



Community Ecology Institute

ANNUAL REPORT 2021



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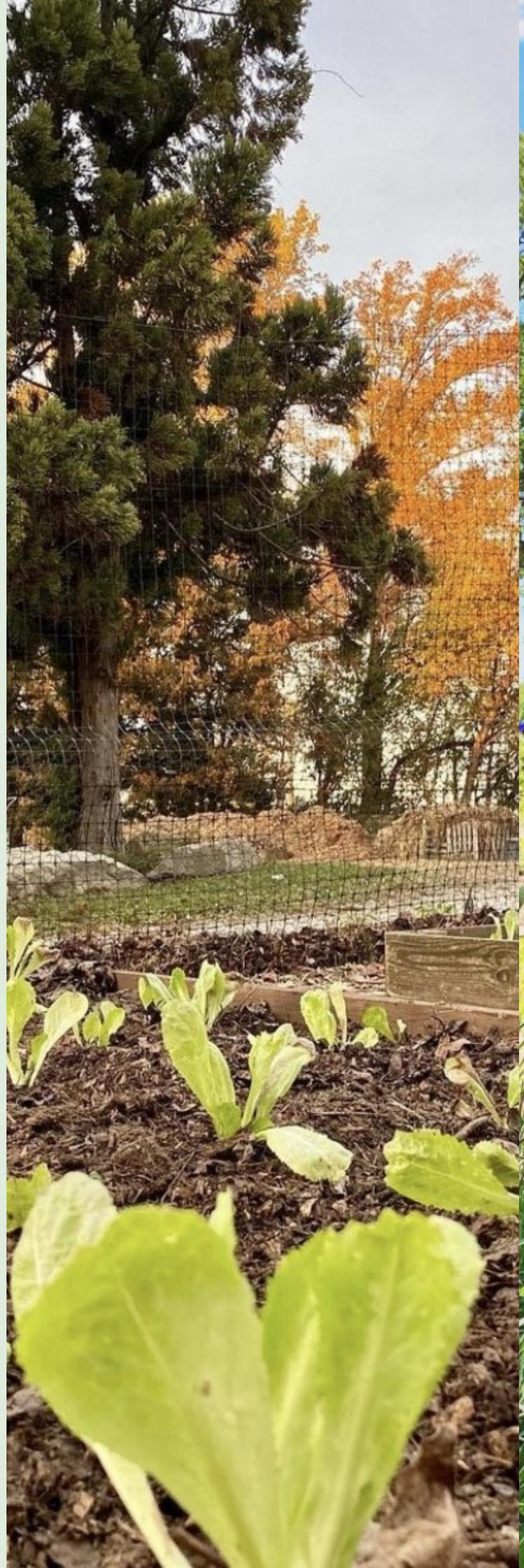
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Hello, Community!

With all the challenges facing our world in 2021, the Community Ecology Institute (CEI) has been working with active hope to cultivate communities where people and nature thrive together. We have faith in Desmond Tutu's teaching that "it's those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world."

It has been a joy and honor to reflect on the bits of good connected with our work in preparing this 2021 Annual Report. I hope you can find yourself a lovely place in which to savor this document, finding things in the pages ahead that invite a smile and offer inspiration. We are grateful to have you joining us in celebrating a year of meaningful growth and progress, including:

- adding six new members to our team.
- closely collaborating with more than a dozen local organizations.
- launching our Nourishing Gardens program, which offered training to 16 people and installed or enhanced ten gardens.
- significantly growing our Roots & Wings program, which served 86 children between the ages of 5 and 13.
- graduating our first class of high-school interns and enhancing this joyful program.
- completing our stormwater management best practices construction project in the northwest portion of our property and introducing the Walkable Watershed concept for the community surrounding Freetown Farm.
- working with more than 1,000 individual volunteers to complete a tremendous number of projects at Freetown Farm.
- growing more than 5,000 pounds of produce, the majority of which was donated to our neighbor, the non-profit Grassroots Crisis Intervention Center.
- growing approximately 7,500 seedlings—a portion for sale, a portion for Freetown Farm, and a portion for the community through our Nourishing Gardens program.

There is so much more to share in the coming pages, and it was all made possible by our tremendous community! Thank you for being a part of the CEI family and helping us to achieve so much good this year! We are looking forward to more goodness to come and wishing you all health and happiness.

In gratitude,

Chiara

Chiara D'Amore, Ph.D.
Founder & Executive Director



MISSION

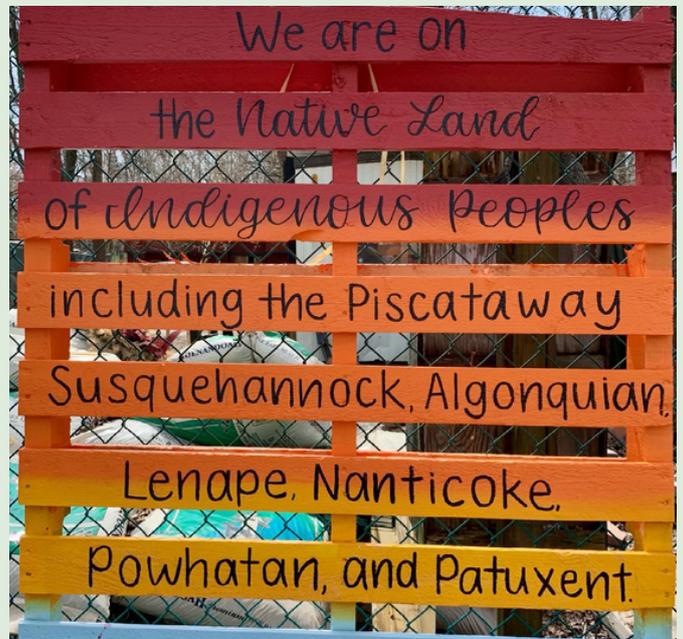
The Community Ecology Institute's mission is to cultivate communities where people and nature thrive together. Our work focuses on tangible, community-level change at the intersection of environment, education, equity, and health. Our initiatives have concentrated on four Cs: Connection to Nature, Civic Ecology, Community Health, and Climate Action.

NATIVE LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Freetown Farm is on land that is the ancestral home of indigenous peoples including the Piscataway, Susquehannock, Algonquian, Lenape, Nanticoke, Powhatan, and Patuxent, among others. Native people have stewarded this land for many generations. We are grateful for their strength, resilience, and wisdom, and we strive to uphold our responsibilities to the natural world according to their example.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION AND JUSTICE

Just as biodiversity strengthens natural systems, the diversity of human experience strengthens our efforts to create socially and ecologically healthy communities. CEI is committed to honoring diversity, prioritizing inclusion, and working towards equity in all we do. We are dedicated to creating an environment free from any kind of discrimination including race, color, religion, age, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, disability, national or ethnic origin, and veteran status. Our land was part of the Underground Railroad and is now within Columbia, Maryland—a place explicitly founded by James Rouse to be “a garden for growing people where anyone—whatever their race, wealth or religious beliefs—could reach their full potential.” We continuously work to make this vision a reality and to help other communities do the same. CEI joins the call for a more equitable, inclusive, peaceful, and just future that reaffirms dignity and ensures safety for all.



STRATEGIC PLAN

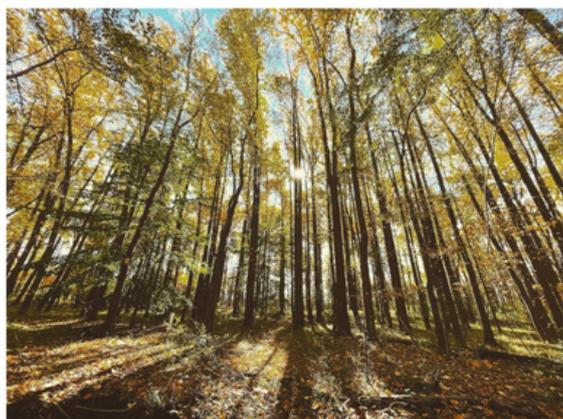
From April through December of 2021, CEI leaders worked with Purple Desert Consulting to draft the organization's first formal strategic plan. Through a community input survey and numerous internal work sessions, we have affirmed, updated, and deeply considered the scope and nature of the initiatives we aim to pursue in service of our mission. During the first half of 2022, we are mapping this plan to conduct and complete organizational endeavors over the next five years. We will be sharing facets of the strategic plan with the community upon its completion. For now, we are delighted to share the following philosophical foundations of our strategic approach.

VISION: Communities are healthy, resilient, abundant, and rooted in regenerative relationships that honor the inherent interdependence between people and the ecosystems of which we are a part.

MISSION: To Cultivate Communities Where People and Nature Thrive Together

GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

1. Inclusive Belonging
2. Restorative Reciprocity
3. Health and Wellness
4. Integrity & Accountability



CEI STRATEGIC PLAN

2022-2027

COMMUNITY ECOLOGY INSTITUTE
*Cultivating communities where
people and nature thrive together*



2021 AWARDS

ACS HUMANITARIAN AWARD



The Association of Community Services of Howard County honors individuals and organizations with these prestigious awards to recognize work that volunteers do in service to others that exceeds any and all expectations. CEI won a 2021 award for our efforts to save and steward Freetown Farm. [Click here](#) to see the video created for the virtual award ceremony.

ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON FOUNDATION PRIZE

In 2021, Howard County won a nationally competitive **Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Culture of Health Prize**. CEI is proud to have been showcased in the County's application and we were honored and thrilled to receive the \$25,000 award from the County. [Click here](#) to enjoy images of the award celebration at Freetown Farm and [here](#) for a press release!



CHANGEMAKER CHALLENGE AWARD



The Horizon Foundation, United Way of Central Maryland, Women's Giving Circle, and Community Foundation of Howard County collaboratively support community innovation with an annual "Changemaker Challenge." (Think "Shark Tank" for social change!) The theme for 2021 was Innovate, Cultivate, Uplift. [CEI's pitch](#) introduced our new Nourishing Gardens program, and we were deeply honored to win the Challenge's Community Choice Award!

Changemaker (n) – One who desires change in the world and, by gathering knowledge and resources, makes that change happen.

2021 IMPACTS

ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY

In 2021, people continued to shape a "new normal," seeking safe ways to combat isolation and move beyond screen-based interactions. The opportunity to volunteer at Freetown Farm was a win-win for the community and CEI!

- More than 1,000 people volunteered at Freetown Farm.
- More than 10,000 volunteer hours were contributed, equating to an economic impact of more than \$270,000!
- People with a fantastic mix of ages and backgrounds participated, whether arriving individually or with families, or whether identified with Scouts, schools, faith and community groups, businesses, or non-profits.



GROWING FOOD



Working together, CEI staff, interns, volunteers, and community partners successfully grew thousands of pounds of produce at Freetown Farm in 2021. Our primary growing space was the **Grow It, Eat It Garden**, from which 3,000 pounds of produce was donated to the Grassroots Crisis Intervention Center, providing residents of their homeless shelter with fresh vegetables and herbs. Food was also grown in our Market Garden, Children's Garden; NAACP garden; and Climate Victory Garden.

TRANSFORMING THE FARM

Freetown Farm becomes more vibrant with each passing season. We have created dozens of unique learning and growing spaces on the property. Scout projects grace every corner: fencing, murals, signage, picnic tables, wood-working benches, and more. Projects of note include:

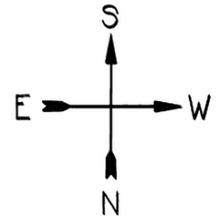
- *A new entrance sign, pillars, gate, and information kiosk.
- *Grow It, Eat It Garden re-design with new brick pathway.
- *Re-commissioning a central greenhouse.
- *Replacing covers on two large quonset huts in the Maker Space with fresh waterproof material.
- *Expanded water infrastructure, so we have more accessible and efficient gardening watering in 2022!



A big thank you to our intern, Hailyn, for the beautiful sign at the farm entrance!

FREETOWN FARM

-  Kiosk
-  Parking
-  Pollinator Garden
-  Bioretention Pond & Meadow
-  Rain Garden
-  Fire Pit
-  Chicken Coop
-  Beehives
-  Medicinal Herb Spiral
-  Wetlands
-  Makerspace
-  Restroom
-  Volunteer Tool Shed



Community Ecology Institute
@ Freetown Farm

[~Click here to take an updated virtual tour of the farm~](#)

Thank you to Hawke Reyes for updating our Freetown Farm map with all the wonderful additions we've had in the past year. And thank you to Spatial Systems Associates for updating our virtual tour!

HELPING HANDS

In 2021, more than 1,000 people volunteered at Freetown Farm--twice as many as the year before! All of these helping hands made a tremendous difference. To manage their involvement in 2021, we were grateful to be matched with a full time AmeriCorp Volunteer Coordinator, Sophie Silver-Isenstadt, who joined us in the fall just as our previous Community Engagement Coordinator, Veronica Adler, started graduate school. Sophie has worked with individuals, families, schools, faith groups, businesses, Scouts and more to help us care for and enhance the farm while continuously welcoming and engaging our community members.



One of the ways we accomplished so much at the farm was through community groups that regularly came out for volunteer days. For example, some regular groups included Leadership U, the United Way, Glenelg High School, Equity4HC, Mom's Organic Market, the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Columbia, Strong Future Maryland, Volunteens and the "Chicken Tenders"! We also had and continue to have an amazing group of core volunteers including: Charlie Goedeke, Elisabeth Ceysens, Mindy Golde, Edwin Gould, Claudia LaFuse, Shyla Cogar, Randall Amster and so many more.

2021 Interns:

Read more about this wonderful program and group of students on page 14.

- *Sophie Allen
- *Emma Bush
- *Clare Chung
- *Akil Cole
- *Jameelah Destry
- *Marissa Douglas
- *Connie Dvorak
- *Michael Gonzalez
- *Hana I.
- *Margaret Kato
- *Eli Kitterman
- *Gracie Knapp
- *Hailyn Lai
- *Ximing Luo
- *Ina Ma
- *Eduardo Marin
- *Muthoni Michhuki
- *Sean Miller
- *Ayla Saksena
- *Alisha Service
- *Jasmine Shearer
- *Trevor Silbert
- *Kiran Singh
- *Joran Wesley
- *Brody Wojdon
- *Yan Yang
- *Grace Yi
- *Livia Zhao

Scout Projects completed in 2021:

- *Mitchell Adkins – Youth Garden shed
- *Thomas Arnes – Pollinator garden expansion
- *Andrew Arthungal – Planting 30 native trees
- *Kathryn Durlach – Eastern property line fencing
- *Roxanne Haythorn – Climate Victory Garden shed
- *Ryan Jensen – HopeWorks Garden shed
- *Darius Johnson – Raised beds for gardens
- *Aditi Kashyap – Building adopted box turtle habitat
- *Jay Leckram – New mailbox and split-rail fence
- *Abishay Reddy – Educational area in Grow It, Eat It Garden
- *Jaya Shelat – Growing food for Grassroots
- *Shete Smit – Firewood storage bins and fencing
- *Vianne Stanford – Trellis archways into the woods
- *Ananya Vijay – Gear Closet shed
- *Nate Zhang – Grow It, Eat It Garden shed
- *Jamie Zhao – Sensory exploration area in woods

STORMWATER SOLUTIONS

Freetown Farm is located less than a mile from the Middle Patuxent River within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. Currently, stormwater from neighboring Atholton High School leaves that property and flows into the surrounding community in chronically problematic ways.

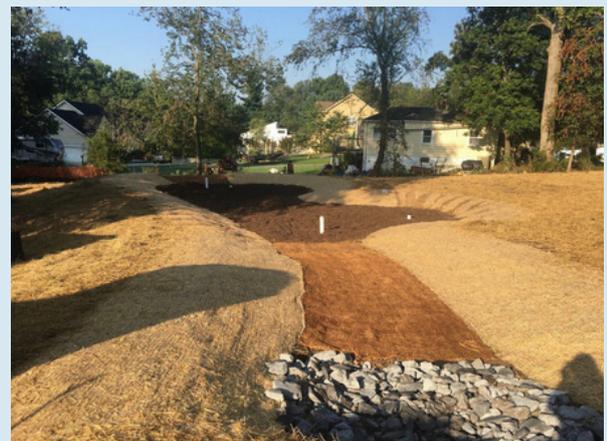
A portion of this water flows onto the farm via a culvert and underground pipe. The farm's previous owner directed this stormwater to the western edge of the property, resulting in flooding and erosion problems for residential neighbors.

In response, CEI is transforming shared stormwater challenges into an organizing and educational opportunity, leading to collective care for our connected ecosystem.

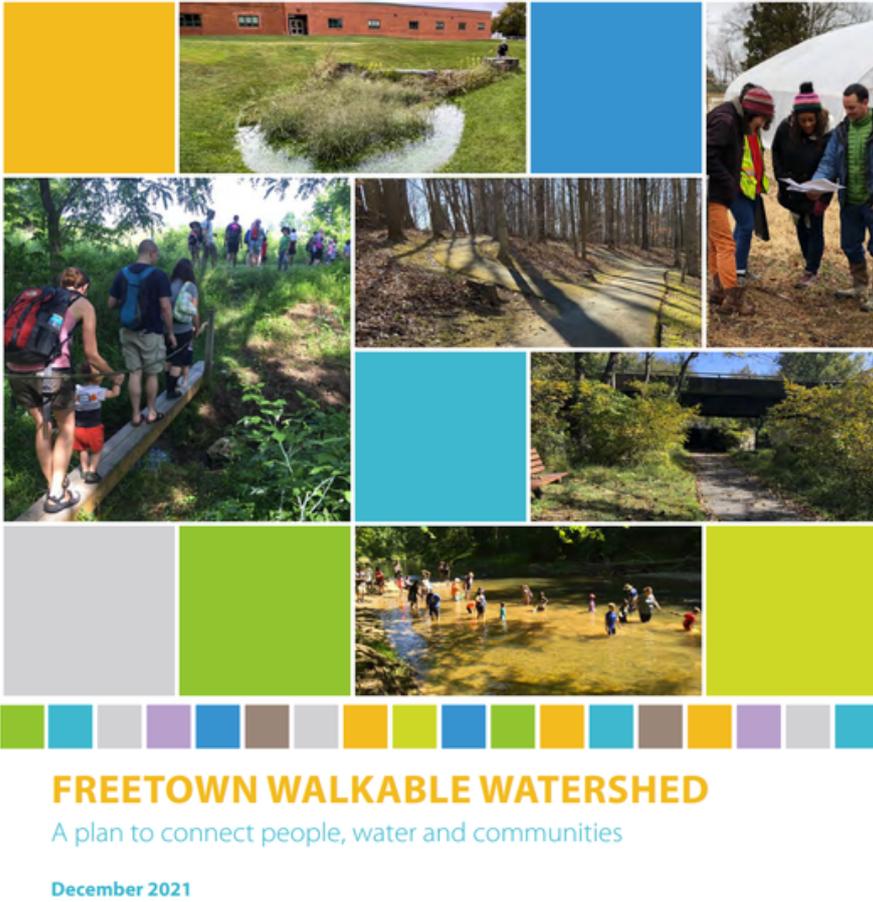
From 2019 through 2021, CEI developed and implemented a series of stormwater-management projects funded by grants from the Chesapeake Bay Trust (CBT) (which are partially funded by the Howard County government). First, we completed an ecological master plan of Freetown Farm and developed a plan to implement best management practices in the northwest field of the farm that would slow incoming stormwater, spread it out, and allow it to soak into the ground.

CEI then worked with Biohabitats to finalize the infrastructure design and with Triangle Contracting and Howard EcoWorks to implement the plans.

After two years of work, a bioretention pond, surrounded by berms, swales, and a pollinator meadow were completed in the fall of 2021! The Howard County Watershed Stewards Academy has been a key partner through all phases of this work.



WALKABLE WATERSHED



A second series of CBT grants through the "Green Streets, Green Jobs, Green Towns" program is focused on mitigating the runoff from Atholton High School itself by developing a green stormwater infrastructure concept plan for their property. The concept and design phase for Atholton are complete, with a goal for the school-grounds component to be completed in 2023. The Freetown Farm stormwater project and the Atholton project are core to the proposed Freetown Walkable Watershed described below.

[Click here for the Walkable Watershed report.](#)

A Walkable Watershed integrates the flow of water and people into a cohesive strategy to improve the overall health of a community and the surrounding watershed. The concept is based on the idea that high-quality water goes hand-in-hand with a high quality of life, supporting access to the outdoors, enhanced community infrastructure and services, and stronger health outcomes. A Walkable Watershed development process:

- provides an integrated planning approach to improve water quality and community health
- engages a broad range of stakeholders
- links environmental and social equity goals
- generates innovative, community-based solutions grounded in technical analysis
- creates multiple benefits, such as walkability, outdoor learning, revitalization, community stewardship and improved water quality
- attracts and leverages multiple funding sources

With the support of a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, CEI worked with Skeo Solutions over the course of 2021 to create a Walkable Watershed concept for the community surrounding Freetown Farm. This plan proposes a set of features that integrate green infrastructure and learning landscapes to improve watershed health and quality of life. With substantial community input, the concept plan creates opportunities for people to protect the watershed, enjoy the rich local history and environment, and promote walking and biking.

CEI PROGRAMS

A COMMUNITY OF FAMILIES IN NATURE



Our first program, Columbia Families in Nature (CFIN), celebrated its seventh birthday in March 2021! COVID required a pause for this program last spring, but in December, we welcomed our new CFIN Director, Tameka Walker, and embarked on re-envisioning how to best serve the community with this program in 2022 and beyond. We renamed the program "A Community of Families in Nature" (still CFIN) and launched a new seasonal membership approach to participation, capped at 20 families. At the close of 2021, our new winter session was fully subscribed within two days! We are excited to see what 2022 brings and are appreciative of a new collaboration with the Columbia Association on this program.

"We love CFIN so much! The people we have met, the skills and information we have learned, and the memories we have made have been such a huge part of our family life. Thank you thank you thank you!!" ~words from a family renewing their membership for the coming year



Columbia
Families
in Nature



7 years
278 free events
9,300 participants
20,000 hours
outside



CEI PROGRAMS

ROOTS & WINGS LEARNING COMMUNITY



It has been said that there are two lasting bequests we can give our children: roots and wings. "Roots" refers to a deep sense of connection to self, to community, and to one's place in the world. This layered sense of connection leads to both curiosity and a love of learning--the "wings" that help children soar into wider worlds of understanding and purpose. The Roots & Wings Learning Community provides opportunities for children to develop passions and talents through holistic, experiential, predominantly outdoor programs. The mission of Roots & Wings is to provide an educational experience for home-schooled children where their knowledge, creativity, and voices are nurtured through nature-infused lessons and activities.

In its fourth year, Roots & Wings welcomed 86 children to the program, expanded class hours, and benefited from a variety of guest speakers including a bird specialist, a potter, a horticulturalist and an artist. We implemented a new Farm Fables program for 5 to 7 year-olds and a new "upper" program for kids aged 10 to 13 who are growing up with Roots & Wings. These older students focused in part on social responsibility projects which explored the United Nations Sustainability and Equality Goals, how we address them at the farm, and on our connections to them as a community.

The Roots & Wings program is led by Director Lindsay Kreisher who teaches along with a wonderful team of colleagues: Dana Belanger, Chelsea Clark, Cecilia Ituarte, Heather Johnson, Shiren Tehrani, and Katherine Diamond. Of their work, a recent parent has shared:

"This program has truly changed the lives of my kids. We've tried public, private, religious, co-op, classical, and all-at-home. Roots and Wings is the first program where they seem genuinely excited about their learning and have been nurtured as 'whole people.'"



CEI PROGRAMS

THE MAKER SPACE: TRANSITION HOCO & THE GEAR CLOSET



mak·er·space: noun - a place in which people with shared interests can gather to work on projects while sharing ideas, equipment, and knowledge.

CEI's Maker Space, situated at the center of Freetown Farm, supports personal and community resilience by creating a space for people to learn arts and skills that were commonly known several generations ago.

In 2021, substantial investments were made in transforming what had been a storage area on the farm into a functional space for community classes and events. Both existing quonset huts were given fresh waterproof covers, and 2022 will see the construction of a beautiful new outdoor classroom, built with the support of a Howard County grant funded through the plastic bag fee. This grant also enabled us to hire Maddy Bloom, our Maker Space Coordinator. Maddy works closely with our lead Maker Space mentor, Charlie Geodeke, who came to CEI through our integration of the **Transition Howard County** program in 2020. Transition has been hosting Repair Cafe events throughout the County for a number of years; in 2021, Freetown's Maker Space became the new home of a monthly Repair Cafe where people gather to fix electrical and mechanical devices, mend clothing, and upcycle and repurpose items. Repair Cafés are part of a grassroots movement that aims to reduce waste, overconsumption, and planned obsolescence. They ignite a "can do" spirit and strengthen social cohesion.

In 2021, a new community initiative was integrated into CEI and the Maker Space! The **Community Gear Closet** has a mission to increase diversity and opportunities for all community members to get outside by lending safe, quality gear to our community. The public donates gently used gear that we clean and fix. Members of the community can then apply to borrow the gear to have their own wonderful outdoor experiences.



CEI PROGRAMS

ROOT & RISE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM



Since the summer of 2020 CEI has been running an internship for local high-school students. The program offers valuable work experience, bolstering participants' professional resumes and building their connections in the fields of environment, health and education. Our first cohort of 16 interns navigated the uncharted territory of virtual schooling together, bonding deeply over their time together at Freetown Farm--one of the only places that many of them went on a regular basis due to Covid. This group of students was featured in an article by Yes! Magazine that discussed the importance of creating equitable access to green spaces for youth and the value of the CEI internship model. Their summer 2021 graduation ceremony photo from the NAACP garden cabbage patch was the cover of the article, which can be read by [clicking here](#).

This Experiential Learning Farm Helps Youth Build a Better World



In the summer of 2021, we welcomed several colleges students into our internship program and onboarded a new cohort of high-school students with whom we are navigating the "new" terrain of in-person schooling.

One of our interns shared: *"While thinking all was lost, missing out on majority of my junior year and the entirety of my senior year, I found Freetown Farm. With my knowledge in woodworking and engineering I became the first Maker Space Intern and completed numerous carpentry projects. CEI is made of the most welcoming and supportive group of people, and I am truly grateful for all of the memories and knowledge gained through the hands-on experience CEI offers. I will continue my education at UMD as a Mechanical Engineering major and now plan on minoring in sustainability."*

CEI PROGRAMS

NOURISHING GARDENS

In the Fall of 2021, CEI launched the Nourishing Gardens program. The program transforms lawns into gardens that nourish our families, the community, and the environment. **The program is two-fold: (1) installing food and pollinator gardens in yards, community spaces, and with community-based organizations and businesses, and (2) providing a green-infrastructure jobs training program.** The program brings the benefits, learning, and experience of Freetown Farm directly to the front doors of our neighbors. It was tailor-designed to meet the needs of Howard County and the surrounding communities, connecting best practice with locally designed solutions, building on pre-existing and emerging community assets. **Sixteen trainees** were welcomed into the program's inaugural cohort and taught by expert team members, **Erica Jones and Gary Pilarchik**. They contributed **more than 450 hours** of combined installation support to develop and care for public gardens at schools, in parks, and in community open spaces throughout Columbia. CEI was honored to be awarded financial support for the program from the Jain Family Foundation, the Howard County Changemaker Challenge, and the Village of Hickory Ridge. In 2022, CEI looks forward to welcoming a new cohort of trainees and installing more gardens in homes and schools!

THERESA TAYLOR, PROGRAM DIRECTOR NOURISHING GARDENS

"I joined CEI as the Nourishing Gardens Program Director in June 2021. It has been a joy to combine my love for gardening with my passion for supporting community-based programs that increase access to healthy, locally grown produce. This year was filled with many exciting firsts during the program launch and I'm eager to welcome its growth in 2022!"

**Grow food. Cultivate community.
Protect the planet.**



Special Thank You
to the
Jain Family Foundation
for making the launch of
the Nourishing Gardens
program possible!

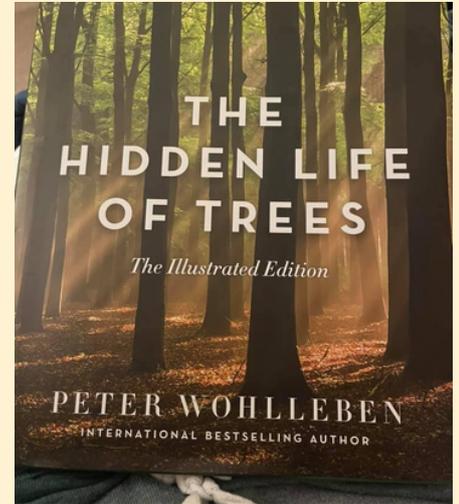


Learn more at
www.communityecologyinstitute.org/nourishing-gardens.html

NEW INITIATIVES

SEASONAL CELEBRATIONS & BOOK CLUBS

In 2021, CEI began to offer seasonal book clubs as well as celebrations at the solstices and equinoxes. Book selections included: *Braiding Sweetgrass* by Robin Wall Kimmer; *The Hidden Life of Trees* by Peter Wohlleben; *Bicycling with Butterflies* by Sara Dykman; and *Gathering Moss* by Robin Wall Kimmerer. Our seasonal celebrations were facilitated by community member Alexandra Pallas.



COMMUNITY BLOOMS PODCAST

Our talented college intern (and now Board Member), Akil Cole came up with the idea to create a CEI podcast. Here is his wonderful invitation: "Are you tired of the doomsday climate scenarios, overwhelming forecasts, or general bad news? Join us for refreshing, inspiring, and hopeful stories from real people in different communities working to protect the environment, educate those around them, and improve the health of their communities." In 2021, Akil interviewed community members for seven episodes, which can be accessed [through this link](#) or by searching for Community Blooms wherever you like to find your podcasts.



PLANT SALES

In 2021, CEI offered a series of pop-up plant sales at Freetown Farm to help people grow produce and flowers at home. Plants were started from seed in our greenhouse and included a wide range of herbs and favorite veggies, including tomatoes, cucumbers, squash, peppers, and more. Select native flowers were sold as companion plantings and pollinator supporters.

ONLY \$2 PER PLANT

Freetown Farm
POP UP PLANT SALE

8000 Harriet Tubman Ln | 11-5 Saturday (5/22)
Columbia, MD 21044 | 11-2 Sunday (5/23)

COLLABORATIONS

NAACP

The Howard County Branch of the NAACP has been a part of stewarding Freetown Farm since the beginning of 2020. Members have designed, established, and nurtured a bountiful vegetable garden from scratch, growing abundant kale, chard, okra, basil, peppers, broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, and more! In 2021, approximately 175 volunteers helped out, with 40 families participating in the George Washington Carver community supported agriculture initiative!



NAACP Howard County Branch George Washington Carver (Growing Food Together) CSA

HOPEWORKS



HopeWorks volunteers and staff spent approximately 137 hours on Freetown Farm, working in the HopeWorks healing garden--a safe space of connection and growth for survivors of domestic violence. This produce and perennial garden offers a meditative space that helps build a stronger community and fosters a deeper appreciation and bond with the earth. The HopeWorks Our Earth program rooted in this garden supports exploration of environmental injustices that disproportionately affect those who are marginalized.

THE 3RD

The 3rd is a Howard County non-profit that supports women of color entrepreneurs. The 3rd enhanced the medicinal herb garden at Freetown Farm by installing raised beds that showcase plants used for health and well being. The garden has become a place where community members can rest, reflect, and restore their energy.



COLLABORATIONS

ROTARY CLUB OF COLUMBIA/PATUXENT



Rotary Club
Columbia/Patuxent

CEI is very grateful to the Rotary Club for helping us continue to develop much needed infrastructure at the farm. In 2021, they enhanced and expanded our water system, ensuring that each of our primary gardens has direct water access. They also helped us replace the covers to our quonset huts used for programs and storage in the Maker Space and completed the preparatory work for an electricity improvement project throughout the Maker Space.



PUBLIC SCHOOL



Freetown Farm offers students within the Howard County Public School System's Student Employment Training Programs the opportunity to build independent work skills in a team environment. In addition, the program teaches students the meaning of community, care for the environment, and vocational fundamentals. In 2021, nineteen students in the Project Search, Career and Community Exploration, and/or Work Study programs were at Freetown Farm three days each week.

HIGHER EDUCATION

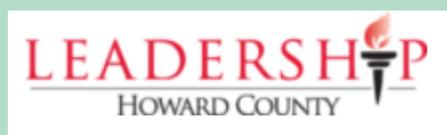
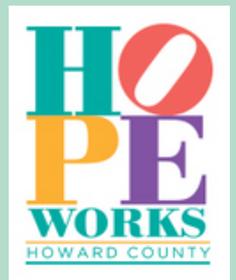
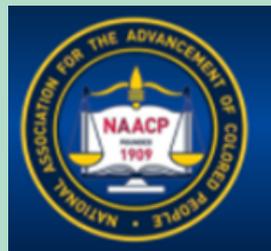
In 2021, we continued to foster collaborations with colleges and universities. We are working with several University of Maryland Extension programs, including the Watershed Stewards Academy and Master Gardeners; Howard Community College; the University of Maryland Applied Agriculture program; Georgetown environmental studies students; and Towson occupational therapy graduate students.



COLLABORATING ORGANIZATIONS



The Jain Family Foundation



InLace

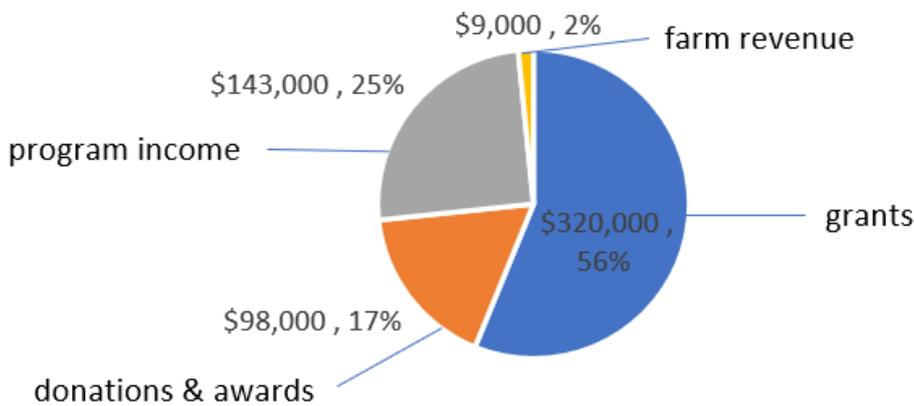


FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

CEI sustained a healthy financial profile in 2021, generating \$570,000 in gross operational income. Grants comprised the largest percentage of our revenue, with 56% percent of our budget coming from 18 grants described on the next page. Unrestricted donations and program revenue support the organization's day-to-day operations. Rental income and revenue from produce sales were invested right back into the stewardship of Freetown Farm.

With a generous donation of \$150,000 from the Reis Foundation, CEI's capital account closed 2021 with \$250,000 in funds reserved for renovating the unfinished barn at Freetown Farm into a Community Engagement Center, inclusive of office space. Progress is underway!

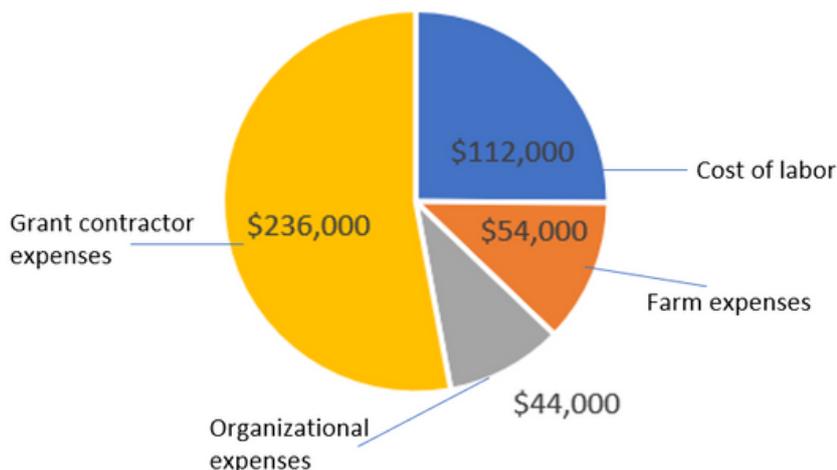
2021 Gross Operational Revenue



\$570,000

Gross revenue

2021 Operational Expenses



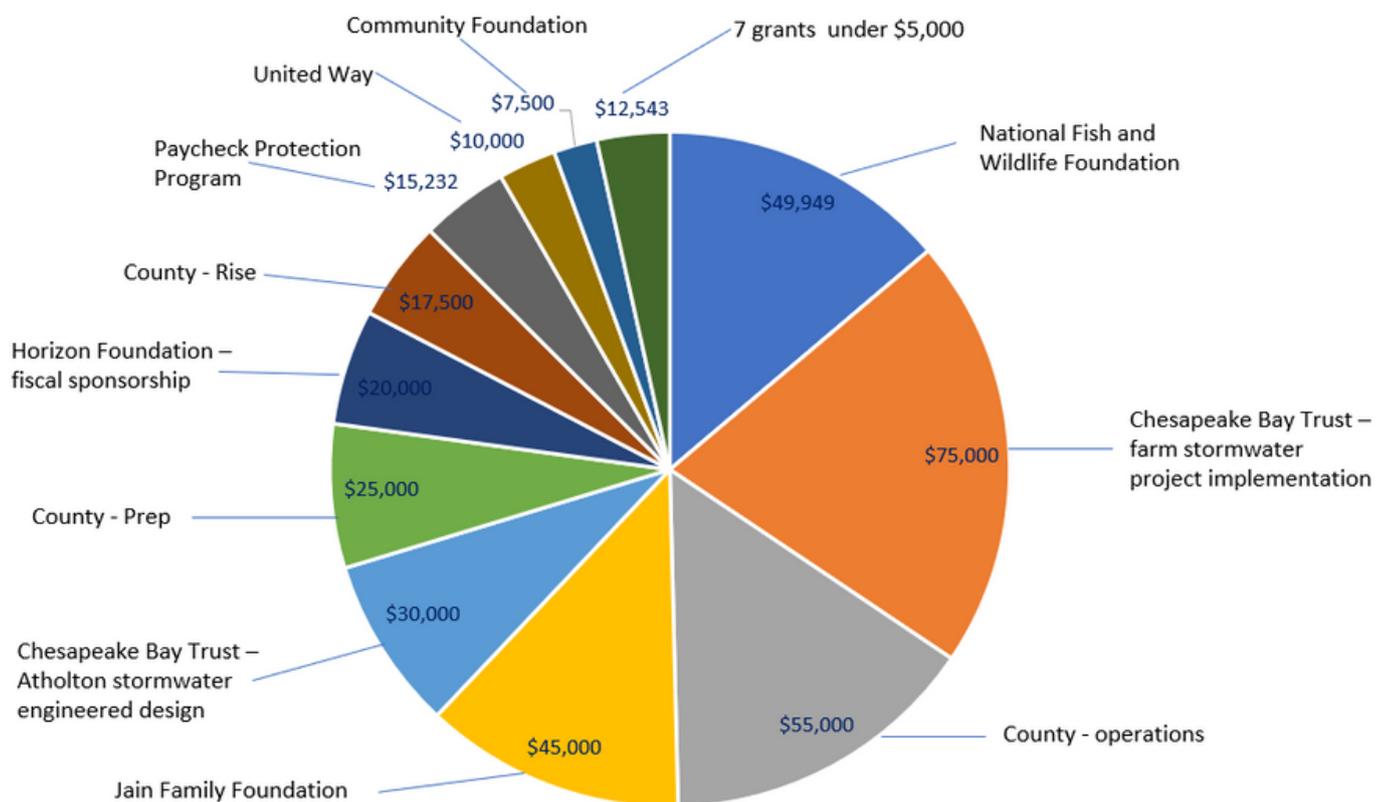
\$446,000

Total operational expenses

GRANTS OVERVIEW

In 2021, CEI was grateful to receive an array of grants that support both our organizational operations as well as specific projects and initiatives. **A total of \$362,724 in new grant funding was awarded to CEI in 2021 across 18 different grants.** Of these funds, \$320,000 was received in 2021 and \$226,068 was spent, with the remaining \$136,656 allocated for expenditure in 2022. In 2021, CEI also spent \$31,780 in grants awarded in 2020 to complete associated initiatives that spanned calendar years.

Our largest grant providers in 2021 were the **Chesapeake Bay Trust**, with \$105,000 in funding dedicated to addressing the community stormwater flooding in the area surrounding Freetown Farm, and the **Howard County Government**, with \$102,500 across three grants for operational support, a plastic bag fee funded grant to develop our Maker Space, and a Covid response grant. The **National Fish and Wildlife Foundation** provided funding to create a Walkable Watershed Initiative for our community, and the **Jain Family Foundation** invested in the launch of our Nourishing Gardens Program.



IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS

THANK YOU TO:

- **BA Auto** - for maintenance of our farm trucks
- **Bray Hill LLC** - for work on CEI's forest stand delineation for our stormwater project permit
- **Keri Isenstadt Photography** - for team photos
- **Larry Schoen** - for engineering services related the barn renovation project
- **MTK Consulting LLC (Mike Kapusta)** - for support establishing WiFi access throughout the farm
- **Nelson Tree Service** - for tree maintenance
- **Outdoor Architects** - for the donation of time and materials to create entryway pillars and a Grow It, Eat It garden pathway and patio at Freetown Farm
- **Rotary of Columbia Patuxent** - for financial and physical support of infrastructure enhancements at Freetown Farm, including recovering the quonset huts in the Maker Space and vastly improving our water infrastructure
- **Rubino and Co.** - for financial management support
- **The Rusted Garden (Gary Pilarchik)** - for facilitating numerous in-kind donations, supporting the build of our second greenhouse, and donating garden supplies
- **Transforming Architecture (Karen Pitsley)** - for designing our new outdoor classroom for the Maker Space area of Freetown Farm
- **Spatial Systems Associations** - for updating our virtual farm tour and stormwater project research
- **Watershed Stewards Academy** - for support of stormwater management initiatives including the bioretention pond construction at Freetown Farm and the Walkable Watershed initiative

\$50,000

Value of in-kind contributions in 2021!



COMMUNITY FUNDRAISING

CEI is deeply grateful to everyone who supported CEI in 2021!

We received over \$66,000 in donations from more than 240 individual donors. We would like to say a special thank you to all of the "Stakeholders" listed below who are at the heart of sustaining our operations, having made contributions equivalent to \$21 or more each month throughout the year.

Christina Abasi

Janey Ady

Adiyah Ali

Randall Amster

Chris Bare

Caela Barry

Paula Bernal

Judy Bloom

Amy Boehmer

Benjamin Busch

Deidre Cauble

Bob Chasnow

Louise Chawla

Bevin Clare

Chelsea Clark

Ann Coren

Lisa Crabtree

Helena Curtis

Patrick Curtis

Chad D'Amore

Heather D'Amore

Daniel Duesterhaus

Margo Duesterhaus

Georgia Eacker

George Eifert

Liz & Brian Feighner

Katherine Flanagan

Pamela Franks

Judith & Charlie Goedeke

Edwin Gould

Kathleen Hayes

Alisa Holbert

Kim Hooper

Tina Horn

Erica Jones

Lisbeth Jorgensen

Sylvia Karman

Allison Korn & Alan Clardy

Lindsay Kreisher

Monica Lewis

Lisa Marini

Kenneth McCallister

Amanda McGuire

Susan McIlwraith

Mike and Leah Miller

Evelyn Mogren

Danielle Morgan

John Overdeck

Stephen Pantano

Bodie Pyndus

Caitlin & Chris Roscoe

Heidi Schweingruber

Stuart Silver

Ted Silver

Jean & Ari Silver-Isenstadt

Gabe Smith

Judy Smith

Klohver Tynes

Mike Wagner

Richard Waugaman

Jovonne Williams

Susan Yi

Phyllis Yigdall

Amy Zezula

Jason Zhao

Businesses:

*2HB Incorporated

*Chaberton Energy

Holdings Inc

*Emmanuel United

Methodist Church

[Please join our community of supporters at
www.communityecologyinstitute.org/donate](http://www.communityecologyinstitute.org/donate)

CEI BOARD

In 2021, CEI's 13-member Board of Directors oversaw the organization with great dedication and talent. We want to express special thanks to our outgoing President, Ashley Woodward, for her years of service to CEI.



Ashley Woodward



Adiyah Ali



Chelsea Clark



Patrick Curtis



Margo Duesterhaus



James Handley



Erica Jones



Monica Lewis



Leah Miller



Gary Pilarchik



Jean Silver-Isenstadt



Gabe Smith



Jason Zhao

We invite you to learn more about our board members at www.communityecologyinstitute.org/board-of-directors.html

VERONICA ADLER



Community Engagement Coordinator

MADDY BLOOM



Maker Space Coordinator

LUCY BURNHAM



Chesapeake Conservation Corp Member

CHRISTY FERGUSON



Chesapeake Conservation Corp Member

SOPHIE SILVER-ISENSTADT



Volunteer Coordinator
(Via AmeriCorps)

CEI STAFF

CHIARA D'AMORE



Executive Director

LINDSAY KREISHER



Roots & Wings
Program Director

THERESA TAYLOR

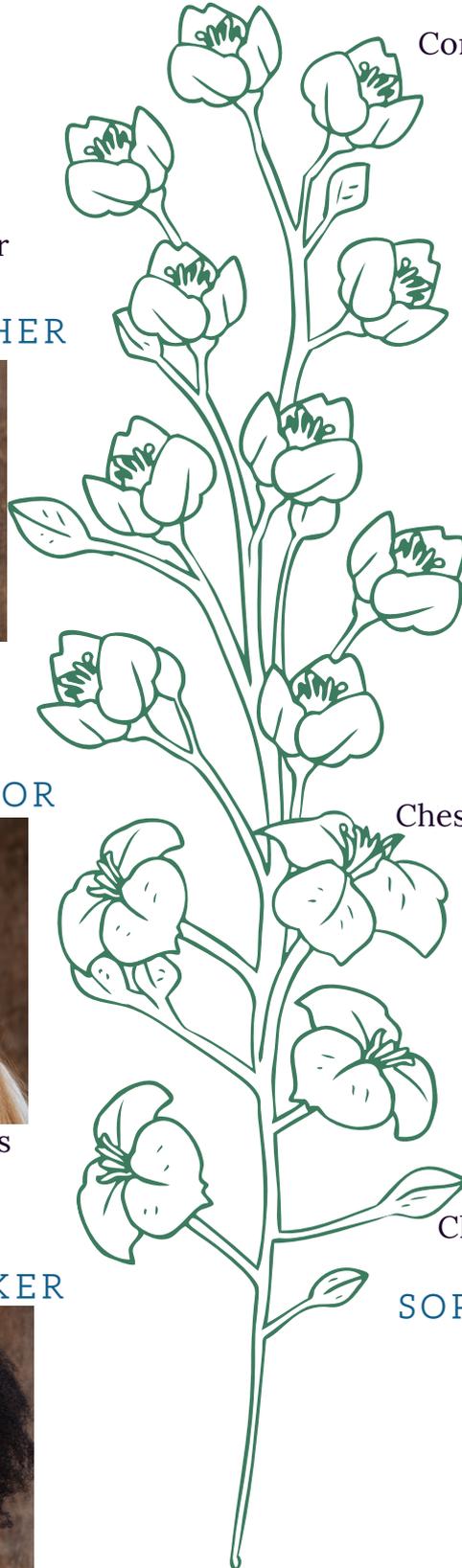


Nourishing Gardens
Program Director

TAMEKA WALKER



A Community of Families in Nature
Program Director



LOOKING AHEAD: BARN RAISING

BUILDING OUT THE BARN!

In 2020, CEI began work with CommONEcology Architects to develop a plan to renovate the unfinished barn at Freetown Farm into office and community engagement space. In 2021, we hired a construction company, Wilhelm Commercial Builders, and submitted our construction permit application to the county. We are eager to begin this renovation project in the spring of 2022 so we have indoor space from which to serve the community year-round.



The renovation design includes a variety of features that will make the final structure a model for green building, including energy efficiency strategies and solar power. We have a goal to be zero net energy in the building and at the farm overall.

Thank you to the Reis Foundation for being the naming sponsor of this project! Visit www.communityecologyinstitute.org/barnraiser to learn about how you can support this exciting project!