

# Jamestown Community Farm Inc.

## Annual Report 2012



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### Board of Directors

Deb Foppert, Chairwomen

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Bob Sutton, Farm Manager

January 1, 2013

## The Jamestown Community Farm

The Jamestown Community Farm Incorporated is a non-profit 501c (3) organization. Our organization was created 13 years ago in response to an idea that there is both individual and community value in helping those in need and that one of the most fundamental needs is good food. Growing fresh produce and distributing it to those less fortunate meets a fundamental human need and is also a valued project defining our Island community.



From the outset our intent was: to grow and produce crops without the use of commercial fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides and to pursue a method of sustainable farming that systematically improves the value of the agricultural soil even as it produces crops. The Farm is committed to methods of farming that recognize and minimize the impact on the natural environment and the native populations of the Island's flora, fauna and natural resources, including water.

### The Land

The Jamestown Community Farm exists on 17 acres of privately owned cleared farmland in the center of Conanicut Island, Town of Jamestown. It is located in the northern section of the Center Island Greenway, a 1000 acre recreational, historical, conservation and agricultural area, that runs down the middle of Conanicut Island from north of Carr Lane south to the Village.

The soils on the Farm (Newport A and Newport B) are excellent for agriculture. In 2012 the Farm received a grant from the US Department of Agriculture to conduct a Nutrient Management Plan for the Farm. This study was completed in December of this year. It will be used as a guide to soil management and conserve our excellent farm soils



## The Volunteers



The Community Farm relies entirely on volunteer labor. The governing board and the Farm manager are volunteers. There is a core group of approximately 10 to 15 individuals and families that have, over the years, provided a dependable stability to the work force. In addition in 2012 we had some very excellent new volunteers to the Farm, both adult and young people. We had approximately 150 separate individuals of all ages show up to work. The Farm is an eligible recipient of student community

service hours. Many private school students are required to perform community service and over the years we have participated in that program. (50 to 75 students annually) Several adults have also participated under the community service requirement.

## The Crops

On approximately 4 acres, which is entirely surrounded by 8' deer fence, we grow the standard variety of garden vegetables with the exception of corn which we do not produce. In 2012 which had excellent growing weather, we grew over 21,000 pounds of vegetables. In 2012 we also added to our honey production. We now have 12 functioning bee hives which produced in excess of 54 gallons of honey.

We also manage in excess of 100 chickens that in 2012 produced over 1400 dozen eggs and provided a nitrogen rich fertilizer to add to the garden soil. The Farm also cares for 3 sheep that support the Farm aesthetic and promote a certain public interest. The remaining 13 acres of hay field produce about 40 tons of hay which is mowed and baled by a neighboring farmer and the hay crop is winter fed to a herd of "grass fed" Belted Galloway beef cattle located on Windmist Farm also in the Center Island Greenway.



## The Distribution System

During the last twelve years we have grown more than 160,000 pounds of fresh produce and distributed this produce at no cost to food pantries and soup kitchens throughout the State: (Providence McAuley House, Newport Martin Luther King Center, Peacedale The Storehouse and Warwick House of Hope. In 2012 we also worked with volunteers from St. Marks in Jamestown to distribute fresh produce to people in Jamestown. During the year members of the JCF Board visited each of the distribution sites. The Jamestown Press also wrote an excellent article about these distribution sites and the impact the Community Farm has on the quality of the food provided. In December one of our most faithful volunteers also conducted a food drive at the Farm. Sophie Perrotti organized and managed a one-day food drive that collected over 400 pounds of food for the RI Food Bank.



## The Educational Role



One aspect of the Farm that was not anticipated at the outset and has evolved and grown each year are the educational opportunities, both formal and informal, that the Farm provides. In 2012 we sponsored, a seed planting day at the Farm greenhouse, earth day open house, a film at the Jamestown Library on the growing trend of young people in agriculture, seminars on; the Farm's photovoltaic power, the barn's architecture, beekeeping, chickens, nursery school pumpkin day, pumpkin hayrides, and a natural wreath making workshop.

## **The Equipment and Farm Infrastructure**

In 2012 we completed the construction of the photovoltaic panels and the roof-water cistern, both funded by a grant from the Champlin Foundation. The farm now produces all of the electricity necessary to operate the Farm and stores all the rainwater necessary to supply the water for all farm necessities. We completed our first year in our newly constructed barn and found it to exceed, both in design and functionality, all of our wishes.



## **Funding the Farm's Annual Budget**

A major goal of the Farm is to be financially self-sustainable. That is, to have the Farm generate enough revenue annually (approximately \$4,000) to meet its operating costs of seed, plants, fuel, etc. Toward that end the Farm sells; vegetables, eggs and honey from our farm stand. In 2012 the JCF Board approved a fund raising component that would provide funds for longer term capital improvements and other more major repairs or expenses. The Jamestown Community Farm Patron program solicited membership of individuals and families willing to donate an annual amount of \$100.00. (See the attached treasurer's report for all program financial statements) In addition we continued to have very large donations from individuals and organizations the largest being from the national AARP.



## The Future.

There are two central interwoven and simultaneous missions of the Farm, critical to its sustainability and its growth. . The mission at the outset to provide fresh produce to those in need is central to our organization. It is particularly critical given the outlook of our economy over the next years. Related missions are to build on and further develop the educational programs and further develop the sustainable agriculture opportunities that have evolved. Consistent with these central missions the Jamestown Community Farm Incorporated has established all of the following as goals and will systematically pursue all of these objectives over the next ten years: (listed in no particular order)



- Improve the growing methodologies working particularly toward systems that continue to improve the soil and minimize the persistent weed and pest problems.
- Provide and strengthen our community service aspect especially with school educational programs.
- Maintain and improve our equipment and infrastructure..
- Work with and strengthen the Farm's relationships with the local and state agricultural community.
- Improve our marketing with the intention that the produce sales provide a significant portion of our annual farm operating budget.
- Concentrate some additional effort on increasing adult volunteerism
- Continue to develop a plan for the perpetual protection of the 17 acre property in the event the current owner decides to sell.



*Thank you to all our volunteers,  
donors and friends.*

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## **Jamestown Community Farm: An Earth Day Commitment all Year Long**

The Farm was intended from the outset, to function with minimum impact to the Island's land, water and natural habitat:

1. We do not use any commercial herbicides, pesticides or commercial fertilizers
2. We do not have deep water wells or employ garden wide irrigation.
3. We use "untreated" seed and many heirloom variety vegetable seeds and plants.
4. We add decomposed leaf compost to the soil annually.
5. We plant winter rye cover crops in the off-season and plow this organic material back into the soil in the spring.
6. We have chickens for egg production and we rotate them around the farm to add natural fertilizer and eat bugs.
7. We have many bird houses scattered around the Farm and encourage small birds that feast on insects and other bugs.
8. We have honey bees to produce honey and also supply natural pollination of the vegetables.
9. We rotate our crops annually to avoid depletion of soil nutrients.
10. The new barn was constructed by volunteers from native pine lumber
11. The interior of the barn was designed to minimize electrical lighting and is lighted naturally using a modern plastic material.
12. The farm produces all its own electricity using photovoltaic cells.
13. The barn captures the rainwater from the roof in a 3000 gallon cistern and we use that water exclusively for greenhouse irrigation and animal water.
14. Although we kill bug pests with our fingers, we use only passive wild animal controls to protect the produce. (deer fence, tomato netting, etc.)
15. We believe in local food production, grown sustainably,
16. We try to minimize the use of all petroleum fueled equipment and transportation. We use tractors for cultivation and other farm work.
17. We encourage and sponsor farm educational programs, cooking demonstrations and we actively promote sustainable local agriculture.