



# Feed Fannin News

One Community, One Spirit

Feed Fannin, Inc.

Spring 2022

## Soap Box Derby Fun!

Kinslee Anderson, who just turned 7 years old, did a great job of driving Feed Fannin's entry in the Blue Ridge Soap Box Derby on April 30. The youngest of the drivers in Category 1 (for 7-12 year olds), Kinslee won her first two heats before a rival managed to edge her out just before she reached the finish line. Kinslee is the daughter of TJ Anderson, a local veteran, who also drove one of the derby cars.

Posing with the little cutie here is Rhonda Haight of Mountain Place Realty, who sponsored the Feed Fannin car. It was a beautiful day for the races and a wonderful way for kids and their families to enjoy time together cheering each other on.

Many thanks to Kinslee and to Derby organizers Brian Higgins and Mike Sullivan for arranging this fun event and to Mayor Haight for Mountain Place Realty's



sponsorship of the colorful Feed Fannin derby car. Another first for Feed Fannin, and we'll be back, as our derby car is now safely in storage for future races! ❀

## Spring has Sprung at the Farm, and Volunteers have been Busy

### Farm/Garden Report

By Kathy Beck, Vice Chair of Farm/Garden/Education

Welcome Spring! Let the fun begin!

The farm survived the winter storms and wind but not without the lifting of a corner of the roof of the garage and the loss of a huge tree that was uprooted behind the



farmhouse and garage. Thankfully, there was no damage to the structures. The tin roof was able to be straightened and secured. Thank you to the Fannin County Board of Education Maintenance Department for your help with this. Some of the shingles of the shed were also

raised but thankfully a volunteer was able to tack them back down. A new roof will need to be installed in the future, and we are exploring options.

Winter and early spring projects have kept things busy at the farm. New light fixtures were added in the farmhouse and installed by Blue Ridge Electric. Thanks to Gina Small for working with us on the installation.

The George Link Jr. Raised Beds Garden where we lease 22 beds to community residents received a little face lift: brush was trimmed, some old project remnants were removed and heavy landscape fabric was installed and gravel added to the walkways around the beds to help with weed control.

Volunteers mowed the winter rye cover crop planted last fall every few weeks throughout the winter/early spring months. We also tested the soil and ordered supplies.

**Volunteer Guia Nocon  
planting sweet potatoes**

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## ***Spring Farm/Garden Report continued***

We planned a layout for the Spring 2022 planting with crop rotation in mind, plowed under the winter rye with the tractor and marked the rows for the garden. Volunteers have been busy readying the infrastructure in the garden, installing tomato cages and fence grid. A supporter in the community and past volunteer donated 10 grow bags that will be planted as part of Ada Street Garden volunteer education. Straw bales planting is another experiment and education project that will be done this summer. Several new varieties of sweet potato plants that are more resistant to wetter summers and have less vines are also part of our research this summer. A report of all our research

results will come later in the fall issue of the newsletter.

Thanks to the generosity of a Young Farmers member and new friend, Father Louis Guerin, Feed Fannin acquired many

plant starts he grew in his hoop house in Mineral Bluff for the Ada Street farm, Faith Presbyterian Church and other partner gardens, as well as the Mittleider Garden. Some of Louis' plants were also given to food pantry clients. He has offered to grow plants for Feed Fannin for 2023. He is such a blessing to be around, and I am grateful for his support of Feed Fannin.

By the time you read this newsletter, planting in the Feed Fannin Ada Street Garden, and Mittleider Research Garden will be mostly completed. Red potatoes, sweet potatoes, lettuce, tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, spaghetti squash and yellow squash, eggplant, onions, okra, corn, cilantro, parsley, dill, basil and oregano are planted and other cool crops will be added later in the year.

Faith Presbyterian Church, which partners with Feed Fannin by planting a vegetable garden and donating the food to the pantry and community projects, has also planted many of the crops listed. They are excited to

have recently added a fence around their garden. We appreciate the partnership with Faith Garden and other individuals who plant-a-row and donate extra produce to the food pantry.



***Tammy Guzzardi plants sweet potatoes***

Keeping the grounds looking beautiful is a huge job, and I appreciate all the volunteers who assist with string trimming and any aspects of maintenance to the grounds. We receive frequent positive comments and appreciation from many in the education community and other people who visit the farm or pass by. Feed Fannin is fortunate to have the opportunity to use this beautiful property leased to us by the Board of Education.

If you would like to join our volunteers in the garden and on the farm, our regular work schedule is 9 am to noon on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Just stop on by!

## **Community/Food Outreach**

Farm to Pantry produce deliveries from Old Dial Road Farm continued throughout the winter on Mondays with cool crop vegetables. It was nice on a recent Monday to set out the produce at the pantry and have a client get so excited to be given fresh turnip greens with turnips... "one of my favorite vegetables." We get comments every week about the quality of fresh lettuces, greens and produce provided. Soon additional vegetables from our own garden will be added.

The owners of Old Dial Road Farm, Catherine and Jeff Morris, are so fantastic in their passion to grow organic produce. We are fortunate to have many local farmers who provide the community with fresh produce all summer.

Feed Fannin Chair Ron Ciochon and I recently attended a Food Summit with representatives from Family Connection, Snack in a Backpack, Faith Presbyterian Church, Temple Baptist Church, Cherry Log Christian Church, St. Luke's Episcopal Church, First Fruits, the Copper Basin Crisis Center, and those who help with providing and distributing food in our area. It was an

***Continued on. p. 5***



## 2022 Scholarship Winners!



Feed Fannin's Scholarship Committee reviewed applications this spring and made scholarship awards of \$1,000 each to Copper Basin High School graduating senior Ally Foster (at left with Feed Fannin's Carol Martel) and to Fannin County High School graduating seniors (l-r) Kaleb Couch, Carly Jane Cox and Austin Smith.

**Ally Foster**, a Copper Basin Scholar, has received Honors awards in multiple subjects. She is a member of the Key Club and the yearbook staff, and was the 2021 Homecoming Queen. In the community, she volunteered with

Habitat for Humanity and planted trees for the American Chestnut Foundation. She is planning to attend the University of Tennessee Chattanooga to pursue a degree in Environmental Science.

**Kaleb Couch** is a strong student of agriculture who has been in the Future Farmers of America for six years and participated in numerous FFA career development programs. He has been a member of Fire Explorers for four years, a member of Georgia Young Farmers and has volunteered with Habitat for Humanity.



**Carly Jean Cox** has been a long-standing member and officer of Future Business Leaders of America. She is also a member of the yearbook staff, the wrestling manager, and a member of the United Community Bank Junior Board, the National Honors Society, and the National Technical Honor Society. Carly is on the Honors Roll and has received awards in geometry and computer science. She wants to pursue a career in education and return to Fannin County to become an elementary school teacher.

**Austin Smith** has been a member of the FFA for seven years and has participated in a number FFA career development programs. He is also a football athlete. Teachers describe him as having exceptional leadership skills, always doing his best and having a positive attitude. He is hard working, personable and caring, and wants to use the Feed Fannin Scholarship to continue his agricultural studies.

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## Awards & Honors



Feed Fannin recently honored Gaye Whalton (left), founder of Snack in a Backpack. Gaye was a key member of Feed Fannin in its formative years prior to founding Snack in a Backpack in 2009 to focus specifically on school children in need of food assistance. Shown with her here is Feed Fannin member Jane Kimzey (right), who presented Whalton with a framed photo of the Ada Street barn during a Snack in a Backpack's 2022 fundraiser.



End of school year activities have found Feed Fannin busy attending FFA Middle School and High School Awards Banquets. Recently at the Fannin County Middle School banquet, Feed Fannin was presented with the Distinguished Service & Outstanding Supporter Plaque (photo at left). And at the high school awards banquet (photo at right), Feed Fannin vice chairs Kathy Beck and Priscilla Cashman accepted a Certificate of Appreciation for supporting the high school's FFA chapter. School grants are given by Feed Fannin to all local schools for school garden supplies and to assist with FFA leadership conference. It is a credit to the strong leadership of FFA officials who teach the life skill of public speaking that the FFA students were impressively well spoken during their respective presentations.

This year, Feed Fannin expanded its involvement in youth programs with a grant to the Fannin County 4-H program, which serves 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders. On April 20, Feed Fannin Vice-Chairs Kathy Beck and Priscilla Cashman (right) presented a check for \$3,200 to Fannin County Extension Agent Ashley Hoppers and Fannin County 4-H Advisor and AmeriCorps member Rachael Wasserman (left). These funds will enable eight local students to attend 4-H Camp this summer. Camp will be held at the Burton 4-H Center on



Tybee Island July 4-8. Campers will participate in environmental classes, engage in exercises that promote cooperation and character-building, and interact with other 4-H members from across the State of Georgia.

## Get Ready for Another Online Auction!

With the coming of summer, Feed Fannin is in high gear preparing for another Bowls of Hope Online Auction. This year's dates are Aug. 21-30.

The auction raises funds used by Feed Fannin to purchase food for distribution to the Fannin County Family Connection Food Pantry clients and to donate to people in the community who need assistance. The money also supports Feed Fannin's efforts to grow literally tons of fresh produce each year for pantry clients, purchase additional produce from local farmers and food staples such as milk and eggs, all of which goes to other community members in need throughout the year.

As in years past, we will have a wide variety of donated items for bid on our website — artwork, baskets of goodies

and gift certificates donated by local merchants, restaurants and attractions, and a wide variety of household items and decorative pieces donated by Feed Fannin volunteers, local merchants and people throughout the community whom we approach.

Live bidding opens at 12 noon on Sunday, Aug. 21, and closes at 8 pm, Tuesday, Aug. 30, so participants will have nine days to bid on the items of their choice at [www.feedfannin.org](http://www.feedfannin.org). Items can be picked up at Family Connection during the Labor Day weekend. ✿





## ***Spring Farm/Garden Report continued***

opportunity to share information and learn how the groups can work together to better serve those in our community in need of food. Feed Fannin currently provides milk and eggs to First Fruits Food Ministry every two weeks.

Please see the box below for two new community/food outreach initiatives we have undertaken.

### **Education**

You will read elsewhere in this newsletter about our involvement with local schools and education organizations. I'll just say here that I represented Feed Fannin at the Fannin County Ag Advisory Council Lunch Meeting on May 9. This is an opportunity for different groups to meet and interact with educators and others involved in promoting agriculture in the community, and Feed Fannin is honored to be included on the Fannin County Ag Advisory Council.

"One Community...One Spirit...in Partnership" is a great way to explain the first half of 2022. Feed Fannin is committed to growing our relationships in the community and local schools and organizations by continuing to



### ***Volunteers pack boxes for Meals on Wheels***

support local youth and agriculture through school grants, scholarships and summer camp tuitions; by growing and purchasing produce for the Family Connection Food Pantry and by continuing to support local farmers and vendors through the purchase of supplemental produce throughout the year for different projects; and by partnering with churches and other groups who share our passion and the mission of feeding the hungry in our community. ❀

## **Two New Initiatives for Feed Fannin This Summer and Fall**

Feed Fannin has two new initiatives that are expanding our community outreach efforts.

During June and July, we have committed to providing fresh produce for Snack in a Backpack's Summer Meal Program.

A large percentage of the children in Fannin County are eligible for free and reduced-cost meals during the school year, but these meals aren't available during the summer break. Snack in a Backpack partners with Fannin County Family Connection and several local churches to provide nutritious food to local families with children during this period. This summer, Feed Fannin is adding produce to the canned goods and packaged food

We will be sourcing, ordering and providing produce to fill 160 family produce bags each week — produce for a total of 1,280 bags over the course of

the eight-week program. There may be opportunities for some of our volunteers to help with packing and delivery. Anyone interested in helping with the Summer Meal Program should send an email to [feedfannin@feedfannin.org](mailto:feedfannin@feedfannin.org) with Summer Meal Program in the subject line.

In addition, Feed Fannin will be partnering with Fannin County High School's new Resource Room to supply quick pick-up food items for students in the fall when school resumes. The Resource Room was added during spring break this year, and the final touches will soon be complete.



## Food Assistance by the Numbers — Our Impact in 2021

Feed Fannin strives to make an impact by providing food — grown by us and our partner gardens, plus items purchased and donated — to families in need of food assistance in our community. In 2021, we provided:

More than 178,000 pounds of fresh produce, canned, dry and frozen food items

This is the equivalent of nearly 148,500 meals to help feed the hungry

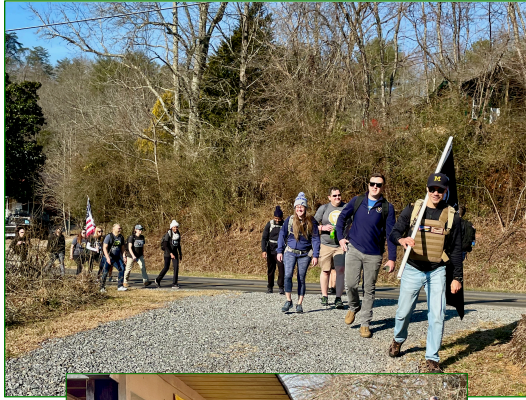
10,300+ dozen eggs, 9,100+ gallons of milk and donated 1,300 hams and turkeys for Thanksgiving and Christmas



## A Great Big Thank-You to our Amazing Volunteers!







## March on, Soldiers, March on!

At least 20 members of the Travis Manion Foundation marched from downtown Blue Ridge to the Feed Fannin Farm in February carrying a large quantity of cans and packages of non-perishable food in their backpacks that was later donated to the food pantry.

The national non-profit organization empowers veterans and families of fallen heroes to grow by engaging in community service and leadership. The men and women were looking for a service opportunity while in town for a regional retreat. We are honored that they chose to involve Feed Fannin in their activity. ✿



Feed Fannin Chair Ron Ciochon (left) greets the group of marchers (shown entering the farm above). Above right, a portion of the non-perishable food the veterans and family members brought with them.



## Garden Volunteers Hard at Work at the Ada Street Farm







Many thanks to employees of **The Home Depot** of Blue Ridge, who presented Feed Fannin with a gift card for \$1,000 through Operation Surprise, the store's charitable contributions initiative! Shown here, Department Supervisor Monica Cherry (far left) and Assistant Manager for Operations Ray Nieves (far right) presented the gift card to (l-r) Feed Fannin's Vice Chair for Food Purchases, Food Programs and Pantry Relations Priscilla Cashman, Chair Ron Ciochon, and Kathy Beck, Vice Chair of Farm, Garden and Education.

## Please Make a Gift to Feed Fannin Today

Your generosity during the past two challenging years made it possible for our all-volunteer organization to help more people in more ways than ever before. Feed Fannin is 100% funded through private donations.

To continue our work, we ask that you again give generously. We plan to expand our outreach to help feed more people as we have done in new and innovative ways over the past two years by partnering with service and faith-based organizations to help distribute food we grow and food we purchase to those in need. We appreciate your support.

You may use the form on the right to make your donation or go online at [feedfannin.org/donate](http://feedfannin.org/donate).



## Stay in Touch!

Ron Ciochon, chair  
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Mail form and donation to:

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Blue Ridge, GA 30513

**Your gift is greatly appreciated!**

## Our Mission

Working together to educate and encourage our community towards self-sufficiency while providing food for those in need.