



# Feed Fannin News

One Community, One Spirit

Feed Fannin, Inc.

Spring 2023

## On Your Mark, Get Set, Go!

For the second year in a row, Feed Fannin competed in the Kiwanis Club's Blue Ridge Soap Box Derby. Dylan Henry, 15 and a student at Mountain Education Charter High School in Fannin County, won 2 of his 3 heats in the colorful Feed Fannin car as dozens of drivers launched two by two from a trailer at Fannin

County Middle School.

They drove cars sponsored by local businesses, organizations, churches, restaurants and even the Fannin County



Board of Commissioners as crowds cheered them on to the checkered flags at the finish line. ❁

## Farm, Partner Gardens Prepared, Planted for the Growing Season

### Farm/Garden Report

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

May is coming to an end, and life at the farm has started to get busy. The memories of the hard work involved at the farm last year have mostly faded, and the mind is filled with the excitement and anticipation of a new growing season.

Early spring activities have included some projects that include removing fallen trees; reading to students at Blue Ridge Elementary School during Agriculture Literacy Day; plowing and prepping of fields and beds as well as

attending year-end school FFA banquets for middle and high schools; attending the Fannin County Ag Council meeting; and judging a scarecrow contest for the Faith Garden.

Faith Presbyterian Church partners with Feed Fannin to grow corn, potatoes and sweet potatoes (provided by Feed Fannin) for the community at their property. Several supporters of Feed Fannin have grown and donated plants for the garden. Thank you to Father Louis Guerin and 6 Ponds Farm and West Fannin Elementary School for your support of the Ada Street garden, which is mostly planted at this point. We are looking forward to a successful growing season. A big thank you to Jeff and Catherine Morris of Old Dial Road Farm who grow incredible organic lettuce and greens in their greenhouses for Feed Fannin to purchase during the winter months which enables us to provide Family



**Kathy Beck preparing the soil on a beautiful spring day**

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

Connections Food Pantry with produce throughout the year.

Long's Produce and other local farmers and vendors will help supply produce to Feed Fannin again this summer for eight weeks during school summer break. Feed Fannin is purchasing 6,000-7,000 lbs. of produce to supply Snack in a Backpack's Summer Meals program with produce for over 1,400 food boxes. We are blessed to be able to partner with many groups in the community, as well as dedicated volunteers who make projects possible.

I think in life it's important to realize not only where you are headed, but from where you have come. I grew up on a small farm in a family of six children. My oldest sister, who is now 85, is the only sibling other than me who still loves to garden. Growing up, we grew all our own food and working in the garden was expected, and all that I knew. It was hard work, and vows were made by some to never again work in a garden when they grew up and were able to make that choice.

My siblings cannot believe that today I voluntarily choose to work hard to manage a farm when I don't have to. It is hard to explain unless gardening is deeply rooted in your soul. Admittedly, there were farm and garden chores growing up that I didn't always enjoy, but recently I have been reflecting on life lessons and some of my favorite gardening moments and necessities for working in a garden.



The necessities? A Hori Hori Knife, Zip Ties, a sharpened pair of pruners, a comfortable pair of garden boots, a good pair of gloves, a ball peen hammer, and a folding stool that converts to a kneeling pad.

So, why garden? The rewards for gardening and life can't be measured by time or dollars invested. I do it for the joy and the awe and the wonder it can bring to me and to others. When I pass a flowering squash, okra, or corn tassels filled with bees or any flowering vegetable bloom, it makes me smile. When I arrive at the garden in the early morning and experience the solitude, that is it's own reward. ❀



**Volunteers at work at the Ada Street farm**

**"There is no better demonstration of faith than planting seed in a field."**



**Feed Fannin's partners at Faith Presbyterian Church preparing their garden for another season**

# Congratulations to our 2023 Scholarship Winners!

Feed Fannin is pleased to have awarded four \$1,000 scholarships to very deserving students this year. Three recipients are Fannin County High School seniors, and one is from Copper Basin High School. All awardees have strong academic records, have shown leadership in their school activities, and have served as committed volunteers in their communities. Their further education and future career plans align with Feed Fannin's mission relating to food supply and providing support for people suffering with food insecurity.

Our work to provide nutritious food from our community and partner gardens, purchased from local suppliers and regional food banks in Atlanta and Chattanooga, drives home to us the enormous importance of helping educate young people in agriculture and fields related to the food chain. We all benefit

**"If you eat, you are involved in agriculture."**

**—Wendell Berry**



**Feed Fannin's Martel (l) and Maniscalco (r) flank Nicholson and Putnam**

by educating the next generation to help ensure the quality, quantity, and safety of food production and distribution.

High quality, safe food is possible through dedicated leadership, hard work, and expertise in growing food, managing water use, employing new environmental technologies and best practices in food and animal sciences, and focusing on nutritional needs that help keep families, children and seniors in our communities well-fed and healthy.

Two of our recipients, **Zoe Putnam** and **Emilee Thomas**, will attend Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College (ABAC) in Tifton, Ga, to study Animal Science with



**Martel with Ross**

plans to pursue degrees in veterinary medicine. **Blake Nicholson** will also attend ABAC to pursue a degree in Agricultural Education and follow his passion for teaching.

**Sapporiah Ross**, valedictorian of her class at Copper Basin High School, will enroll in the Nursing School at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville to pursue a degree in Nutrition with a Biomedical Nutrition Science concentration.

The criteria for the Feed Fannin scholarships, consistent with our goal of providing nutritious food to people in need, are: 1) Be accepted at a college, university, or technical school/college, 2) Have a minimum 3.0 grade point average during senior year, 3) Plan to pursue degrees in agriculture, horticulture, environmental or food sciences or related fields (preference will be given to these studies, however, applicants who plan to pursue degrees in education may also be considered, and 4) Demonstrate active involvement in FFA, 4-H, Garden Club or in other activities, clubs and organizations at school or in the community related to the above fields of study.



**Thomas**

Additional support to young people in our communities is provided through our 2023 grants for gardens in three elementary schools, the middle and high schools in Fannin County and to students from the Copper Basin area to attend 4-H Summer Camp in June.

Thank you to our Feed Fannin financial supporters who make these awards possible, and to this year's Scholarship and School Outreach Committee members, Kelly Maniscalco, Diane Tortis, Suzanne Blakeman and co-chairs Carol and Carlos Martel. We are grateful for their participation and careful review of the students' applications, and selection of four outstanding young people from our area schools to further their educations consistent with Feed Fannin's efforts to better lives by providing nutritious food to people in need. ❀

By Carol and Carlos Martel, Co-Chairs  
Feed Fannin Scholarship and School Outreach Committee

## A Salute to Our Silent Volunteers

By Carol Martel, Feed Fannin volunteer

Very recently a wonderful friend passed away. She was not only a personal friend, she was also a dedicated Feed Fannin volunteer. Her passing made me think about the many people who volunteer time and contribute funds to Feed Fannin whose names we may not recognize or whom we don't often see featured in newsletters, on social media or the newspaper. They are the ones whose quiet dedication to helping in many small ways makes Feed Fannin the caring, serving organization that it is today.

When our founder, Barbara Ferer, envisioned Feed Fannin over 14 years ago, she started with a small group of caring, concerned people who wanted to help in whatever ways they could to feed people in need in our community. To this day, small groups of people dedicated to small and large tasks alike power our organization and keep it strong and vibrant.

Whether this is

- picking up the donation jars from local merchants as my friend did, or
- collecting donated food items from Feed Fannin Green Boxes around town,



- packing boxes for seniors and low-income housing tenants,
- pulling weeds and making scarecrows for our gardens,
- growing a row in home gardens for the pantry, or
- donating money to support the food we grow and the food we purchase from regional food banks,

these faithful “silent” volunteers are the heart of Feed Fannin. They are the many wonderful people who come together and donate their time, talents, and treasure to serve a cause greater than themselves by helping those members of our community who are hungry and in need of assistance.

Thank you to my friend and to every Feed Fannin volunteer for all that you do for this community through Feed Fannin. Every effort, every idea shared, task undertaken, and every dollar donated helps make a difference in the life of a family, child or senior who does not have enough food at their table. ❀

## A Fashionable Kind of Fundraiser

Get ready for a completely new kind of fundraiser for Feed Fannin — a fashion show!

Tickets will soon be available for the fun show, to be held on Friday, Sept. 8, 6-8 pm at Willow Creek Falls, 35 Trackside Lane in Blue Ridge. Models clad in fashions from a variety of area merchants will walk amongst tables of diners enjoying wine and other beverages as an emcee details what they are wearing.

The event, which will include dinner and a silent auction, will raise funds that Feed Fannin will use 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 will also support Feed Fannin's efforts to:

- grow literally tons of fresh produce each year for pantry clients; and
- purchase additional produce from local farmers and food staples such as milk and eggs, all of which go to food-insecure community members throughout the year.



Tickets will cost \$150. Stay tuned to our Facebook page and website ([www.feedfannin.org](http://www.feedfannin.org)) for more details! ❀

# Pantry & Food-Related Community Outreach

By Priscilla Cashman, Vice Chair, Food Purchases & Programs & Food Pantry Relations

Feed Fannin has supplied nearly 100% of the funds to the Food Pantry for the purchase of canned and dried, staples, frozen foods, fresh produce, eggs and milk for clients of the Food Pantry at Fannin County Family Connection. In addition, Feed Fannin has a number of food collection boxes located in the Blue Ridge, and the contents of these boxes are taken to the pantry regularly. The total averages about 350 pounds a month of staple items collected from these boxes.

Once a month, Feed Fannin volunteers pack 28-30 large boxes for North Court Apartments and 45-50 small supplemental boxes for Meals on Wheels clients. Small supplemental boxes are also provided to Pruitt Health Hospice clients as needed and requested. Many of the items packed are ordered direct from Chattanooga Food Bank to ensure availability and suitability of product on packing day.

Last year, Feed Fannin began purchasing eggs and milk in a partnership with First Fruits of Fannin, which delivers to needy families in our community. This organization has delivered a total of 1,080 half-gallons of milk and 990 dozen eggs to our community



***Feed Fannin Chair Ron Ciochon (l) and other volunteers receive a shipment of turkeys that were distributed to Food Pantry clients and our community partners between Thanksgiving and Christmas 2022.***

during the period January-March 2023. In addition, staple food items are delivered to the University of North Georgia "Lunch in a Crunch" for enrolled and qualifying students, as needed. ❀



## Feed Fannin to Team with Snack in a Backpack Again This Summer

Feed Fannin will once again provide fresh produce for Snack in a Backpack's Summer Meal Program during June and July.

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. Feed Fannin is adding produce to the canned goods and packaged food.

Feed Fannin will be sourcing, ordering and providing produce to fill 175 bags each week during the eight-week program. There are 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. ❀



## Food Assistance by the Numbers – Our Impact in 2022

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 2022, we grew, produced or procured:

More than 424,000 pounds of staple goods, fresh produce, frozen food items, eggs, milk, hams and turkeys — more than doubling last year's total

This is the equivalent of nearly 354,000 meals that helped feed the hungry

112,584 dozen eggs, 10,963 gallons of milk and donated 1,100 turkeys and hams for Thanksgiving and Christmas

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





## Hail to our Chilly Chili Champs!

Feed Fannin volunteers braved the cold and helped us win first prize (among Civic Organizations) in the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Fire and Ice Chili Cook-Off and Craft Beer Festival on Feb. 18 in downtown Blue Ridge. Feed Fannin Chair Ron Ciochon (our chef) is shown at left accepting the prize purse of \$500. Feed Fannin's Community Events Coordinator Mary Kay Britzius pitched our mission to a guest, and he donated \$1,000 to our cause via the website. Volunteers chatted up hundreds of chili lovers and they generously responded by putting \$227.50 into

our donation box, and many expressed interest in joining us in the garden this spring. Feed Fannin got the Chili Cookoff trophy, some new volunteers and a total of \$1,727.50 to help the food insecure in our area. A big thank you to all the helpers (see photo at right) who made this an enjoyable event to be a part of, and a special shout out to our Chair, Ron Ciochon, for putting his culinary skills to great use in making a delicious, award-winning chili! What a great day! ❁



## Spring Seedlings a Mega-Popular Class at Quinn's Nursery

An annual class in starting spring seeds at Quinn's nursery in McCaysville hosted by Feed Fannin attracted so many gardeners that a second class had to be added to accommodate them. Both the morning and afternoon class were filled to capacity with local residents eager to pick up tips about spring planting in the North Georgia mountains. Nursery co-owner Ginger Montgomery (at right) provided guidance on soil enhancement, the needs of various plants, raising plants from seeds, and when and where to plant successfully. Participants went home with flats of the seedlings of their choice. ❁



**"If a farmer teaches one person about farming, it might not change the world, but it might change the world for that one person."  
—Farmer Tim**

Feed Fannin's Farm Manager, Kathy Beck, reads to students at Blue Ridge Elementary School during Agriculture Literacy Day, a program of the Young Farmer Association in celebration of Georgia Agriculture Awareness Week in late March.



A mission group from the Atlanta area spent several days volunteering at the Ada Street farm this spring. Members helped to restore the storage shed at the front of the property, scraping and priming it and replacing shingles that had been blown off the roof during the winter. The colorful work of local artists that covered the walls of the shed was over 10 years old and needed a facelift. Artists will soon decorate it with new farm and garden scenes.

## 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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Like and follow us on Facebook  
[facebook.com/Feed-Fannin](https://www.facebook.com/Feed-Fannin)

### Yes, I Want to Help!

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.