

Come to the Table Conference
Sylva, NC
Thursday, March 19, 2015
Session Descriptions



Bringing Farmworker Issues to the Table

Learn about farmworkers in the mountains of NC and how congregations and communities can reach out to bring them to the table. In this breakout session, participants will look at a few different portraits of farmworkers, talk about the unique contributions they bring to this state, and the difficult working and living conditions they often face. There will also be time and space for sharing ways to get involved, advocating for improved conditions, and supporting workers in your respective communities.

- **Devereaux Swaim** - Vecinos, Inc.
- **Amy Schmidt** - Vecinos, Inc.



Community Gardening Part I- Volunteers

These sessions will be divided into two distinctive parts that will provide participants a glimpse into the diverse models of community gardens in Western North Carolina. The sessions will be facilitated by members of The Western NC Alliance of Gardens That Give who have one main thing in common: they grow their food for donation. The first breakout session (Part I) will focus on the challenges of locating, managing, and engaging volunteers. A panel of five garden managers will share their insights and outline strategies for finding and working with individuals and groups to support their gardens.

- **Susan Sides** - The Lords Acre Garden
- **Kathleen Wood** - Dig In!
- **Diana McCall** - Dr. John Wilson Community Garden
- **Sandy Drake** - Swannanoa Community Garden
- **Adam Bigelow** - Botanical Consultant and Horticultural Hit-man



Rescuing Food

The greatest challenge that many communities face in their efforts to relieve hunger is finding ways to “rescue food.” Learn how food is being rescued from grocery stores, farm fields, and community gardens and placed into a distribution network of food banks, churches, and community centers. Hear how a regional food bank, a local gleaning group, and our state’s School Nutrition Program are securing food for those who are food insecure.

- **Jen Waite** - MANNA FoodBank
- **Jim Geenen** - Haywood Gleaners

- **Alexis Harris** - School Nutrition Program, NC Dept. of Public Instruction, Child Nutrition Services



Local Food Access and SNAP/EBT at Farmers' Markets

Learn about local food access initiatives at farmers markets in North Carolina, including SNAP/EBT acceptance and Double Bucks programs and how you can support your local farmers market's efforts. Hear from farmers' markets about their market programming and their community partnerships that range from the public health sector to refugee assistance organizations.

- **Salem Neff** - Beyond Hunger Relief Program, RAFI-USA
- **Local Partners** - To be determined



Local Food Councils as a Tool to Address Food Insecurity

Hear from local residents who are involved in Local Food Councils within Western North Carolina communities. They will share information on local food councils and the opportunities that they represent to generate solutions locally that address hunger and access to sustainable local food. The session's panelists will provide participants with insights based on the real world experiences of addressing local food policy through local food councils.

- **Emily Edmonds** - Western North Carolina Food Policy Council
- **Mandi Carringer** - MountainWise, Inc.



Community Gardening Part II- Listening and Heart Work

The second of a two-part session concludes with a panel of five garden managers from local gardens that are a part of the Gardens that Give network of community gardens. The Part II breakout session will be a time of sharing and dialogue between the panelists and session participants. The five garden managers share their insights and perspectives on the importance of listening to your community and your partners using the (ABCD) Asset Based Community Development model. They will also share tips from the Listening Project. They will then offer personal stories of how these concepts have impacted their gardens with time for Q & A before the session ends.

- **Susan Sides** - The Lords Acre Garden
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Garden Techniques for Growing Your Best Produce

Ron Arps, a local Jackson County farmer who uses organic methods and mostly muscle power to grow on three-fourths of an acre will lead this session on growing techniques. Ron will share some of the agricultural practices employed at Vegenui Garden that allows them to grow everything from arugula to zucchini on a five-year crop rotation based on the unique fertilizer requirements of the vegetables. Come hear Ron share from his experience about organic methods and other resourceful methods that may assist all gardeners in improving their growing skills which leads to better yields.

- **Ron Arps** - Vengenui Gardens, Sylva, NC



Beyond Hunger Relief: Barriers and Opportunities in Farm Based Food Access Initiatives

RAFI-USA and the Resourceful Communities Program have partnered on a multi-year participatory research project to better understand barriers, opportunities and trends in food access initiatives that prioritize fresh, local food. In this session participants will learn about creative, community-based projects in NC that use innovative approaches to alleviate hunger and food insecurity in their communities. The session will highlight specific opportunities for the faith community to support innovative and transformational food access work in NC.

- **Francesca Hyatt** - Program Director, Beyond Hunger Relief, RAFI-USA
- **Jesalyn Keziah** - Community Food Coordinator, Resourceful Communities



Moving Beyond Hunger: Sharing Our Stories

Food insecurity in Western North Carolina is very real and prevalent in ways that many of us may not have recognized or even considered. Hear how different groups are approaching this issue, finding creative solutions to get food to people with limited access to food resources, and working to improve access to healthier food options.

- **Mary Scott Christfield** – Hunger Coalition of Transylvania County
- **Susan Williams** – Grace Church Food Pantry (Grace Church in the Mountains)
- **Mary Alice Lodico** – Grace Church Food Pantry & Haywood Gleaners
- **Mary Sue Kindred** - Haywood Gleaners