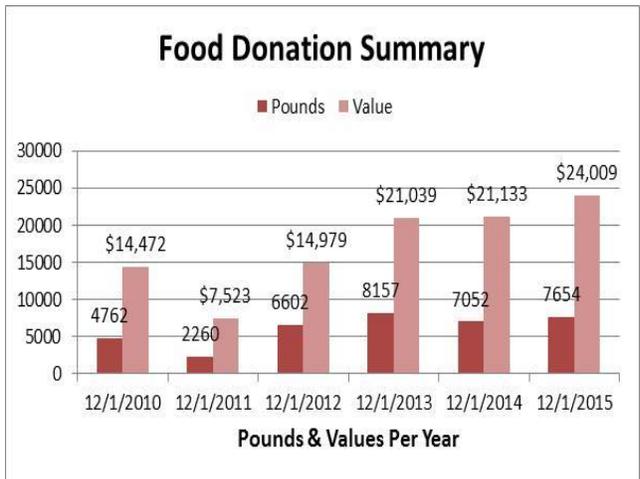


The Centennial Campaign for Massaro Community Farm



The above renderings are preliminary.



Keep Farming. Feed People. Build Community.

MASSARO
COMMUNITY FARM

Preserving the Past ~ Growing our Future

1916-2016: Celebrating 100 Years at Massaro Community Farm

“At its heart, a genuine food culture is an affinity between people and the land that feeds them.”
~Barbara Kingsolver, *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle*

Preserving the Past

When John and Mary Massaro began farming in Woodbridge, Connecticut, they probably never imagined what their farm would look like 100 years later, nor could they have pictured the Community Farm as it is today. In 1916, Italian immigrants John and Mary bought ~110 acres of farmland with a house and established a dairy and poultry operation. After John died in an auto accident one Christmas eve, the farm was left to two of the Massaro's sons, John Jr. and Tony. The family continued farming successfully, engaging young people from the surrounding community. The land was deeded to the Town of Woodbridge under a conservation easement in the 1990s. When the last remaining Massaro son, John Massaro Jr., died in 2007, efforts began to reinvigorate the historic farm property and operate it as a community farm: preserving the land for agricultural production, and serving as a public space for community engagement around food and the environment.

Today, Massaro Community Farm stands as a witness to the legacy of a farming past and future in Connecticut—and as a model for reconnecting people with the soil, and the food that sustains them.

Cultivating a Community Destination

We've come a long way from the Massaro family farm operation in 1916. Through the passionate dedication of volunteers over the last seven years, Massaro Community Farm has grown from a small group of concerned residents and donors with a vision to an independent, thriving community-supported organization led by a knowledgeable farm manager, and guided by its mission to *Keep Farming ~ Feed People ~ Build Community*. Here's how we've accomplished our mission so far:

Keep Farming

- Recruited a skilled farm manager
- Established an ecological, organic farming operation, with nearly 8 acres under cultivation, and more than 50 varieties of vegetables
- Restored
 - The historic Massaro farmhouse, dating back to the 1850s
 - The two-story gambrel dairy barn, and
 - A 1931 stone barn
- Employed local residents as farm staff, providing training opportunities for young aspiring farmers and supporting the local economy

Feed People

- Donated **33,487 pounds** of fresh produce since inception to local food banks and social service organizations, providing nutritious sustenance to those most in need
- In partnership with FoodCorps, supported the establishment of four school gardens in area schools with accompanying nutrition education, reconnecting youth to where their food comes from
- Established a subscription-based CSA, providing abundant, fresh organic vegetables to 200 families each season

Build Community

- Education:
 - Annual 2-week farm-based summer day camp for ~50 children
 - Increased connection with local schools, hosting 25 field trips and more than 1,000 children, teachers, and adults last year
 - Offered adult environmental and gardening education, including beekeeping, gardening, and birdwatching, serving over 500 people annually
- Partnerships:
 - Joined forces with CT Beekeeper's Association who oversee bee apiary and provide backyard beekeeping workshops to the public
 - Became member of Griffin Hospital PRC VITAHLS group to improve health and nutrition in Valley-area schools
 - Collaborated with other organizations such as Girl and Boy Scout troops to create the nature trail, butterfly garden and other property improvements
- Events:
 - Created a variety of food-centered community events to be hosted at the farm, such as Celebrate Spring, Pig Roast & Harvest for the Hungry, Dinner on the Farm and Family Fun Day, attracting ~1,000 visitors to the Farm annually

"Sharing this gift of knowing how to interact with the earth positively and how to grow food...that is something Massaro provides and I really appreciate that."

Abby, Massaro Community Farm Board, Youth Representative

The Challenge Remains

Even as we celebrate the history of one hundred years of farming and the success of the last seven years at Massaro Community Farm, we know that there is more work to be done. While acres of productive farmland across the US continues to decline, the number of farms across Connecticut has grown 22% in the last five years, bucking a national trend and outpacing other New England states. This growth is due, in part, to the Farmland Restoration Act, even though national policies still favor large agribusinesses. The unique business model at Massaro Community Farm affirms that by using a multi-pronged approach that includes several revenue streams, small farms can survive and thrive in today's economy. **We need the community to succeed as much as the community needs a farm.**

Access to any food, let alone fresh organic produce, continues to be a challenge for many in the wider community surrounding Massaro Community Farm. Many of the children attending field trips or camp at Massaro, like Dylan, never had the opportunity before to see first-hand where their food comes from, to watch a plant grow from seed to fruit, or taste vegetables right out of the garden. *We help make this access possible.* **Connection** to where our food is grown speaks to our larger relationship to the Earth, and to each other. Educating people about how produce grows and who grows it is a critical part of understanding and improving our food system. *We provide the space and opportunity for these connections to be made.* **Learning** to protect our environment and at the same time improving our health and well-being will avoid illnesses largely related to poor lifestyle choices. These habits, once adopted by youth, have the power to transform the community over time. *We offer many opportunities for hands-on education.*

"It's important to get kids outside so that they are seeing it as a realm of wonder...MCF is a model at the forefront of the community."

Louisa Cunningham, Massaro Community Farm Board

Growing Our Future Together

Massaro Community Farm is in a unique position to protect farmland, and to provide an accessible, public resource to address these interconnected challenges of access, education, health and relationship to the land. Massaro Community Farm strives to maximize its impact around issues of food access, food and farm based education, and sustainable community building.

In the coming years, we hope to keep farming, feed people and build community. We will preserve the past, and grow our future as we:

- Continue to operate an organic farm using thoughtful land management and sustainable methods
- Maintain our commitment to give away at least 10% of our weekly harvest throughout each season to those who need it most
- Grow the number of youth and adults engaged in educational programming about food and the environment
- Develop new partnerships and strengthen existing ones with area schools and businesses, providing a space for team building, volunteerism, and training and mentoring
- Become a resource center for teachers, schools, and community leaders looking to incorporate food, farming, and the environment into their classrooms or community spaces
- Increase our base of support by recruiting members from the wider community, including the Lower Naugatuck Valley

Our 100 Year Vision

Massaro Community Farm will become the premiere regional center for engaging the public around sustainable farming, food, and the environment while remaining a productive, working organic farm, a vital food donation partner to local social service organizations, and a hospitable and accessible community gathering space.

Your Support Will:

- Create an improved **Welcome Area** with safer pedestrian access, improved parking and directional signage; Expansion of indoor and outdoor sheltered space will allow Massaro to accommodate the increased number of people we hope to host at the farm, and allow the space to be used for a greater diversity of events, gatherings, meetings, and workshops
- Build a **Multipurpose Pavilion** which will serve as a meeting place for groups visiting the farm, provide shelter from sun & rain, and offer a space where food can be prepared and tasted
- Initiate a **Field Trip Fund** to make it possible for schools and groups with limited resources to visit the farm. This fund can also provide scholarships for families who wish their child to attend our summer camp but would otherwise be unable
- Set up a **Community Garden Resource Center** for teachers, schools, and community members seeking to establish or expand their school or community garden and food-related outdoor curriculum
- Establish **Ongoing Support** for long term programming and outreach by supporting staff resources

Total Estimated Cost: \$350,000

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|---|------------------|
| Welcome Area | \$75,000 |
| Multipurpose Pavilion | \$75,000 |
| Field Trip Fund | \$25,000 |
| Community Garden Resource Center | \$25,000 |
| Ongoing Development Support | \$125,000 |
| Campaign Costs | \$25,000 |