



# Feed Fannin News

One Community, One Spirit

Feed Fannin, Inc.

Fall 2022

## Bowls of Hope Online Auction a Success Once Again

Feed Fannin raised more than \$12,000 through its Bowls of Hope Online Auction Aug. 21-30, 2022. Once again, thanks to all the merchants, service providers and individuals who donated items, and the volunteers who collected them and arranged the auction, we were able to offer over 150 items from which to select.

Returning participants from the previous two online auctions and many new to Feed Fannin found a wide variety of items they liked and took home to enjoy. The hottest items this year were visual arts and handcrafts, especially pottery, home furnishings and food and beverage.

Thanks to the enthusiasm and generosity of auction participants, we were able to collect over \$12,000 to help the organization grow and purchase food to help people in our community in need of food assistance. The produce from our one-acre community garden, plus the eggs and milk that Feed



***Auction items waiting to be picked up***

Fannin purchases from local suppliers, bring additional nutritious vegetables and proteins to many families, children and seniors in our community.

We are so grateful to all who continue to support our Bowls of Hope auctions. To provide an added bonus this

***Continued on. p. 3***



***LEFT: Farm Manager Kathy Beck plowing the garden.***

***RIGHT: Farm volunteers harvesting sweet potatoes.***



## Hard-Working Farm Volunteers Bring in the Harvest

### Fall Farm Report

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

After a busy and successful Summer and Fall, the harvesting at the farm is complete. A small, but mighty crew of 10-12 volunteers worked tirelessly from April to September throughout the heat and humidity of summer and harvested 5,400 lbs. of produce from our Ada Street farm.

Additional produce in the amount of 7,304 lbs. of produce was purchased from local farmers and vendors for a total of 12,910 lbs. of fresh produce donated through Sept. 22 by teaming up with local food ministry groups in our community.

Some of the groups we partnered with this summer to donate produce are Family Connection Food Pantry, First Fruits of Fannin Food Ministry Outreach and Snack in a

***Continued on. p. 2***

## Fall Farm Report continued

Backpack. There are other produce purchases and community outreach projects planned for the remainder of the year, especially during the holiday season.

### Preparing the garden for its winter rest

Ten volunteers worked hard and sweet potatoes were harvested over a three-day period. I could not have asked for a better crew. They maintained a cheerful attitude even



in the heat and humidity and pushed through to get it done. Vines were cut and plants hauled away. We have pulled up spent tomato, squash, and cucumber plants. Corn stalks have been cut and hauled away, and the soil has been plowed. A winter crop will be planted.

Many thanks again to Father Lewis Guerin for the excellent plant starts that he donated in the spring. They were key to the production of great produce.

Cages and fencing used for tomatoes have been taken down and stored. Silage tarps used for weed control have been removed, washed and put away. Mowing, trimming and spraying the fence line is ongoing. Many thanks to our grounds-keeping volunteers who keep the farm looking beautiful.

### For sweet potato aficionados

Four varieties of sweet potatoes were planted this year that were new to us. We had excellent plants from the grower that flourished with about 98% survival on the original slips, and no replanting was required.



Two varieties (Puerto Rico and Vardaman) were advertised as “vineless” varieties. The plants were not totally vineless and did have runners, but not as many as others we have grown in the past. One well-known old favorite that we tried (Beauregard) was grown

for its reliability and ability to tolerate wet soil better than the Covington variety during the wet summer of 2021. Beauregard gave us the best yield with the least problems. The fourth choice was almost white in color (Bonita) and

was recommended by the grower. We found upon harvesting that many potatoes had cracked.

Research shows this could be caused by excess water following heat near time of harvest or too much nitrogen. We did have heat, humidity and rain in the weeks before the harvest. Our soil test did not show excess nitrogen. We will likely not try Bonita or vineless varieties again, but did like the Beauregard and will use that variety again.

### Experimenting, learning in the garden

Our goal for this year was to work “smarter, not harder.” I have previously mentioned several new experimental and educational trials in the garden. The volunteers' consensus is that straw bale gardening is a possible way to garden in that there was growth, but bales dried out easily and plants did not yield as well as in pots or raised beds. The planting bags worked well, especially for herbs.

The silage tarps worked great for weed control. Between two rows we put down thinner regular landscape fabric to see if it would help control weeds. It held up extremely well, at a substantial lower cost, but enough light got through that you could see weeds growing underneath. However, the weeds did not penetrate through the fabric.

### The importance of pollinators in a garden

Deliberate plans were made this spring to increase our pollinator plants to attract bees, birds and butterflies. Our location and plantings have always successfully attracted pollinators, but we want to continue this trend. Georgia is one of the leading states to track pollinators by having several dedicated days in August to count the number and types of bees and insects that feed on one's plants.

We are fortunate to have native yellow cut leaf coneflower and iron weed, as well as milk weed that provide the right habitat to attracts bees and butterflies. We have many species of birds that live on the property. We also limit chemical use to protect beneficial insects and bees. Birds also feed on the insects attracted to these plants. Most plants need pollinators like bees and butterflies to reproduce, and they are great for the environment to help increase biodiversity and natural pest control. We plant staggered corn crops in our garden, and the honeybees swarm the tassels of the corn. Flowers on okra, squash and herbs also attract pollinators.



*Continued on p. 3*



Feed Fannin's Mittleider Garden had another productive summer. Guy Gooch (right), who spends many hours tending it, reported that the cukes, zucchini, squash and various kinds of lettuce he harvests often disappeared as fast as he was able to clean and load them in the bins for food pantry clients.



### ***Online Auction continued***

year, we set up a long table full of beautiful handcrafted ceramic bowls donated by local potters for our live Bowls of Hope fundraisers. Auction participants arriving in person to pick up the items they had won had a nice surprise – the opportunity to make a donation and take a bowl home.

With the help of many hands and the support of many friends, Feed Fannin continues to engage people in our community to help those in need of food assistance. We connect with members and friends through our community garden, the food pantry and other community partnerships, fundraising events and online auction, the Old Timers' Parade, Photos with Santa, spring and fall Arts in the Park festivals and our monthly meetings.

We love welcoming newcomers to the Feed Fannin family of volunteers and offer many opportunities to serve throughout the year. Go to [feedfannin.org](http://feedfannin.org) to learn more about ways to get involved! ❀

### ***Fall Farm Report continued***

To learn more about attracting pollinators in your yard or garden, visit the Fannin County UGA Extension Office or their website at [extension.uga.edu](http://extension.uga.edu)

In closing, teamwork and partnership continue to be the theme for this year. The volunteers in our community are extraordinary, and I have enjoyed meeting and working with some I did not know. My life has been enriched by some new garden volunteers who shall be fondly referred to as “the okra girls.” You showed up in August and your enthusiasm was just the spark that was needed to help get through the long summer. The farm volunteers have all worked very hard, but we have taken the time to stop and enjoy the blossoms and admire the beauty we are blessed to see each work day.

The soil has been tilled, and the summer growing season has come to a close. Winter will hold time for more scheming about new things to improve our gardening and farm efforts. ❀



### **Kala Ballew is New Food Pantry Manager**

Kind, humble, and hardworking are just a few words that describe Fannin County Family Connection's new Food Pantry Manager, Kala Ballew.

Kala was a volunteer before she took over the reins of the Food Pantry operation this summer, and she brings a wealth of experience to the job, including work in shipping, packing and inventory, plus team leadership.

Kala's pantry day begins at 7 o'clock each morning and consists of placing and organizing orders, leading volunteers, and serving clients in the pantry.

Kala describes herself as organized and willing. “I would never ask anyone to do anything I wouldn't do myself,” she said. “And I love labor work. It makes me feel good. It gives me balance.”

Former food pantry manager Greg Gelp, whom Kala has known for years, has been assisting her in making the transition to her new leadership position.

On behalf of all the Feed Fannin volunteers, we welcome Kala. We are delighted to work in partnership with you to continue the very important work of distributing food to those in our community who need a helping hand. ❀

*Editor's note: Photo and excerpts reprinted with permission from the FCFC's Connections Newsletter.*

## Board Member and Officer Updates; Martel Steps Down as Treasurer

Feed Fannin Treasurer Carlos Martel stepped down this summer and recommended Susan Sciuolo to succeed him, an appointment that was approved by the Board of Directors in July.

Carlos had handled Feed Fannin's finances since 2018. The board members and Chair Ron Ciochon thanked him for his outstanding service and dedication to the organization.

Susan is a trained CPA who, prior to her retirement to Blue Ridge, held senior executive positions in major healthcare companies, including Children's Healthcare of Atlanta and Grady Hospital. Susan was recruited as a Feed Fannin volunteer in August 2019 and has served in a number of capacities since then.



*Ciochon (l) thanks Martel for his service.*



*Sciuolo*

Kathleen Holt, a volunteer and board member, will continue to serve as assistant treasurer.

Feed Fannin volunteer James (Jim) Hatten, who has been serving as assistant secretary, has been elected to the Board of Directors. Jim retired in 2021 as district court executive and clerk of court for the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia.

## Make a Gift to Feed Fannin

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like to receive information about Feed Fannin by email? Y\_\_\_\_ N\_\_\_\_

Amount of gift donation: \$\_\_\_\_\_

Need a tax receipt? Y\_\_\_\_ N\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to:  
Feed Fannin, Inc.

Mail form and donation to:  
Feed Fannin  
PO Box 1085  
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.

## Reaching Out to the Community

TOP: Loading fresh produce headed to Snack in a Backpack for the Summer Meals Program.



MIDDLE: Stocking the "Lunch in a Crunch" closet for students in need at the University of North Georgia.



BOTTOM: Unpacking purchased food for Meals on Wheels and seniors living at the North Court Apartments.

