



Feed Fannin News

One Community, One Spirit

Feed Fannin, Inc.

www.feedfannin.org

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Fall 2023

Fashion Show & Silent Auction Fundraiser a Big Success



Feed Fannin hosted an elegant evening of fashion, good food, entertainment and eye-catching silent auction items while raising funds to feed the hungry on Sept. 8.

The event at the lovely Willow Creek Falls in Blue Ridge brought in \$30,000 to support Feed

Fannin’s mission to provide food for those in need. This money will fund the purchase of approximately three months of food for the Food Pantry to distribute to feed families.

Event Chair Cheryl Engledow assembled a large cadre of models of all ages, male and female, to display the latest fashions offered by local boutiques as attendees enjoyed tasty hors d’oeuvres from local restaurants, wine from Living Water Winery & Vineyard and live music by Michael Smith & Company.

“The event was a big success,” said Feed Fannin Chair Ron Ciochon. “We had more than 100 people attend. The silent auction itself raised over \$5,100. It was well worth all the effort put forth by our volunteers and our supportive community. People who attended were talking about it for days afterward.”

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Farm, Research, Partner Gardens Yield Over 4,000 lbs. of Vegetables

Farm/Garden Report

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

As of the end of September, Feed Fannin has harvested 4,016 lbs. of produce from our Ada Street and Research and Partner gardens. In addition, 1,924 lbs. of produce have been purchased locally, bringing a total of 5,940 lbs. of produce that has been provided for the food pantry. An additional 4,961 lbs. of produce were provided to Snack in a Backpack for its Summer Meals Program, bringing the grand total to 10,901 lbs. of produce that Feed Fannin has provided for outreach in our community.

The summer growing season at the farm has gone well and the only remaining crops left to harvest this

fall are okra and peppers. Onions, cabbage and a few other cool weather crops will be planted in the raised beds. Silage tarps placed on the soil for weed control in the spring will be left in those areas over winter as part of an experiment, and the remaining fields will be planted with a cover crop.



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Fashion Show continued

Gold-level corporate sponsors Coldwell Banker and Southern Comfort Cabin Rentals were well represented at the event, and United Community Bank purchased a table, as did Escape to Blue Ridge and several individuals.

Boutiques contributing to the fashion show included Blue Ridge Adventure Wear, dunworkin', Juliana's Bolutique, Moonbeams & Mudpies, Mustang Sally Clothing & Jewelry, Neighborly, Southerndipidy and Threads on Main.

Restaurants contributing a wide variety of tapas during the evening included Black Sheep, Carroll's Barbeque, Chester Brunnenmeyer's Bar & Grill, Cucinella's Pizzeria, Grateful Bread, Harvest on Main, Hook & Eye, Rin Tin's Barks & Brews Cantina, Rum Cake Lady Cuban Food Café, The General Ledger, The Sweet Shoppe of the South, and Whiskey & Water Seafood & Bourbon Bar.

Blue Ridge Flowers contributed lovely fall table arrangements for the occasion, and Celebrations! lent great assistance with the set-up of the event. The silent auction tables brimmed with home décor, handbags, serving ware and gift certificates to restaurants, shops, train rides and services. ❀

Silent Auction Makes the Transition

From pandemic to post pandemic we have seen lots of changes to our annual auction over the past few years.

Transitioning from last year's successful online auction to this year's in person auction kept us busy. Volunteers made the switch easily, pitching in to solicit items, put together gift baskets, organize and catalogue the many items donated for the auction.

In addition, the many businesses and individuals who have supported Feed Fannin over the years contributed terrific gift items. As always, we had lots of talented artists' works, gift baskets, gift certificates and event tickets. We were able to stage the items on beautifully decorated tables at Willow Creek Falls for the special event.

Many thanks to the businesses, the individual donors and the volunteers who made this year's live auction possible and successful. A successful Feed Fannin auction leads to more food purchases which leads to more families in our community being fed. And that is our ultimate goal! ❀

Fall Farm/Garden Report continued

Thank you seems hardly adequate to express gratitude for the small, but mighty group of faithful garden volunteers who have helped at the farm this season.

In spite of the heat, humidity and hard work, garden volunteers found time to still have fun planting, growing and learning more about the native pollinator plants we have on the farm. We also hosted several groups of students and assisted an Eagle Scout candidate in earning hours for his badge.

Outreach Activities

Feed Fannin is committed to supporting agriculture in our community. Our mission statement is "educating and encouraging our community towards self-sufficiency while providing food for those in need."

During the last few months, we have taken opportunities to support all parts of that mission statement. In late August, Priscilla Cashman and I attended the FFA banquet in recognition and support of FFA students and their accomplishments. On AG Day, Sept. 6, I helped prepare food as a member of the Fannin County Young Farmers organization and on behalf of Feed Fannin during a luncheon at the Fannin County Agriculture Facility attended by over 300 third-grade elementary school students and teachers. In addition to enjoying lunch, students learned different aspects of agriculture with presentations and demonstrations.

On September 20, FFA Adviser Seth Davis brought his Forestry Class to the Feed Fannin Farm to study and identify the different species of trees growing on the property. We welcome and encourage FFA students to come often to study all the farm has to offer.



On Sept. 21, the Feed Fannin Farm hosted another visit as Seth Davis and 36 agriculture students were educated on how we grow sweet potatoes and how to trim vines. The harvesting of the

potatoes was demonstrated with a hands-on dig involving nearly 1,000 lbs. of sweet potatoes. This life skill had been experienced previously by only one of the students. It was a beautiful blue-sky, sunny day and fun field trip for the students and a huge benefit for Feed Fannin to receive help with the harvest. The dig was also a good opportunity and teaching moment for discussion of the mission of Feed Fannin to provide food for those in the community who are food insufficient and to pass along the concept of volunteering and giving back to help others in our community. In the area for the day was bonus guest, Dr. Josh Allen from Watkinsville, Ga., who is the North Region Horticulture Ag Teacher and participated in the dig.

On Sept. 26, another garden volunteer, Diane Tortis, and I represented Feed Fannin during West Fannin Elementary School's Field Day trip to 6 Ponds Farm hosted by owner Gilda Lyons. There were 73 first-



grade students, along with teachers, parents, grandparents and 12 of us as volunteers from the agriculture community. We led students in STEAM activities ranging from crafts related to the parts of a plant to fishing, discussions and interactions with goats and rabbits. Gilda has a beautiful farm and shares the passion many of us have to educate and pass along agricultural knowledge and skills to the future generation.

In the Spring newsletter, we shared that the Barbara Ferer Research Garden that had been used for quite a few years as a Mittleider Garden was being transformed to a garden with soil amendments added to the small remaining amounts of sawdust and sand that are there. I am pleased to report that the vegetables, herbs and flowers that have been

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Fall Farm/Garden Report continued

planted to help with pollination have been happy, and produce from this garden has been enjoyed by the pantry clients. Several cool-weather crops are in the process of being planted there as the tomatoes complete their growing cycle.

Several costly expenditures have been necessary this summer at the farm. The HVAC system in the farmhouse had to be replaced, and repairs had to be made to the Kubota riding mower. The mower is working well now. Many thanks to the volunteers who help with grounds-keeping, as well as those who assist with equipment maintenance.

The garden shed near the street is beginning to

have color and artwork added back to it after restoration work was done in the spring to scrape off the peeling paint and deteriorating artwork



that was done over 13 years ago and prime the exterior boards. Gilda Lions, owner of 6 Ponds Farm, hand-crafted, painted and donated a customized wooden barn quilt for the shed. Gilda is a friend and supporter of Feed Fannin and has donated tomato plants for the garden for several years.

A second barn quilt was donated by another local part-time artist, Adri Herman, who is a neighbor of a garden volunteer.

Gratitude is expressed to both of these artists for their generosity

and willingness to share their talent with Feed Fannin as well as anyone who drives by on Ada Street. The garden volunteers and I are in the process of adding additional signage and artwork to beautify the shed and to cover areas where windows had been broken.



Time to Give Thanks and Give Back

So as the summer fades into fall and harvest time is coming to an end, I pause to give thanks for the bountiful season we have experienced and all the knowledge that has been taken in and all that has been shared. Sweet potatoes have been curing in the barn since harvest, and dirt will have been dusted off and the potatoes taken to the pantry for distribution by the time you read this. The barn and farmhouse have been decorated for fall to welcome all passersby on the train to Blue Ridge and for all to enjoy. Planning is already underway for next spring to continue to work “smarter, not harder” and provide a productive, yet beautiful place to work, educate and learn, encourage and grow.

Feed Fannin plans to continue the tradition of partnering with several community groups to provide holiday meal boxes and with the Good Samaritans to provide turkeys and sweet potatoes for the upcoming Thanksgiving Community Meal on Thanksgiving Day at the Fannin County High School Cafeteria. We will also provide meat and food boxes to Meals on Wheels and several other community outreach projects. In addition, Feed Fannin will purchase and supply 800 hams to be donated to Family Connection Food Pantry to be distributed during the holiday season. We feel blessed to be able to help so many people. ❀