



2024

ANNUAL REPORT

“Growing Forward”



**Cornell Cooperative Extension
Dutchess County**

DUTCHES COUNTY FARM & HOME CENTER
2715 ROUTE 44
MILLBROOK, NEW YORK 12545

CCEDUTCHESSESS.ORG

(845) 677-8223

Extension At-A-Glance:

Our Mission:

Cornell Cooperative Extension puts knowledge to work in pursuit of economic vitality, ecological sustainability and social well-being. We bring local experience and research-based solutions together, helping New York State families and communities thrive in our rapidly changing world.

**Over 350 volunteers provided 17,800+ HOURS =
a value of \$596,122+ in our community!**

Volunteer Hours Source: independentsector.org

**4,917,738+ youth, adults & families benefited from
programs & services!**

Source: programmatic reporting



Volunteering is a great way to get involved in your community, receive research based educational support, utilize your talents and spread the education to residents. Our annual volunteers are diverse and varied based on the needs of the initiatives and program requirements. Some programs have more volunteer support than others but **all volunteers make a difference in Growing Forward!**



Administration:

- 30 general volunteers:
- Our Program Advisory Council members and Board of Directors are *awesome* volunteers!



Master Gardeners:

- 19 newly graduated volunteers:
- Dutchess County Fair
- Horticulture Hotline
- Example gardens
- Speakers Bureau
- Annual Plant Sale



4-H Youth Development:

- We have 62 Leader, co-leader and/or Project Leaders enrolled
- 163 general adult volunteers
- 77 Dedicated support volunteers
- Over 9,000 dedicated hours!

Strategic Plan 2022-2024

Vision:

Goals:

Governance

Ensure an active, engaged, and informed Board of Directors that is responsive to emerging needs and trends.

Revenue Generation

To generate sufficient financial revenue for the organization to sufficiently provide the various services, programs, and education to the community and help fulfill the mission.

Programs & Education

Maintain and expand quality programs that foster knowledge and self-sufficiency.

Marketing & Partnerships

CCEDC will enjoy strong recognition and support from all local communities, sectors, and constituencies.

Operations

Internal operations and communications will support effective operations and promote employee morale.

1

CCEDC will have the financial stability to respond to the community needs in Dutchess County effectively and efficiently through the use of technology and its flagship programs.

2

CCEDC will be needs driven and serve and assist Dutchess County community members throughout their lifespan, while conveying a culture of diversity in our staff and volunteers.

3

With financial support, CCEDC will collaborate and respond to the priority community needs of Dutchess County.

4

Through collaboration, increased financial support and public engagement, CCEDC will meet the defined community needs and have a positive impact throughout the lifespan of individuals.



Day in Albany, "Kid Pic" with State Senator Michelle Hinchey

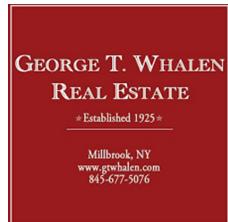
Event Donor & Supporters



Dutchess County 4-H held their annual "A-Fair to Remember", Sunday June 2nd at Wilcox Memorial Park, Stanfordville. This fun-filled day is designed to ensure every 4-H'er experiences the excitement of the Dutchess County Fair while introducing a new generation to our rich culture. This event features farm animals, arts and crafts stations, archery and air rifle activities, live demonstrations, games, a splash pad, lake swimming, live music, and much more!



Exhibiting at the Dutchess County Fair provides young participants with valuable learning experiences, recognition for their achievements, and the chance to create lifelong memories and friendships.



Donations from private individuals included a pledge to match all personal donations. This was achieved with ease thanks to the generosity of the following:

Holly Alger
Jill Auerbach
Harry Baldwin
Daniel Briggs
Mary Callahan
Lois Carver
Michael DeCola
Denise Dunn

Ingrid Fields
Julie Hart
Linda & Vance Keeling
Beth Ledy
Eileen Lomoriello
Lois Mander
Carolyn Marshall

Lisa Paquette
Andrea Parent-Tibbetts
Cathy Poluzzi
Helen Vandervoort
Stephen Van Tassell
Victoria Wadlin
Patricia Flood
-multiple anonymous
donors.

Welcome to the CCEDC 2024 Annual Report

2024 has been a year of significant challenges and transformation for our organization. Despite facing a substantial deficit at the start of the year, along with staff retirements and departures, we have successfully navigated these hurdles and are now poised to **“grow forward.”**

Through strategic cost-saving measures, including reductions in salaries, benefits, and operational expenses, as well as departmental restructuring, we have made meaningful progress in reducing our deficit.

I am incredibly proud of our staff, who maintained professionalism and high-quality service during this period of change. Their dedication has been instrumental in our success. We have also been intentional in hiring highly qualified professionals who will improve our internal processes, policies, and procedures as we move into a new year.

As an integral part of the Cooperative Extension ecosystem, **our programs are interconnected and deeply rooted in community collaboration.** Our commitment to educational excellence, supported by Cornell University’s research-based curricula, ensures we continue to meet the evolving needs of Dutchess County.

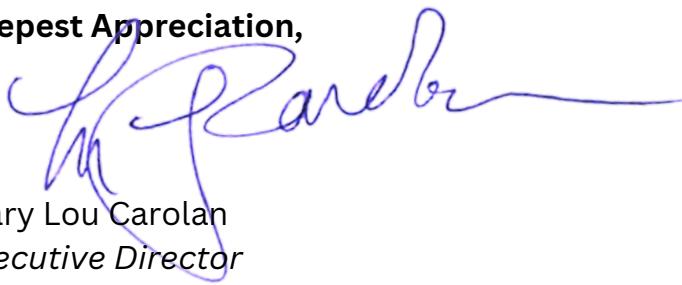
This compilation shares the many ways we accomplish this in Dutchess County in 2024:

- Farming and food production,
- Invasive Species Education
- Parenting, family life and family dynamics
- Child health, development, and nutrition
- Immersive youth learning and experiential opportunities through 4-H
- Water, land and energy conservation and management
- Community resilience and preparedness
- Nutrition education and health

Looking ahead, we are excited to enhance our programs by investing in staff training, improving our infrastructure, and upgrading our databases, website, equipment, and communications. *These efforts will strengthen our ability to serve the community effectively.*

For over 111 years, your involvement and support have been the foundation of our success. The connections we’ve built and the collaborations we’ve fostered have shaped our vibrant past and present, and they will continue to guide us toward a bright future. **Thank you for being an essential part of our “extended” family and for helping us craft a legacy of impact and growth forward!**

Deepest Appreciation,



Mary Lou Carolan
Executive Director



Board and Committees

Board of Directors 2024

Lacie Reilly, *President*

Chris Shave, *Vice President 4-H Youth Development, Personnel Committee, Fair Committee, Nominating Committee, Facilities*

Mark McLean, *Treasurer - Finance Committee, Chair, Facilities Committee*

Julie Hart, *Secretary - Personnel Committee, Facilities Committee*

Peter Berasi, *Environment & Energy - Personnel Committee*

Judy DiMatteo, *Family & Consumer Education - Finance Committee, Facilities Committee*

Andrea Parent-Tibbetts, *Agriculture & Horticulture - Personnel Committee, Chair*

Maribeth Rubenstein, *Family & Consumer Education - Personnel Committee,*

Eugene Valoy, *Agriculture & Horticulture - Finance Committee, Fair Committee, Nominating Committee*

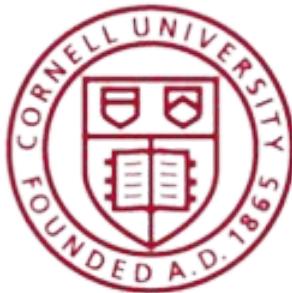
Chris Drago, *Legislative Representative*

Adam Hughes, *CCE State Extension Specialist*

Eoin Wrafter, *County Executive Representative*

Mary Lou Carolan, *Executive Director*

Kristin K. Ludl, *CCEDC Recording Secretary*



Collaborators & Funders

Images are arranged to fit, not a particular given order.



Assemblymember Jonathan Jacobson
- District 104

DC Dairy Committee

Millbrook Library

Pleasant Valley Free Library

Howland Public Library

Arlington CSD

Beacon CSD

Carmel CSD*

Dover Union Free School

Haldane CSD*

Hyde Park CSD

Millbrook CSD

Pawling CSD

Pine Plains CSD

Poughkeepsie CSD

Red Hook CSD

Rhinebeck CSD

Spackenkill UFSD

Taconic Hills CSD*

Wappingers CSD

Webutuck (Northeast) CSD

Ralph E. Ogden Foundation

Les Roe Foundation

LOVE146

Cornell Cooperative Extension
Eastern NY Commercial Horticulture Program

**Cornell
Water
Resources
Institute**

**FIELD HALL
FOUNDATION**



COMMON GROUND

**BEACON
RECREATION**
★ ★ ★ ★



**WALKWAY
OVER THE HUDSON**



**NORTHERN
DUTCHESS NEWS**

**Poughkeepsie
New York**

LAND TO LEARN



Dutchess County Agricultural Society, Inc.
Southern Dutchess News



**COMMUNITY
FOUNDATIONS
OF THE HUDSON VALLEY**



**LOWER
HUDSON
PRISM**



NYSERDA



**Hudson River
Estuary Program**



**Department
of Health**



**Agriculture
and Markets**



**Child Care Council
of Dutchess and Putnam, Inc.**

Connecting Communities and Children

**Berkshire Taconic
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION**



**DUTCHESS
COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

VASSAR

NWF

**Mediation
CENTER OF DUTCHESS COUNTY**

arts

Mid-Hudson

together we create

Donors & Supporters



Eleanor Acworth- DVM
Holly Alger -Royal Court of Dover
Katherine Anstreicher
Harry Baldwin
Ann Bancroft
Allison Bazinet
Erin Berg
Estheury Castillo
Alicia Crisp
Mary Lou Carolan
Matthew Decker
Michael DeCola
Luisa Eusse-Roche
Beth Evans
Eileen & Walter Ferguson
Carl Ford
Ruth & Aldrich Gau
Jim Germain
Michael & Elizabeth Gillies
Margaret Gilligan
Marty & Pauline Gyves
Kathrin Hammon
Jackson Hardaker

Julie Hart
Kellyann Hee
Ed Herrington -Herrington's
Brandon Kieler
Andrew Lane
Faith Laudann
Shirley Lee
Pamela Lovinger -Half Moon Farm
Carolyn Marshall
Cristin McPeake -
Community Foundation
Andrea Moed
Matthew Nolfo
Esther & Gerald Ottaway
Evelyn Panichi
Blair Patterson -Betty Teaspoon
Jeff & Paula Pennock
Catherine Poluzzi
Nicolette Rivera
Tatiana Serafin
Amy Sherman
John & Barbara Singler
Cari Skier

Jerry & Carol Talbott
Susan Tveekrem
Stephen Van Tassell -DC Dairy Committee
Devon Vlasin
Frances Wallin
George Whalen- George Whalen Real Estate
Sarah Winden
Kira Wizner
Jaime Zimmerman
Fidelity Charitable
Bank of Millbrook
Adams Fairacre Farm
Bank of Millbrook
Dutchess Land Conservancy
Williams Lumber
Ruges Subaru

Thank you!

Your generous support continues to deliver our programs to enrich the youth and adults within our community. Please excuse us if we missed your name! We truly appreciate every donor!

Your support helps CCEDC to do more and to reach more -- youth, adults, families and businesses in our communities -- with high-quality, research-based educational programs they can trust



Staff and Program Advisory Councils

Association Administrative/

Support Staff:

Mary Lou Carolan, *Executive Director*
Olga Petroff, *Payroll & Accounts Manager*
Melissa Tan, *Payroll & Accounts Manager*
Ryan Karpisz, *Taste NY Store/Grants Asst.*
Kristin Ludl, *Sr. Administrator*
Porfirio Vargas, *Facilities Coordinator*
Heather Ohlson, *Marketing, Outreach & Communications Coordinator*

Sr. Administrative Assts:

Angela Sullivan
Francheska Kuilan
LaQuan Rosario

Agriculture & Horticulture Program:

Jennifer Fimbel, *Agriculture/Horticulture Program Leader*
Bethany Mae Schulteis, *Commercial Horticulture and Food Resources Educator*
Heather Brenner, *Community Horticulture Program Coordinator*

Taste NY Todd Hill:

Lachele Coninx-Wiley, *Market Mgr.*
Liz Esack, *Assistant Mgr.*
Melissa Hoffmann, *Asst. Coord.*
Dan Richard, *Facilities Coord.*

Eastern New York Commercial Horticulture Staff:

Vegetable Specialists:

Teresa Rusinek
Ethan Grundberg
Maire Ullrich
Dan Donahue, *Tree Fruit Specialist*
Elizabeth Higgins, *Business Management Specialist*
Jim Meyers, *Viticulture Specialist*
Laura McDermott, *Small Fruits and Vegetable Specialist*

Agriculture & Horticulture Program Advisory

Committee:

Eugene Valoy
Brendan Foley
Andrea Parent-Tibbetts
Lisa Baker
Dr. Mark Condon
Amber Coon
Shaun Williams

Environment & Energy Program Staff:

Collin Adkins, *Energy Program Leader*
Anna Harrod-McGrew, *Environmental Educator & NCLI Program Manager*
Kelsey West, *Environmental Educator*

Energy Advisors:

Fernando Ahumada, *Program Manager*
Amanda Catale, *Program Manager*
Frankie Lede, *Program Manager*
Mike Murphy, *Energy Team Leader*
Rocio Sharrock, *Program Manager*

Environment & Energy Program Advisory

Committee:

Alex Wolf
Ashley Alred
Peter Berasi
Julie Hart
Jane Lucas
Ann Olsson

Staff and Program Advisory Councils *cont.d*

Family & Consumer Education Program

Staff:

Jessica Canale, Program Leader
Francheska Kuilan, Administrative Asst.

Educators:

Maureen Rodriguez Callamari
Heather Ohlson
Francheska Kuilan
LaQuan Rosario

Megan Dhanabala, Dutchess

Tiffany Glavan

Bintou Hinds

Bee Moser

Josephine Quiocco

Jenna Ricker

Maria Vele

Meghan Young

Family & Consumer Education Program

Advisory Committee:

Judy Di Matteo, Board Representative
Tomasine Oliphant, Vice Chairperson
Maribeth Rubenstein, Chairperson
Ann D. Swinger
Barbara Warren, Secretary

IPM Field Crops Specialist:

Ken Wise, State-wide IPM Specialist
Livestock and Field Crops

SNAP-Ed Hudson Valley (Regional Program of 9 Counties):

Shayna Russo
Regional Program Manager
Steven Alihonou
Amanda Conover
David Cordero
Erica Dahl

4-H Youth Development Program Staff:

Jane Rodd, 4-H Program Leader
Samantha Brittain, Green Teen Program Manager

Savanna Burke, 4-H Program Coordinator
Emily Murnane, Green Teen Educator
Emma Kron, 4-H Program Manager

Educator:

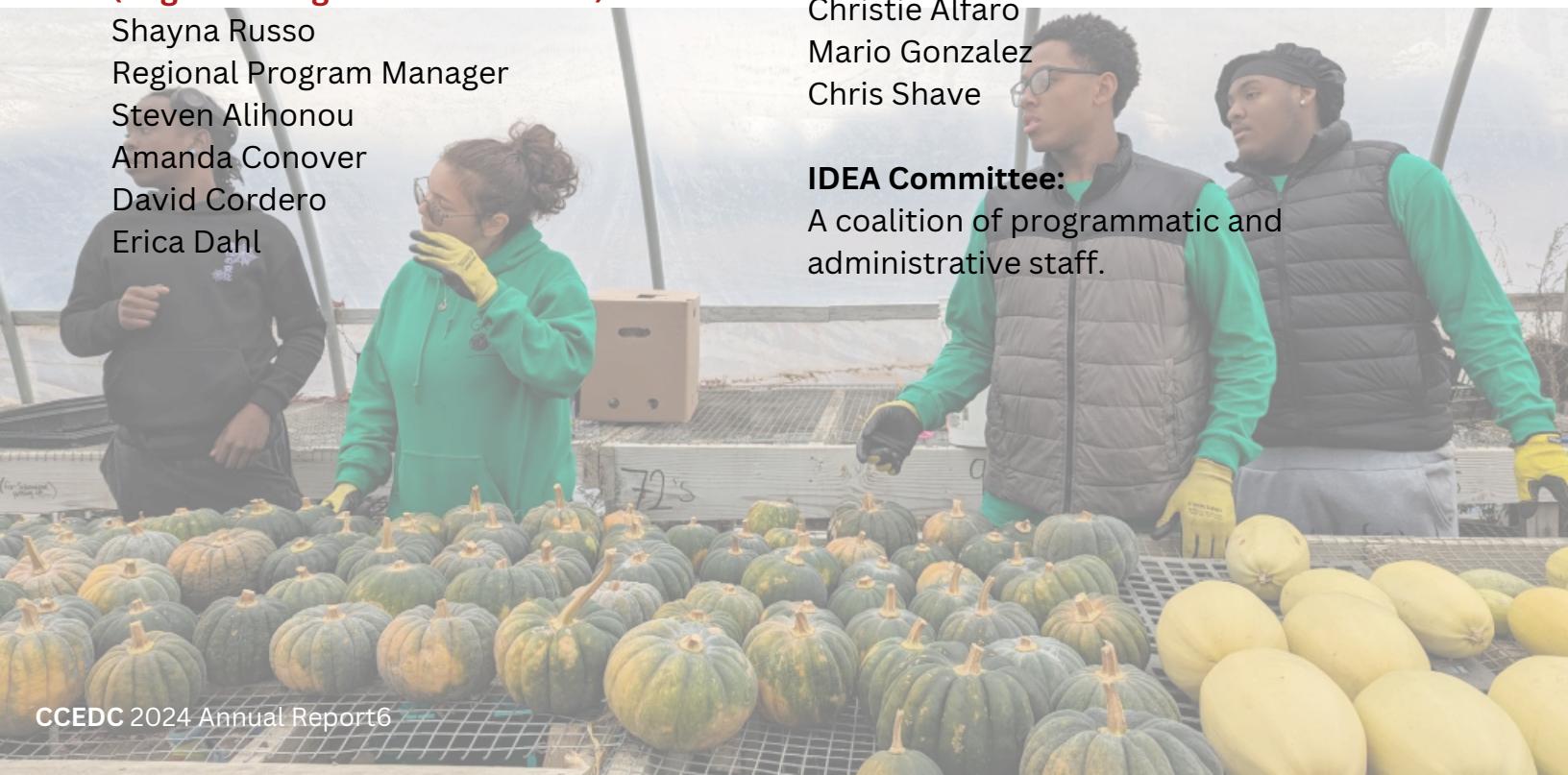
Allie Jeffrey
Joanna Shultz

4-H Youth Development Program Advisory Committee:

Katie Briggs, Chairperson
Christie Alfaro
Mario Gonzalez
Chris Shave

IDEA Committee:

A coalition of programmatic and administrative staff.



Impact SPOTLIGHT

Climate Smart Community Assessments were completed in three Dutchess municipalities:

- Town of Clinton
- Town of Red Hook
- Town of Washington

6 NCLI Educators were employed by the program through the end of June.

52 youth were educated by our NCLI educators across the 3 spring outreach events they participated in.



NCLI youth assisting NYSDEC educators with glass eel monitoring on the Fall Kill in Poughkeepsie.



- **Dutchess County Earth Day at Vassar Barns:** youth shared a display highlighting the research they had done on the potential for composting programs in the City of Poughkeepsie and led youth in a water cycle game.
- **Eel Program at Walkway Over the Hudson:** Youth educators assisted DEC staff in educating the public on migrating glass eels and eel habitat in Hudson River tributaries.
- **NYSDEC Get Outdoors Day:** Youth assisted DEC educators with fishing instruction, seine netting and educational games. (*New York State Department of Environmental Conservation*)
- Youth participated in the Ulster BOCES **Sustainability Summit** where they presented to peers on the composting research.
- Participated in eel monitoring on the Fall Kill throughout the spring, culminating in the annual **“Elebration”** held in June.



Dutchess No Child Left Inside (NCLI) collaborating with City of Beacon Climate Smart Coordinator, to learn about Beacon's composting program.

Environment and Energy



The [Mid-Hudson NYSERDA Regional Clean Energy Hub](#) is a team of trusted, knowledgeable, community-based organizations, led by CCEDC, working to equitably support residents, non-profits, and small businesses to learn more about and **access the NYS energy efficiency and clean energy programs** and projects available to them. Energy Advisors provide free support for residents and businesses in the Mid-Hudson Valley looking to make their home or workplace cleaner, greener, and more cost-efficient.



OUTREACH & EDUCATION

11,310 PARTICIPANTS

educated on energy and cost-saving programs over **419** virtual and in-person events.

1 in 3



people took action on a project after a one-on-one consultation with an energy advisor.

569

referrals into energy- and cost-saving programs (up **66%** over year 1)

of which

52%

were low-income programs and wrap-around services (up **24%** over year 1)



 Cornell Cooperative Extension
Smart Energy Choices – Mid-Hudson



 Regional Clean Energy Hub
Partnering Organization



 Cornell Cooperative Extension

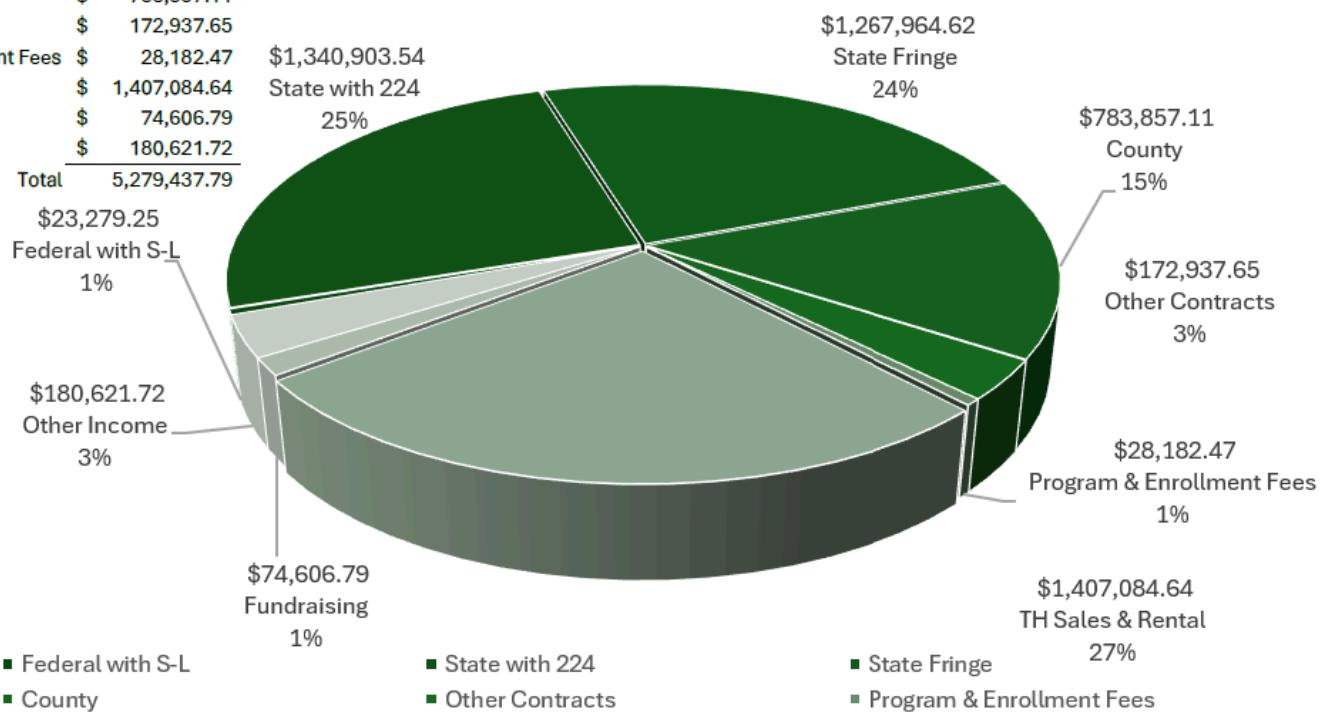
Dutchess
Orange
Putnam
Rockland
Sullivan
Ulster



Financial Overview

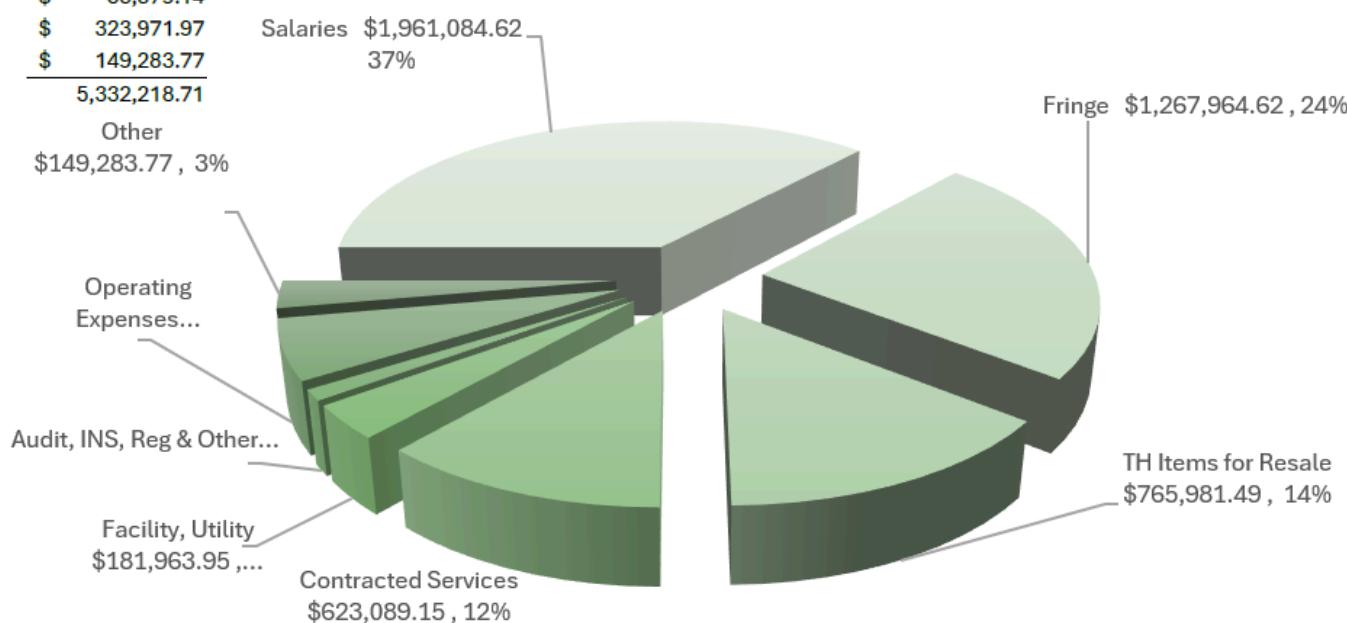
2024 Revenue

Federal with S-L	\$ 23,279.25
State with 224	\$ 1,340,903.54
State Fringe	\$ 1,267,964.62
County	\$ 783,857.11
Other Contracts	\$ 172,937.65
Program & Enrollment Fees	\$ 28,182.47
TH Sales & Rental	\$ 1,407,084.64
Fundraising	\$ 74,606.79
Other Income	\$ 180,621.72
Total	\$ 5,279,437.79



2024 Expenses

Salaries	\$ 1,961,084.62
Fringe	\$ 1,267,964.62
TH Items for Resale	\$ 765,981.49
Contracted Services	\$ 623,089.15
Facility, Utility	\$ 181,963.95
Audit, INS, Reg & Other	
Support	\$ 58,879.14
Operating Expenses	\$ 323,971.97
Other	\$ 149,283.77
Total	\$ 5,332,218.71



Agriculture and Horticulture



This summary highlights the significant contributions of the Ag/Hort Sustainability and Ag Navigator programs in community engagement, farmland protection, invasive species management, and producer education.

Ag/Hort Sustainability and Ag Navigator

- **Spotted Lantern Fly K9 Detection:** Facilitated training; demonstration for Hudson Valley Grape Industry with Cornell Communications.
- **Eastern NY Commercial Horticulture Program:** Ongoing collaboration and info-sharing with county partners.
- **Ag Value Assessment & Ag District Inclusion:** Main point of contact; review of applications completed.
- **Lower Hudson Valley PRISM Grant:** Approved for \$16,200

- **Legislative & Municipal Work:** Staff met with East Fishkill on agriculture planning, assessors on town code violations, and Legislator Drago on farmland protection.
- **Pasture Recommendations:** Guidance for seeding, fertilizing, and horse carbohydrate management.
- **Public Outreach:** Weekly radio spots, daily social media updates, and participation in DC Tourism's rebranding session.
- **Recognition:** Dutchess County Legislature recognized retiring Jen Fimbel with a commendation for her years of service to the county.

Sustainability

- **Grant Implementation:** Planning Lower Hudson Valley PRISM project.
- **Training & Education:** Led ISA Training (76 total attendees), completing Food Systems course.
- **Community Programs:** Seed to Supper and Master Food Preserver planning.
- **Greenhouse & Lab Work:** Managing greenhouse, providing weed ID.

Youth & Community Engagement

- **Youth in Ag:** Monthly John Jay FFA meetings; Pawling added an Ag program.
- **Municipal Engagement:** Advised three municipal officials on ag-related zoning and permits.
- **Farm & Ag Report:** Broadcast 5 days/week (18,000 weekly reach).
- **Farm to School:** Coordinated school lunch manager and farmer meet-up.
- **Public Tours & Talks:** Planned farm tour for Sen. Gillibrand's staff, presented at Pleasant Valley Library.

Taste NY at Todd Hill



A function of the Ag-Hort program area; to support agriculture, horticulture, and agritourism in Dutchess County and throughout the state.

In 2024, Todd Hill saw significant growth in marketing, outreach, and sales. A **strategic marketing plan**, including **pop-up events** at high-traffic locations like John Jay High School's FFA Fundraiser and the Arlington Street Fair, contributed to increased visibility and revenue. **Partnerships with the Hudson Valley Renegades helped distribute nearly 1,000 promotional prizes, resulting in new customer visits.** The introduction of a weekend outdoor market (THOM) replaced the previous farmers' market model, generating vendor satisfaction and approximately \$26,000 in sales. **Sales increased by 12% over 2023, supported by the addition of 12 new vendors and 50+ new products.**

Staffing and education initiatives also played a key role in Todd Hill's success. The dedicated team, including **members with up to 10 years of service**, provided continuity and expertise. Digital-based staff training and monthly blog content enhanced knowledge of new products and vendor stories.

Community engagement remained strong through partnerships with Dutchess County Tourism and Ulster BOCES, connecting students with food and farm employers.

Statewide Taste NY promotions further reinforced support for local farms and businesses, contributing to a successful year of growth and outreach.



Impact SPOTLIGHT

Taste NY promotes agricultural work force development through BOCES connection:

I never thought about being an agricultural entrepreneur even though I have been surrounded by farms and orchards my entire life." - *Student Feedback*

"My daughter was excited to share what she learned about the apple business, and I was blown away at how she really understood the big picture." - *Parent Feedback*



Green Teen Beacon: 20 Years of Empowering Youth and Strengthening Community

In 2024, **Green Teen Beacon** celebrated **20 years of empowering youth and strengthening the community**. The program served 29 youth through employment, with nine promoted to Crew Leaders, and nine more through its Club program. **Over \$50,000 was paid in youth wages**. Green Teen **harvested and distributed 1,400 pounds of vegetables**, serving 33 families weekly via their Free Farm stand and delivering to 11 senior homes. **The “Feeding Seniors” initiative expanded to include weekly vegetable deliveries to 10 seniors**.

Club Green Teen's winter season featured field trips to local institutions, while fundraisers—like garlic and hoodie sales—raised \$1,000. **The program was honored at Renegades HOPE Week, with a participant throwing the opening pitch**.

Youth described Green Teen as a **“family” and a “place of guidance,”** highlighting its role in building skills and community.

Plans for a 20th-anniversary celebration are underway.





The **Master Gardener Annual Fundraiser** saw great success this year, thanks to the collective efforts of friends, family, volunteers, staff, and board members.

In the fall of 2024, **19 new volunteers** successfully completed Master Gardener training, contributing to the program's expansion.

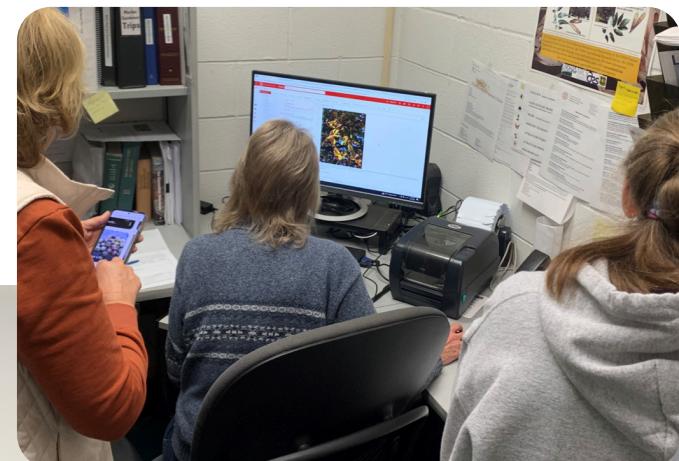
Meanwhile, the **Dutchess Dirt Newsletter** continues to reach over **2,200 subscribers each month!**

A major achievement this year was securing the **Lower Hudson PRISM grant**, which enabled training for Dutchess County Parks staff on *invasive species management*. The program includes **iMapInvasives** reporting training and the development of educational materials, such as a Spotted Lanternfly brochure and a QR-coded business card linking to online resources.

Our **Speakers Bureau** engaged over **275 community members** through educational presentations.

Additionally, our **Seed Library pilot program** launched in six Mid-Hudson Library System branches, *connecting over 130 individuals with resources on gardening and seed-saving*.

Our **Horticulture Hotline** addressed **more than 440 inquiries** in 2024, underscoring the program's dedication to providing expert horticultural support.



Master Gardeners working the Horticulture Hotline
(NAMES OF MGS)



Dedicated Master Gardener volunteers have played a key role in revitalizing the program's **Diagnostic Lab**, home to the Horticulture Hotline. The long-awaited makeover has maximized the lab's limited space, improving efficiency for both volunteers and staff.

Enhancements include: new shelves, a lab table, and a wall-mounted computer monitor to better display microscope specimens. The removal of bulky file cabinets has further transformed the workspace, allowing volunteers to provide even more effective support to the community. This upgrade reflects the ongoing commitment of Master Gardener volunteers to delivering expert horticultural guidance and resources.

Family and Consumer Education



The **Family and Consumer Education (FCE)** Program is dedicated to supporting Dutchess County families by providing engaging, empowering, and educational programs. As communities navigate challenges in wellness, finances, education, and parenting, FCE remains committed to delivering relevant resources and adaptable programming that meet the evolving needs of local households.



Community Engagement Strengthens Family and Parenting Programs in Dutchess County:

The power of community involvement was on full display in 2024 as local programs helped parents and families build stronger connections. The **Parent And Support Education (PASE)** program, which focuses on improving family communication, celebrated the graduation of **64** parents who completed its classes this year. Similarly, Our **Parenting Skills Workshop Series (PSWS)**, part of the Department and Community and Family Services (DCFS) efforts to reunite families in crisis, graduated **80** parents through **102** sessions, equipping them with valuable parenting skills.

Community outreach was also a priority. The **Hudson River Fish Advisory** program hosted **21 education events**, reaching **1,300 individuals** with vital information about safe fish consumption.



Impact SPOTLIGHT

This year we held the **Relatives as Parents Program Roundtable Event**. Key figures from our local and statewide agencies, involved with kinship families, discussed what CCEDC does for kinship families, what resources we can provide by partnering with these agencies and how we can work together to support **Dutchess County Kinship families**. In attendance were representatives from **Kinship Navigator, The Dutchess County Department of Community and Family Services, The NYS Unified Court System ~ Office for Justice Initiatives Division of Child Welfare and Family Justice, The Dutchess County Office for the Aging, ASTOR services and the New York State Caregiver and Respite Coalition**. This successful event provided very robust conversations that allowed us all to know more about how we can work together to help kinship families.

Flourishing Farmers Expands Opportunities for Youth in Agriculture

The **Flourishing Farmers** program served **23** youth this year, with two new farm partners, **Harlem Valley Homestead** and **Hope Rising Farm**, bringing the total to five.

Fifteen participants (65%) showcased their work at the Dutchess County Fair, and two Stony Kill group exhibits were selected for the NYS State Fair, competing against 4-H exhibits statewide.

Youth gained hands-on experience working with livestock, growing vegetables, and developing essential animal care skills.

As **program leader Greta Bleimeister** noted, *“There is very little opportunity for these youth to build connections with animals, and it really makes a difference.”*



After School & Summer Programs: Empowering Youth Through Hands-On

Learning *This project has been supported by a grant from Literacy in Action 1, a fund of Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation.*

The after-school program served **65 unduplicated youth (25% of Wingdale Elementary's population)**, with a focus on immigrant students. Lessons were offered in English and Spanish, covering literacy, financial literacy, math, science, and agriculture. Popular activities included vermicomposting, making butter, and interacting with chickens and rabbits.

Summer programming **engaged 23 youth**, emphasizing civics, financial literacy, and American culture. Participants explored saving and spending, met New York's Lt. Governor, and recreated works of great American artists.

This year, the program expanded to Dover Elementary, where students are midway through an intensive dairy-focused curriculum, continuing the tradition of hands-on, impactful learning.



Our **Ag in the Classroom (AITC)** program takes place in March each year; Ag Literacy Week saw 4-H staff work with schools and community groups to provide over **2200 1-3rd grade children** with agricultural education.

4-H Positive Youth Development



CCEDC Youth and Workforce Development programs focus on Positive Youth Development, equipping participants with the skills, values, and confidence to make good choices, reduce risks, and achieve success.

Dutchess County 4-H Cultivates Youth Leadership and Skills:

Our **4-H Club** Program engaged **380 youth across 24 clubs**, fostering skills in agriculture, animal science, cooking, and more. Members completed **280 public presentations**, gained financial literacy, and **dedicated thousands of hours to community service**.

A new **Youth Livestock Sale Representative Initiative** connected farming with meat processing and culinary arts, partnering with Kron's Custom Cuts and four local restaurants.

Fundraising efforts, including the **A-Fair to Remember Gala**, raised **\$23,000 to support 4-H'ers at the Dutchess County Fair, where 259 exhibitors showcased their work**.

At the Big E, Dutchess 4-H earned top honors in livestock competitions, and **Ag Literacy Week educated 2,800 youth** about strawberries. Through hands-on learning, 4-H continues to empower future leaders.



Cloverbud Dairy Youth



Youth Sale Reps at Melzingah Tap House



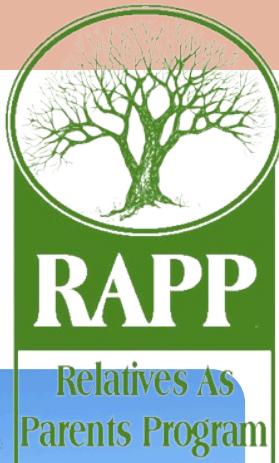
Homespun Hangout at Gala



Big E Group Photo

Meanwhile, **RAPP, (Relatives As Parents Program)** which provides essential support for kinship families, fostered connections through monthly peer support groups and special events, including an apple-picking outing at Dubois Farm, a holiday party, and a summer picnic.

This year, RAPP served 25 adults and youth.



Catching up at the Annual Picnic.



Teaming up for apples.



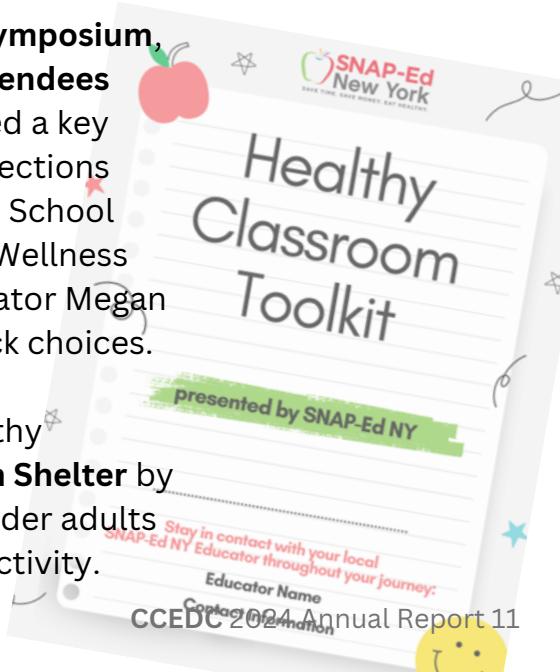
RAPP families apple and pumpkin picking

To further strengthen these initiatives, two internal staff members joined the FCE department as parenting educators. Their expertise will enhance the department's reach, which already connects with over **1,040 community members monthly** through the FCE newsletter.

These programs demonstrate the ongoing commitment of Dutchess County residents, volunteers, and staff to fostering stronger, more resilient families through education and support.

The **SNAP-Ed NY 4th Annual School Wellness Virtual Summer Symposium**, held August 6-8 via Zoom, was a great success, with over **110 attendees** and strong engagement. The SNAP-Ed Hudson Valley team played a key role in organizing and promoting the event, which fostered connections among educators and wellness champions. In Poughkeepsie City School District, SNAP-Ed continued its collaboration by facilitating the Wellness Committee and supporting policy updates, while Nutrition Educator Megan taught in over **30 classrooms**, influencing students' healthy snack choices.

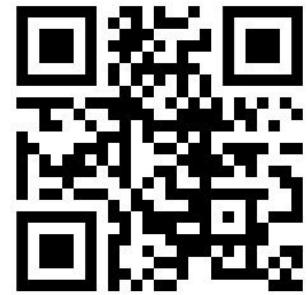
Additionally, **nine Poughkeepsie classrooms** pledged to be Healthy Classrooms in 2024. SNAP-Ed also supported **River Haven Youth Shelter** by guiding teens toward healthier snack choices and worked with older adults at Lakeview Arms Senior Apartments on nutrition and physical activity.





Donate!

Dutchess County Farm & Home Center
2715 Route 44
Millbrook, New York 12545
(845) 677-8223



Volunteer!

Green Teen Community Gardening Program
Beacon Recreation Center
23 West Center Street
Beacon, New York 12508
(845) 831-4287

Taste NY Market at Todd Hill
4640 Taconic State Parkway
North Poughkeepsie, NY 12603
(845) 849-0247





Sponsor!

Corporate Sponsorship

As a local non-profit, CCEDC strives to meet the needs of our county's communities with innovative programs despite an increasing scarcity of public funds. Consequently, CCEDC is reaching out to the business community by offering Corporate Sponsorships. These branding opportunities will assist your business in reaching potential customers and supporting a valued local educational institution.

If you wish to become a corporate sponsor and receive these great benefits, contact us at (845) 677-8223 and speak with Mary Lou Carolan, Executive Director.



Support!

Support a Specific Program

CCEDC offers a variety of programs which fall under our four main program areas of Agriculture & Horticulture, Environment & Energy, Family & Consumer Education, and 4-H Youth Development. To inquire about opportunities to provide financial support for a specific program, please contact us at (845) 677-8223.

- General Operations
- Agriculture & Horticulture Programs
- Environment & Energy Programs
- Family & Consumer Education Programs
- Green teen Program
- Master Gardener Volunteer Program
- No Child Left Inside Program
- 4-H Youth Development Programs