



FAIRFAX Food Council

healthy • accessible • affordable

COMMUNITY FOOD NEWS

The latest news and updates from the Fairfax Food Council

IMPORTANT DATES

URBAN AG WORK GROUP MEETINGS

January 22	10:00 – 11:00 a.m.
February 26	10:00 – 11:00 a.m.
March 18	10:00 – 11:00 a.m.

FOOD ACCESS & LITERACY WORK GROUP MEETINGS

January 31	10:30 – 11:30 a.m.
February 28	10:30 – 11:30 a.m.
March 27	10:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Want to attend? All Fairfax Food Council meetings are open to the public. Anyone interested in learning more or getting engaged in supporting the food system in Fairfax is welcome to attend. Meetings are currently being held virtually, so please email FairfaxFoodCouncil@fairfaxcounty.gov for more information and/or how to 'attend' a meeting.

Winter 2024 News

by Diane Charles, Project Manager, Fairfax Food Council
As a new year begins, many changes are happening at the Fairfax Food Council - from new personnel to a newly designed newsletter (coming soon) to a new project!

FOOD COUNCIL HAPPENINGS

Personnel Transitions and Additions

After serving for three years as one of the Co-Chairs of the Fairfax Food Council, Kate Garsson passed the torch onto Dawn Hyman, who joined Co-Chair Matt Mulder to lead the Fairfax Food Council. The Food Council benefited greatly from Kate's stewardship and leadership in a variety of ways, including navigating important efforts of the Food Council throughout the pandemic and leading the task force that developed a strategic plan. By staying in this leadership position for an extra year, Kate enabled the Food Council to establish staggered terms for the Co-Chairs.

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Personnel Transitions and Additions, continued

Dawn Hyman has been an integral member of the Fairfax Food Council since its beginnings. Over the last year, Dawn formed and led the Community Voice Task Force, whose mission is to look at our food system through a broad lens to identify and include its actors from whom we have not traditionally heard, lifting up their voices to create and maintain an equitable and just food system in Fairfax County. Dawn's strength in guiding, working alongside and leading efforts to lift voices and bring them to the table will be evident in her new leadership role with the Food Council.

Many thanks to these two leaders who bring valued skills and passion to the ongoing work of the Fairfax Food Council.

The Food Council also welcomes Elisa Solomon as the new Project Coordinator. She has worked closely with the Fairfax Food Council in the past and holds a Master of Public Health degree with a concentration in food security and nutrition. Thus, Elisa comprehensively understands food systems and the interrelatedness of public health, nutrition, the environment, equity, economics, and society. She also holds a Bachelor's in Exercise Science and is a certified exercise physiologist. Elisa has used her knack for simplifying complex material by developing and leading health workshops covering various topics for audiences of all ages and backgrounds.

Additionally, the Fairfax Food Council has two new Youth Representatives, Noemie Nerette-Arciniega and Adama Sawi.

Noemie is currently a junior at Lake Braddock Secondary School. She is passionate about minimizing food waste in the community because she believes in valuing food, as unwanted or unused food could help feed someone else. Noemie is also passionate about ensuring all community members have access to affordable, healthy food. She advocates for everyone to have access to good and locally sourced food.

Adama is currently a junior at Centerville High School. She is passionate about making healthy food more accessible. She is also passionate about reducing the burden of daily cooking and grocery shopping. She advocates for meal planning to make both food and dollars stretch.

New Year, New Look

The Fairfax Food Council is currently in the process of revamping its newsletter. So, the next Fairfax Food Council newsletter that subscribers receive will look completely different from the previous ones. The Fairfax Food Council is excited about the changes and can't wait to share the new and improved version with everyone. Stay tuned for more updates!

New Project

The Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth (VFHY) has again awarded the Fairfax Food Council a three-year grant. One of the grant projects is an experiential composting pilot program at Fairfax County Public Schools which



aims to promote eco-friendliness and healthy habits among students. With the success of its previous grant, the Fairfax Food Council is grateful for the support and partnership of the VFHY and is excited to continue its efforts toward creating a more sustainable and health-conscious community for the future.

EVENTS

Healthy Together Fairfax Community Fair



FOR THE COMMUNITY

HEALTHY TOGETHER FAIRFAX

BY THE COMMUNITY

PRESENTED BY: Fairfax County, Evans, OXO, PACTA, PoP Health

Sunday, May 19, 2024
12 to 3 pm

Rain Plan: Indoors at the Rec Center; same date, same time!

Held at:
FRANCONIA PARK
6601 Telegraph Road, Alexandria, Virginia

The poster features several icons: a purple circle with a pair of shoes, a yellow circle with a house, a green circle with a plant growing from a pot, and a blue circle with a person meditating. It also includes a red alarm clock icon and a red location pin icon.

Please save the date for the rescheduled Healthy Together Fairfax event, which will be on Sunday, May 19, from noon to 3 pm, at Franconia Park (rain plan: indoors at the Rec Center; same day, same time!). Healthy Together Fairfax is a fun (and FREE) interactive event for the community focused on healthy and active living.

ReFraming The Issue



In the Fall of 2023, Britepaths started a new informational event series called ReFraming The Issue with their partner ReFrame Wealth in Fairfax City. Their November 15 event focused on the pressing matter of food insecurity, its impact on children and families in the community, and their role in addressing this issue.

They were pleased to feature Fairfax Food Council Project Manager Diane Charles on their discussion panel, along with financial mentoring client Xena Guzman, her volunteer financial mentor Enjoli Ramsey, Britepaths' Executive Director Lisa Whetzel, and Britepaths' Development Director Abra Kurt.

Read more at: <https://britepaths.org/story/reframing-food>

Britepaths will host their next event in March 2024, addressing the importance of financial education in managing a limited income in this region. To learn more, contact Harper Garcia at events@britepaths.org or 703.273.8829.

RESOURCES

Flash Flood App



The Flash Food App is an app that allows shoppers to browse food items approaching their best-before date, buy them at a discount, and pick them up in-store. This app is a great tool to make healthy foods financially accessible, save money, and prevent food waste.

[Click here to learn more and download the app!](#)

COMMUNITY STORIES

Trust, Belonging, Social Cohesion, Civic Engagement, and Community Engagement

This Fall, Dr. Ben Schwartz of the Fairfax County Health Department's Division of Epidemiology and Population Health presented his research on trust, belonging, social cohesion, civic engagement, and community engagement to the Fairfax Food Council work groups. He explained that individuals and organizations should strive to intentionally incorporate these ideas in their work. A few key points from his presentation were:

- A lack of trust leads to a lack of adherence to public health recommendations.
- From his focus group, Dr. Schwartz found that mistrust in public health institutions/initiatives is higher among African Americans within the county. In contrast, concern regarding the accessibility and cultural acceptability of public health resources is higher among the Latinx community.
- To make change, think intentionally about trust.
- Belonging applies to individuals, whereas social cohesion applies to groups.
- Social cohesion links trust, belonging, and engagement.
- Communities build power with engagement and advocacy, which affects health policy.

The Food Council thanks Dr. Ben for sharing this information, generating ideas that may be included in the next Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP), and discussing actions that can be taken to unite people and communities!

Common Ground Movie Night

The Fairfax Food Council is grateful to Climate Action Now for organizing the premiere screening of *Common Ground*. A sequel to *Kiss the Ground*, *Common Ground* is the sweeping and uplifting story of the pioneers of the "Regenerative Movement" who are creating a new food system that produces tremendous quantities of nutritionally dense food while balancing the climate, healing our bodies, and bringing our entire ecosystem back to life.

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Common Ground Movie Night, continued

In conjunction with Climate Action Now, the Food Council promoted this event, and the outcome was incredible. Tickets sold out! The movie was well-received, and the panel discussion that followed was very engaging and informative. Overall, the night was quite inspirational!

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES



FRESHFARM Farmers Market

Volunteers are needed at the FRESHFARM Reston Farmers Market on Wednesday afternoons. Learn more about this volunteer opportunity and the FRESHFARM Markets [here](#).

Annandale Christian Community for Action (ACCA) Needs Food Captains

These volunteers make sure that families in need receive needed groceries on schedule. They coordinate requests for food with drivers to deliver groceries to clients within its service area. Tasks can be done from home. Training is provided. Food captains are asked to work one week per quarter.

Contact volunteers@accacares.org with questions and to sign up.

Food Rescue US - DC



Want to do something about food waste and hunger in Fairfax County on your own schedule?

Food Rescue US - DC is the answer to one of the biggest barriers to food donation: transportation. They enlist volunteers to use their own cars (and sometimes bikes!) to transfer excess food from businesses that have too much to agencies that

serve people who have too little. Using a web-based app, volunteers self-select food rescues to fit their schedules. The whole process usually takes under an hour and is extremely rewarding.

Operating in Northern Virginia, the District, and parts of Maryland, volunteers can sign up at www.foodrescue.us. Businesses that are interested in donating and agencies that are looking for food donations should contact Site Director Kate Urbank at kate@foodrescue.us to learn how to join the program.

Funding Opportunities

[Specialty Crop Multi-State Program Grant from USDA](#)

The SCMP supports collaborative multi-state partnerships to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through competitively funded projects. A multi-state partnership is a project that implements activities with



measurable outcomes that benefit two or more U.S. States and/or Territories along with Non-Profit entities. The focus is to address regional or national-level specialty crop issues, including, but not limited to, food safety, plant pests and disease, research, crop-specific projects addressing common issues, and marketing and promotion.

Projects must enhance the competitiveness of U.S. or U.S. territory-grown specialty crops in either domestic or foreign markets. SCMP will grant awards in the amount of \$250,000 - \$1,000,000. Application due by 1/31/2024.

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Public Health Institute



PHI has multiple job openings, some of which are remote and in the Washington, DC area. These job applications remain open until the position is filled. [Click here to see openings.](#)

This information is provided by the Fairfax Food Council.

fairfaxcounty.gov/food-council

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[@FairfaxFoodCouncil](#)

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