



Dear Friends of the Farm,

We are excited to share an important update regarding the future of Crabtree Farms. As we continue to grow, we remain steadfast in our commitment to cultivating a sustainable and thriving future for our organization, our community, and the environment.

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Over the past 25 years, Crabtree Farms has become a cornerstone in Chattanooga, promoting community connections, urban farm-based education, and sustainable agriculture. We want to first express our gratitude for your unwavering support in helping us achieve these goals.

Today, we are delighted to introduce some key initiatives from our recent strategic planning, which will guide us through the next several years as we strive to make an even more significant impact in our community. Our strategic plan outlines the following objectives that will shape our future:

Food & Land Access Programming

Expanding the Crabtree Community Gardening Program: We plan to build 24 more raised garden beds over the next 3 years which will increase the number of accessible community garden plots from 30, to 54 (an increase from 960 sq.ft to 1,728 sq. ft of raised community growing space). As always, two-thirds of the available beds are offered free of charge to residents of Clifton Hills and the surrounding neighborhoods of the 37407 zip code in which the farm resides.

Launching the *Mary Navarre Moore Emerging Farmer Mentorship Program:* Our new Emerging Farmer Mentorship Program will provide underserved producers and the next generation of agricultural professionals with free land access, market access and vocational training. This program will host 4 new farmers from “seed to market” production and will include the creation of (4) 100x100 growing spaces, a tool shed, processing station, cold storage, water & irrigation access. Participants will receive a comprehensive orientation, access to educational courses, regional farm tours, farmer-to-farmer mentorship, and quarterly planning meetings.

Increasing Food Donations: We aim to increase food donations to the Community Fridge and other partner organizations that distribute food to families in need by at least 20%, ensuring that nutritious, locally grown food reaches even more people, especially those in our neighborhood and surrounding areas.

Access to Fresh Produce for SNAP Recipients: Through community outreach and engagement activities, we will work to increase access to nutrient-rich, locally grown food for SNAP recipients, further addressing food access issues in our community.

Education

We will enhance and formalize our on & off-farm educational offerings, ensuring our community has access to valuable learning opportunities.

Events

Spring & Fall Plant Sales: We will be working to diversify our plant offerings to include more natives, more perennials, and more options for successful at-home food production.

Annual 100 Dinner & Auction: We are setting new fundraising goals, expanding event sponsorship and engaging more local businesses in our efforts.

Food Production & Distribution

Partnership with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS): We are committed to our ongoing partnership with the NRCS to carry out our comprehensive conservation and sustainability plan for all of Crabtree Farms' 22 acres, ensuring the long-term health of this land.

Supporting Local Farmers & Producers: We will continue to support new and existing local farmers through collaboration and cooperative marketing and selling opportunities.

Sales & Distribution Model: We have reimagined our distribution model to be of maximum effectiveness for the organization and the community. We will continue to sell our produce at the Main Street Farmers' Market, at the Crabtree Farm Stand, and through select wholesale accounts.

This strategic plan represents a significant step forward, and we invite you to be a part of our journey. Your continued support is vital in helping us achieve our goals and make a positive impact in Chattanooga. We are excited about the opportunities that lie ahead and are eager to work collaboratively with all of our stakeholders to realize our vision.

In the coming weeks and months, we will be sharing more details about specific initiatives, events, and projects related to our strategic plan. We invite you to stay connected and engage with us as we enter this exciting new chapter.

Thank you for your trust, your dedication, and your belief in the mission of Crabtree Farms. Together, we are creating a more sustainable, resilient, and prosperous future for our community



Melonie Lusk
Executive Director
Crabtree Farms of Chattanooga