



2017

ANNUAL REPORT

MISSION AND IMPACT

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Food Policy Council exists to advocate for policies that build a sustainable, equitable, and healthy local food system. The goals of our council are to enhance the health of our citizens, strengthen local economies and market opportunities, and reduce hunger and food insecurity.

To achieve these goals, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Food Policy Council connects local and state organizations involved in food systems work and educates community members about the importance of healthy, fair, and sustainable local food.

Our mission is to strengthen our community by:



Serving as a forum for discussing food issues



Building relationships in the food system



Educating, advocating for, and communicating policy issues



Acting as a primary information source for food related issues

Dear CMFPC Supporters and Friends,

As I reflect on 2017, a word that repeatedly comes to mind is collaboration. Since our founding in 2010, one of the strengths of our small organization has been the ability to bring people together. 2017—more than any year in our history—saw people in Charlotte and Mecklenburg County coming together again and again to talk about food and food policy and how our community can work together to bring greater food security to our neighbors, help our local farmers and food entrepreneurs, and influence the national dialogue on topics such as healthy food access and supplemental nutrition assistance programs.

As I survey the local food scene in the Queen City, I know that we have reached a tipping point. Never before has the topic of food, food security, and healthy food access been such a pressing topic for so many people in our area. Never before have I seen so many well attended events bringing together all parts of our city—residents, city and county employees, elected officials—to talk about food.

There are so many reasons for us to be thankful as we launch into 2018. We are thankful for our passionate FoodCorps service members and the incredible support they receive from the community and the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. We are thankful for every person who attended the standing-room-only food advocacy training held at the West Boulevard Library and then clamored for more! We are thankful to be a part of the Adams' Hunger Initiative and to work with elected representatives who not only want to advocate for policies to alleviate hunger and food insecurity in Charlotte but throughout our country.

Finally, we are thankful to watch our membership grow—it means so much to all of us, myself and our board of directors—that you believe in the work that we are doing and that you want to be a part of it. It has been such a pleasure to be the director of this amazing organization, and I cannot wait to see what 2018 brings!



Erin Brighton
Director,
Charlotte-Mecklenburg
Food Policy Council

“2017—more than any year in our history—saw people in Charlotte and Mecklenburg County coming together again and again to talk about food and food policy.”

FROM THE BOARD CHAIR



Erin Illman
Board Chair

In the last year CMFPC has continued to work relentlessly to address issues in our local food system. Thanks to the leadership of former board chair Katherine Metzo, director Erin Brighton, and our board of directors, our organization continues to bring together policy makers, community leaders, and non-profits to address issues and cultivate action plans to realize our vision of a healthy community and a strong local food system.

I am humbled by the amazing group of enthusiastic, enterprising community members involved with CMFPC who care deeply about policies and actions that will help end inequality and build up our neighborhoods, schools and individuals. I would like to personally thank the organizations, policy makers, and individuals who have supported our initiatives and provided financial support for our organization.

Our work has led us to expand our board of directors and we are focused on growing our organization as we continue our focus on local food systems.

There is enormous synergy in Charlotte, and beyond, to build a more accessible, sustainable, and affordable food system. We invite you to join us!

ACCOMPLISHMENTS



Our strategy was to bring together people already involved in the local food space with those who want to get more involved and have them brainstorm ways to approach change.

ADVOCACY TRAINING

CMFPC's first and highly-successful Food Advocacy Training took place on September 23, 2017. Board members and 45 attendees met at the West Boulevard Library to discuss topics such as: hunger relief, childhood nutrition and food insecurity; the development of local food businesses to combat food insecurity; SNAP/WIC accessibility at markets and stores; farmer succession and economic development; and improving food choices in Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools.

Our main objective for the training was to introduce attendees to policy issues in Charlotte and provide them with a framework for moving forward when trying to work toward policy change. Our strategy was to bring together people already involved in the local food space with those who want to get more involved and have them brainstorm ways to approach change.

“Community Food Strategies is always excited about any opportunity to partner with the CMFPC. We greatly appreciate the council's willingness to share their experiences and lessons with other groups across the state. We feel inspired and humbled by the intense amount of passion and experience that they bring to their work.”

Jared Cates

2017 Board Chair Kathy Metzo discussed the state-of-the-plate report to set the tone for the day. Co-chair Nicole Peterson clarified the differences

between local, state and federal policies. Jared Cates from Carolina Farm Stewardship Association informed the group about policies at the state level that are undergoing change. John Short from Charlotte Housing and Neighborhood Services provided information about the city's farmers market initiative and the neighborhood grant matching program.

Opportunities to get more involved with CMFPC were offered as well as resources to support our guests as they move forward in their advocacy journey. Working in small groups proved to be beneficial to our attendees, and we got great feedback that will help us plan future training events.

ENGAGE WITH POLICY MAKERS

Hunger Initiative SNAP Farm Bill Letter – drafted by Congresswoman Alma Adams and cosigned by our organization on February 16, 2018 – outlines the priorities of the Adams Hunger Initiative. Founded in 2015, the Initiative brings together stakeholders working in hunger and food insecurity, specifically those working in the 12th District and Mecklenburg County.

The Farm Bill is under congressional review, and programs like SNAP (formerly food stamps) are being threatened by severe cuts. These cuts will directly impact our community, especially those who are already food insecure.

We are proud to be a part of the team advocating for healthy food access for all. **The letter in its entirety can be viewed on our website.**

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The Charlotte Mecklenburg Food Policy Council is a regional leader in food policy advocacy. I'm proud to work with them through the Adams Hunger Initiative to train Charlotteans in food system advocacy, develop next steps for advancing a food cooperative in Charlotte, and to protect SNAP in the upcoming Farm Bill. Together, we are fighting to end hunger to ensure no one in our community has to wonder where their next meal will come from.

Dr. Alma S. Adams
U. S. Congresswoman

2017 MEMBER EVENTS

FARM TOUR / APRIL STREET FARE FARMS

On a rainy day and over a winding road, members discovered Street Fare Farm. Farmer Ben Street's tour started with a majestic mountain of beautiful brown chickens and a sneak peek at his microgreen operation. The tour continued at Lomax Incubator Farm where Ben utilizes their land and greenhouses to nurture his farming venture. The group cracked open some local brews while Ben recounted his journey into farming and where he was going. In the end, there's nothing better than seeing the land, farmer, and food with your own eyes.

CHOCOLATE TASTING / MAY THE UNDERGROUND TRUFFLE

On May 18, 2017 CMFPC members and guests enjoyed an informative seminar and sustainable cocoa tasting event led by Esa Weinreb, founder and owner of the Underground Truffle. The seminar detailed the cacao farming process and how the bean is used to make delectable treats rich in both flavor and nutrients. The group then sampled a wide variety of luscious chocolates produced by the Underground Truffle from cacao grown using organic, sustainable farming practices.

LOCAL WINES / DECEMBER VIN MASTER

In December, a local wine tasting event was held at Vin Master in South End. Lynn Caldwell walked us through a variety of different wines from local vineyards such as Shelton, RagApple Lassie, Dover, and Childress—just to name a few. It was a great way to meet new members and welcome them to our organization while learning about and supporting local North Carolina businesses.



ANOTHER BUSY YEAR WITH FOODCORPS

FoodCorps worked with students in the Occupational Course of Study program at **Garinger High School**. About 30 students participated in weekly cooking lessons in the fall semester that utilized produce from the Friendship Gardens Urban Farm. Students practiced their culinary skills by making healthy adaptations of their favorite recipes, including veggie ramen noodle stir fry and baked butternut squash fries.

At Barringer Academic Center, hands-on cooking and gardening lessons are as popular as ever. Fifth and second grade classes



Gigi and Marcus

teamed up to plant a fall garden with kale, collards, turnips, carrots, salad greens and garlic. Kindergarten classes learned how to harvest their own spinach and make a tasty garden salad, as well as adding freshly picked turnips to their Stone Soup for Thanksgiving. Third-grade classes had a weekly lesson in which we made “Three Sisters” salsa with squash from our summer garden, baked our own kale chips with freshly picked kale, and dissected our garden soil to learn the importance of decomposers.

At Shamrock Gardens Elementary School, students were excited about cooking in their classrooms and preparing for the warmer weather to come. Grades third through fifth learned about food justice by practicing “how to get to the grocery store,” and preparing seedlings to sell at our Shamrock Shuffle fundraiser to local community members. The preschoolers enjoyed story time with a healthy snack, while first and second graders started personal seedlings.

GRANTS

Amazon Smile
Bank of America
Compass Group
Crisis Assistance Ministries
Foodbuy
Newman's Own
Publix
Shamrock Gardens
Share Charlotte
Truliant
Whole Foods Market
Whole Kids

Plus generous membership support and personal donations

Over
\$39K
raised
in 2017

PARTNERS & SPONSORS

7th Street Public Market	Leadership Charlotte
Atherton Market	Mecklenburg County Health Dept.
Blue Cross Blue Shield of NC	North Carolina State University Cooperative Extension
Carolina Farm Stewardship Association	Piedmont Culinary Guild
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools	Queen City Forward
Community Food Strategies	Shamrock Garden PTO
Earth Fare	Stratford Richardson YMCA
Foodbuy	Toxic Free NC
Friendship Trays and Gardens	UNC Charlotte
Harris Teeter	Walmart
Johnson C. Smith University	Whole Kids Foundation

BOARD MEMBERS

Erin Jane Illman, chair	Courtney Achee
Nicole Peterson, vice chair	Holt Akers-Campbell
Marisa Faigen, treasurer	Maggie Bean
Julie Covington, secretary	Erin Hostetler
	Sean Langley
	Alisha Pruett
	Elliott Royal

JOIN US! You can also show your support for the Food Policy Council by becoming a member. Your membership funds the essential work of building relationships in the food system, educating and advocating for policy issues and sharing information about food-related issues. Membership starts at just \$25. Visit charlottefoodpolicy.org/members to join today! Have questions? Email us at cltfoodpolicy@yahoo.com.