



# 2016 ANNUAL REPORT

## MISSION AND IMPACT



**Erin Brighton**  
Director,  
Charlotte-Mecklenburg  
Food Policy Council

Dear CMFPC Friends,

2016 was a stellar year for the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Food Policy Council. As I look back on all that we have done together to build a sustainable, equitable, and healthy local food system, I could not be more proud.

All that we have accomplished was made possible because of the tireless work of our very active board of directors, the invaluable advice and connections of the Experts' Panel, and the countless community members who supported us by attending our events, becoming CMFPC members, or simply sharing our message and stories online.

2016 began with the release of the 2015 State of the Plate Community Food Assessment. As our board members and researcher met with community leaders, elected officials, and interested citizens, we were moved by the overwhelmingly positive response to our work. **We know that no one else in the Charlotte area is looking at food insecurity across the county like we are and we are happy to have widespread support to use this data to make lasting changes.**

2016 also saw us expand our FoodCorps program from one service member to two service members serving full time in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. With the addition of a second service member, we expanded our reach to even more students and their families through nutrition and cooking classes, innovative STEM curriculum, and school gardens. Our FoodCorps service members were also part of a local team working to expand the farm to school programming in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools with the first Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) certified garden on a CMS campus. This GAP certification will open more doors for fresh, locally grown foods to be served to our students in their school cafeterias.

**As we set our goals for 2017, we will continue to focus on enhancing the health of our residents, strengthening local economies and market opportunities, and reducing hunger and food insecurity.** We will continue to look to build more partnerships within the food and hunger community here in Charlotte, and we plan to grow our member base of concerned, involved citizens passionate about local food and the health of our community.

Please take a look at what we have accomplished in 2016 and ask yourself how you can fit into the work of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Food Policy Council in 2017! I look forward to working with all of you!

Sincerely,

[charlottefoodpolicy.org](http://charlottefoodpolicy.org)  
[cltfoodpolicy@yahoo.com](mailto:cltfoodpolicy@yahoo.com)

*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**

## FROM THE BOARD CHAIR



Katherine Metzo, Ph.D.  
Board Chair

Over the past three years, CMFPC has emerged as a leader in the local food system. It's often difficult to see our progress while we're in the weeds of policy work, but thanks to the leadership of former board chair Young-Sun Roth, director Erin Brighton, and our board of directors, the effort we have put into bringing together policy makers, community leaders, and non-profits is starting to pay off in big ways and small.

At the beginning of 2016 we shared the results of our State of the Plate research, which included a wide range of opportunities for change—a phrase we embraced over “recommendations” because we wanted to invite the community to see possibilities instead of flaws. Partners throughout the community responded to this call to action.

Now, at the beginning of 2017, **we find ourselves with three solid policy priorities** where we started making progress in 2016.

Our 2017 policy priorities reflect intersecting parts of the food system: with our focus on childhood nutrition, **we care for our children** who will carry our work forward into the future; with our focus on SNAP/WIC accessibility, **we care for our neighbors** by providing them the tools they need to care for their families; with our focus on economic development and equity, **we care for our community** by being honest about the inequalities that past policies have created and we begin to find ways for our neighborhoods to thrive. Each of these priorities builds on and enhances the others and I am so thrilled to work with our talented 2017 board.

**This is exciting, challenging, and critical work.** And if it moves you as much as it moves me, please reach out—we have room on the board and the panel of experts for leaders who want to build a thriving and resilient community around our food system.

## WHAT WE DO



### STATE OF THE PLATE

State of the Plate is a multi-partner community food assessment that identifies food priority areas in our county to help coordinate efforts to reduce hunger and food insecurity.

### FOODCORPS

FoodCorps is a national service program teaching kids in underserved communities about healthy eating, school gardens, and cooking. CMFPC has two FoodCorps service members working in Shamrock Gardens Elementary School, Barringer Academic Center and Garinger High School.

### EXPERTS' PANEL

Quarterly, we convene a select group of experts in the Mecklenburg County food space to share ideas and projects and better coordinate efforts to enhance the health of our citizens and strengthen local economies.

### FRESH LOOK AT SCHOOL FOOD

Fresh Look is a collaboration between CMFPC, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Public Schools, and Mecklenburg County Public Health to change the culture of school food in our community.



# ACCOMPLISHMENTS



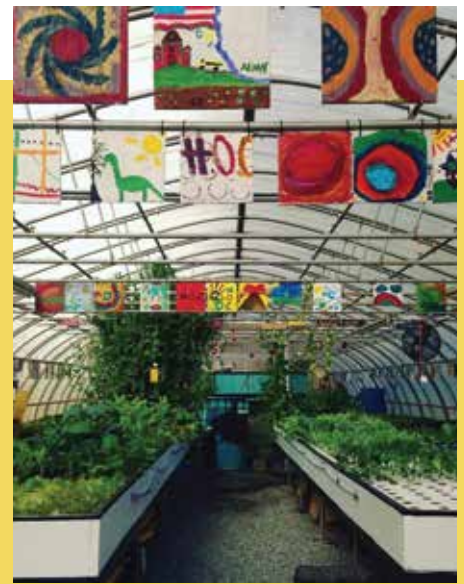
## CANDIDATES FORUM

In advance of the 2016 election, we hosted the second annual Candidates Forum, inviting candidates from all levels of local, state and national government to meet with voters. The non-partisan event was held at the Midwood International and Cultural Center.

Seven candidates participated: Alma S. Adams, Pat Cotham, Joel Ford, Marc Friedland, Jeff Jackson, Ella Butler Scarborough, and Lloyd Scher. Candidates answered questions about increasing the number of school gardens, expanding healthy lunch options in schools, reducing food insecurity in Mecklenburg County, and preserving local farmland.

*“[The Candidates Forum] was a great event. It not only gave folks a chance to ask direct questions about food policy to candidates, but it also gave candidates a chance to learn about issues surrounding food policy. I look forward to coming back.”*

Jeff Jackson  
NC State Senator



## GAP CERTIFICATION

The greenhouse at Garinger High School was successfully GAP-certified last summer.

GAP is the acronym for Good Agricultural Practices, a USDA regulation signifying the food was grown, harvested, and distributed with a high level of hygiene. Earning GAP certification means the food grown in the school greenhouse can be used in the school cafeteria.



## FARMHANDS

CMFPC co-sponsored the third annual Farm Hands Charlotte event at Free Range Brewing in November.

Farmers submitted applications for funding in advance of the event and three finalists—Ardea Homestead Sanctuary in King’s Mountain; The Farm at Dover Vineyards in Concord; and Windcrest Farm Organics in Monroe—were chosen to pitch their big ideas to the crowd.

Local chefs prepared dinner with ingredients donated by local farms, the finalists made their presentations and attendees voted.

Ardea Homestead Sanctuary won the grand prize of \$3,500 to pursue their plans for expanding their line of value added products made from items grown, foraged, harvested, processed, and prepared on the farm. The Farm at Dover Vineyards and Windcrest Organic Farm were awarded \$1,000 each.





## ROSA PARKS FARMERS MARKET

The Rosa Parks Farmers Market opened in 2016. From June through September, the Tuesday morning market sells locally grown and raised fruits, vegetables, meats, honey, jams, and jellies. One of our FoodCorps service members sells vegetables from the Friendship Gardens Garinger Urban Farm.



## GARINGER GREENS

Through a partnership with Friendship Gardens, several varieties of lettuce were grown in the greenhouse at Garinger High School. The lettuce, dubbed "Garinger Greens," were harvested in December and made their debut in the cafeteria at Barringer Academic Center.

In preparation for the lettuce premiere, students made creative advertisements and posted them around the school, learned about hydroponic growing systems and used their math skills to figure out the amount of lettuce growing in the greenhouse and how much salad dressing to make.

During lunch, students tasted a salad made with Garinger Greens and cucumbers from the Garinger greenhouse. The salad was topped with Lemon-Thyme Vinaigrette, made with thyme from the garden and ingredients generously donated by Barringer parents. The Garinger Greens were a big hit!



Over  
**\$30K**  
raised in 2016

“As North Carolina’s largest city continues to expand, CMFPC’s work is appreciated by more and more people who want to know how their food is grown and who is growing it. The Council connects people from all over the county, encouraging them to work together to create a more robust and sustainable community food system in Mecklenburg County.”

Jared Cates, Carolina Farm Stewardship Association

## PARTNERS & SPONSORS

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

## BOARD MEMBERS

Katherine Metzo, chair	Maggie Bean
Nicole Peterson, vice chair	Julie Covington
Marisa Faigen, treasurer	Karina Gonzalez
Erin Jane Illman, secretary	Jodi Helmer
	Reggie Singleton

**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](http://charlottefoodpolicy.org/members) to join today! Have questions? Email us at [cltfoodpolicy@yahoo.com](mailto:cltfoodpolicy@yahoo.com).