among the greens as she casually asked me questions about my experience with local food systems, growing food and farming. I felt embarrassed to admit I had none, but I was so focused on finding and harvesting leaves without holes, on making sure I wasn't bruising the precious harvest, on keeping my knees out of the bed, on ignoring the screaming pain in my back and shoulders and simply keeping my cool that I have no idea what I

said or to what questions I responded.

An hour and a half later my hands were frozen, and I still had only a half of a tote of spinach. I felt as though I was completely failing at what originally seemed such a simple task.

There was so much to remember just to harvest spinach! I was overwhelmed just thinking about all of the other vegetables. Was there always this much to think about? Did I really have what it takes to learn this? I had no idea what I was in for and certainly no clue how steep the learning curve really is.

I survived my first taste of growing food and officially joined the Gibbs Road Farm crew as part of my Growing Grower apprenticeship. I knew I would learn the techniques necessary to farm: seeding, potting on, preparing beds, weeding, cultivating, harvesting, washing, and readying towers of totes of vegetables for our CSA and market customers. What I didn't realize is how much more I would learn over the course of my training. I didn't know the resolve necessary to continue working in the bitter cold or mind-melting heat. I had no way to understand just how challenging it can be to continue focusing on the task at hand when your mind simply wants to wander, or the damage you can do if you fail to stay focused. I simply could not appreciate the importance of interpersonal communication skills in order to complete a job correctly and efficiently with inexperienced people working on it (including myself) or under extreme physical conditions. I underestimated the difficulty in prioritizing a dizzying number of tasks and projects only to have to drop everything and seed as the thunder rolls in.

I just couldn't know how deep you must dig to find the strength to smile and keep laughing when *everything* seems to go wrong.

As the 2012 season draws to a close and I look back on the experience, it is the sum of the more subtle observations of farming with which I have fallen in love. It is noticing seedlings break through soil with their seed shells still clinging to their primary leaves. It is the beauty in how a bed of beets (or any crop) truly looks happier after weeding – the next day standing taller, prouder and stronger. It is how a specific tool feels in my hand as I plunge it into the soft soil. It is the look of determination and then of pride on my mentor's face as we break records and shatter even our own goals for the year during one of the most difficult seasons on record.

As I knelt in a spinach bed in the west field just last week, feverishly harvesting to meet a fast approaching deadline, it was the subtle beauty of seasons and cycles that brought my last two years full circle with a grace and finesse for which I am blessed and forever grateful.

Learn more about the Gibbs Road Farm Apprentice program from [alicia@cultivatekc.org](mailto:alicia@cultivatekc.org)

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### **Student group at University of Kansas Medical Center promotes real food**

By Brandon Hidaka, Graduate Student, University of Kansas Medical Center

*Brandon Hidaka grew up in Kansas City. A Shawnee Mission East graduate, he is now a second-year graduate student working towards a PhD in Medical Nutrition Science in the School of Health Professions at the University of Kansas Medical Center. He has been recognized for student leadership by KU in both the Lawrence and Kansas City. He gardens, cooks, and is obnoxiously passionate about healthy living. He helps lead the Lunar Society, an organization infusing the humanities into medical education, and Food is Medicine.*

Sedentary behavior and poor diet recently surpassed tobacco as the leading cause of preventable disease as a result of smoking less and eating more. Paracelsus coined the phrase, "The dose makes the poison." Our dietary choices appear to be poisoning us. Because of obesity, American children born today have a shorter predicted life expectancy than their parents<sup>1</sup>. We clearly have a dysfunctional relationship with our food.

What can we do?

Many of the lessons learned from the smoking cessation movement can be applied to the local food movement<sup>2</sup>. Specifically, physicians played a critical role in reducing tobacco use. In two generations, physicians stopped blowing smoke in patients' faces and took up the lead on banning smoking at medical centers. Today we frown upon doctors who smell of cigarettes.



Brandon Hidaka and Kim Vandegest-Wallace, PhD, volunteer to unload CSA bags as part a KU "Food is Medicine" project. Photo by Paige Geiger.

Imagine if it were equally unacceptable for a doctor to sip an energy drink or tote around a bag of fast food. What if most physicians inspired healthy living by example? As opinion leaders and stewards of health, doctors and other health professionals have enormous influence in their communities. Changing the eating habits of health professionals will be key in addressing our current healthcare crisis.

Though health professionals are intimately familiar with problems related to obesity, they are just as likely to be overweight or obese. This influences patient care. Physicians with healthier habits are more likely to counsel patients on weight<sup>3</sup>. Doctors tend to preach what they practice. It is completely rational to be

healthy. Unfortunately, the frenetic pace of healthcare often leads to poor health behaviors- inadequate sleep, physical inactivity, and eating processed food.

Our student-led organization *Food is Medicine* at the University of Kansas Medical Center strives to help students, faculty and staff eat better by eliminating barriers. We promote making the easy choice the healthy choice by improving access and convenience to local, sustainable food.

Students, faculty, and staff are involved with *Food is Medicine*, a campus organization officially established in 2010 by Leigh Wagner, a dietitian in Integrative Medicine at the Medical Center. We have members from the three entities that share our campus including University of Kansas Medical Center, University of Kansas Physician's Group, and the University of Kansas Hospital. We meet twice a semester for potluck lunches on campus. While we have a listserv membership of over 200, there are about a dozen students, mostly from the School of Health Professions and School of Medicine passionately involved.

This past year, *Food is Medicine* brought Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) to 168 students, faculty, and staff from across campus. From the end of May through September, we partnered with Good Nutured Family Farms to bring a weekly \$25 bag of groceries of fresh fruit and vegetables, hand-made jarred goods, dairy, eggs, bread, and meat.

Marlies Ozias, a fellow graduate student, volunteered to review the survey results from other workplace CSAs for Good Nutured Family Farms. I really liked the idea of hosting a campus-wide CSA so we made it happen together. We had a small CSA presentation from Good Nutured Family Farms to our core group to learn about CSA. We procured student funding for an industrial refrigerator and set up a bank account.

*Food is Medicine* agreed to help coordinate and manage everything at campus and Good Nutured Family Farms provided the food. Lauren Parker, secretary for the Division of Student Services, was an invaluable asset by receiving payments during working hours and updating our database of subscribers. Marlies and I brought the CSA to KUMC as volunteers.

On campus, we placed the weekly orders, collected payments, and managed a database of customers. We also coordinated volunteers to help with unloading the produce and managing the CSA bag pickup. Sometimes we resolved record discrepancies and dissatisfaction. We were also responsible for taking the unclaimed food down to the Rosedale Development Association for donation on Wednesdays. *Food is Medicine* spread the word on campus by visiting tables in the cafeteria, spamming email list-serves, and handing out hundreds of tri-fold information pamphlets. We filled the largest auditorium on campus when we held a "Get to Know the CSA" lunch event to kick off our project and to take subscription sign ups. To keep in touch with CSA members, we wrote weekly emails and shared the newsletter with subscribers. We also designed, administered, and analyzed a survey of the CSA participants to gauge its success.

One CSA member wrote that "before the CSA, I rarely cooked and never went grocery shopping with the intent to cook meals at home. I ate out at fast food restaurants at least 1-2 times a week. Since I joined the CSA, I have been cooking every week and actually now enjoy finding recipes and making food from scratch. I feel like I'm eating healthier and feel better about myself. I'm actually a little worried about keeping up those eating habits once the CSA ends."

The vast majority of participants joined to support local food. They ended up trying new foods, gaining culinary confidence, eating seasonally, feeling better, and some even claimed shedding a few pounds. There was intense recipe sharing. Many noted how the experience fostered a new sense of community with co-workers and fellow students. Unclaimed food was donated to food-insecure families with the help of the Rosedale Development Association. And, it was all done with a paid staff of zero. Over a third of subscribers volunteered on a Tuesday afternoon for drop-off or pick-up. The project was a resounding celebration of local food. We hope it will continue to grow and blossom this coming year.

*Food is Medicine* was happy to host a presentation from Cultivate Kansas City at a campus lunch event in August. Since then, the organizations have grown closer. *Food is Medicine* folk volunteered at the fundraiser dinner Dig In, KC! A group of students lent their hands at the Salt of the Earth community garden in Kansas City, Kansas as part of the Food Day Crop Mob. And we have been working with Cultivate Kansas City in our plan to install a community garden on campus for next year. The relationship between *Food is Medicine* and Cultivate Kansas City is just budding.

We must transform our diet as a culture. The healthcare sector is ripe to lead this sea change. *Food is Medicine* envisions a future in which healthcare leaders appreciate food can be medicine or poison. We literally are what we eat. Rather than continuing to beat people with an ineffective, stagnant message- eat less, exercise more, we promote healthy decisions by growing a conducive environment. We will know we have accomplished our goal when on campus it is easier and cheaper to grab a local, fresh apple than a sliced potato that has travelled hundreds of miles and been sprinkled with “BBQ Seasoning.” Our journey is long, but we will get there. We have to.

1. *SJ Olshansky, DJ Passaro, RC Hershow, J Layden, BA Carnes, J Brody, L Hayflick, RN Butler, DB Allison, DS Ludwig, “A potential decline in life expectancy in the United States in the 21st century” (2005) New England Journal of Medicine, 352(11):1138-45.*
2. *LI Lesser, DA Cohen, RH Brook, “Changing Eating Habits for the Medical Profession” (2012) Journal of the American Medical Association, 308(10):983-4.*
3. *KB Wells, CE Lewis, B Leake, JE Ware, “Do Physicians Preach What They Practice?: A Study of Physicians’ Health Habits and Counseling Practices” (1984) Journal of the American Medical Association, 252(20):2846-8.*

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## You meet the heroes among us every day

By Jill Erickson, Cultivate Kansas City Development & Communications Director



At a National Food Day Breakfast, author and volunteer Beth Bader shares with guests how she has been helping change our food system. Photo by Ami Freeberg.

Did you know when you stopped by the Gibbs Road Farm to pick up your Winter Veggie Bag you rubbed elbows with a hero? It was the person you stopped to hold the door open for. Did you see her? She was smiling. In one hand she held a bag spilling over with carrots and the other was holding the hand of her young son, while telling him about where carrots come from.

Perhaps you bumped into a hero when you attended the Dig In, KC! event in the City Market. It was the farmer who graciously shared a recipe with a shy young couple who were new to town. That same farmer had risen with the sun that same morning to take his produce to market to sell and earn a living for his family.

Or maybe you met a hero at the Volunteer Appreciation Shin Dig this fall. It was that elderly woman sitting quietly sipping a glass of wine and visiting with friends. She has supported Cultivate Kansas City for a long time by buying local vegetables, giving of her time, making donations.

Truth is we are surrounded by good and amazing people who are passionate about healthy food and making sure everyone in our city has access to that good food. Some support farmers by choosing to buy local; some are farmers; some give their time to volunteer and others give gifts. Cultivate Kansas City thrives because of all of these heroes. When heroes come together, change happens!

We've seen change; there were 15 farmers markets in Kansas City in 2005; today we estimate there are more than 50. Last year four farmers graduated from our Juniper Gardens Training Farm and started their own small farm businesses. There were more than 150 people participating in peer-to-peer learning at our Annual Farmers and Friends Meeting in 2012. The Healthy Food Team held 12 cooking demonstrations at the Juniper Gardens Farms market for low income shoppers. Our Get Growing Team provided hundreds of hours of free, one-on-one technical assistance to new urban farmers. Through community events, conferences, workshops and tours we reached thousands of people to teach them about local food. There were nearly 1,000 volunteers who donated hundreds hours of service.

Together we are GROWING the change we want for our food system.

But there is still so much to do! There are still too many people in our city that do not have access to good food. Too many people are afflicted by poor health due to their diets. We want to change that.

Next year we want to build a community greenhouse for an underserved neighborhood in Juniper Gardens. We want to start two more community gardens for resettled refugees. We want to help start two new urban farms. We want to provide opportunities for 1,000 people to volunteer and work on our farms. We want to train three apprentices. We want to help more families choose to eat local and choose healthy food for their children.

Will you be a hero? Will you send a gift and help us grow the change?

Cultivate Kansas City is a nonprofit organization and all donations are tax deductible as allowed by IRS regulations. You can mail a donation to Cultivate Kansas City, 4223 Gibbs Road, Kansas City, KS 66106. You can also make a safe and secure donation online at [www.cultivatekc.org](http://www.cultivatekc.org)

Reach [Jill@cultivatekc.org](mailto:Jill@cultivatekc.org)

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## Calendar of Events

*Ten Thousand Villages Community Shopping Event.* Sunday, December 16, 1:00PM to 5:00PM. Join us for a Community Shopping Event at Ten Thousand Villages, with 15% of sales benefiting Cultivate Kansas City. Shop for unique handmade gifts, jewelry, home decor, art and sculpture, textiles, and more representing the diverse cultures of artisans in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Middle East. One of the world's largest fair trade organizations and a founding member of the World Fair Trade Organization (WFTO), the company strives to improve the livelihood of tens of thousands of disadvantaged artisans in 38 countries. You'll feel good supporting artisans from around the world and urban farmers in your community. Together we're growing the change! Help spread the word: <http://www.facebook.com/#!/events/164542503688356/?fref=ts>

*Annual Urban Farmers & Friends Meeting.* Saturday, January 26. 9:00AM to 12:00PM. We're heading into another year of growing and eating good, local, urban grown food and the season can't start without our Annual Urban Farmers & Friends Meeting! Each year we strive to connect our daily work as farmers, gardeners, food advocates and friends to the vision of the community we want to build with a farm in

every neighborhood and access to fresh, healthy, affordable food for all people. This year's meeting will feature the second annual "Dreamers and Doers" panel, as well as informal discussion groups to facilitate peer-to-peer learning on topics of interest. (See story for more details). To RSVP, email [mollie@cultivatekc.org](mailto:mollie@cultivatekc.org).

*Great Plains Growers Conference.* January 10 -12, 2013. St. Joseph, MO. The Great Plains Growers Conference is hosted each January by University Extension programs from the region. The three-day conference hosts a wide variety of workshops, keynote addresses and panels for all types of farmers. Learn more: <http://www.greatplainsgrowers.org>

*New Partners Conference.* February 7-9, 2013. 301 West 13th Street, Kansas City, MO. This year, the New Partners Conference makes its way to America's heartland—Kansas City, Missouri. The Midwest is searching for a path to sustainability—what it means in the context of the region, and what it will take to achieve that vision. Like other parts of the country, Midwestern states are wrestling with the challenges of defining and achieving a future that transforms low-density, car-oriented communities into healthier, more walkable and economically vibrant places to live, work and raise a family. The 12th annual New Partners conference will explore practical strategies for identifying and overcoming barriers to more sustainable development in the Midwest and the rest of the nation. Learn more: <http://www.newpartners.org/>

*TEDxManhattan "Changing the Way We Eat" Viewing Party.* Saturday, February 16, 2013. 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM (3 sessions). TEDxManhattan "Changing the Way We Eat" will take place February 16, 2013, in New York City. Speakers with various backgrounds in food and farming will share their insights and expertise. Cultivate Kansas City is hosting a viewing party of the event, providing an opportunity to tune in and connect with the sustainable food movement nationwide, and discuss the ideas locally. Learn more: <http://www.tedxmanhattan.org>

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