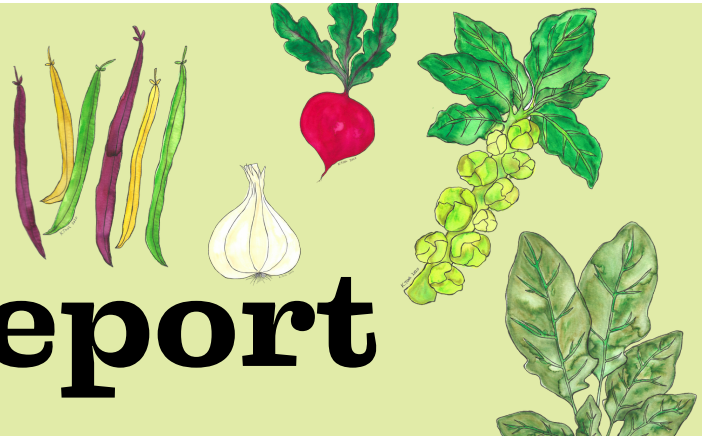




HEART & SOIL COLLECTIVE, INC

2023 Annual Report



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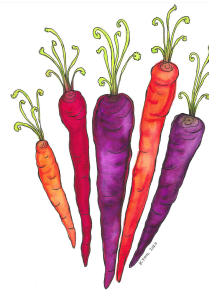
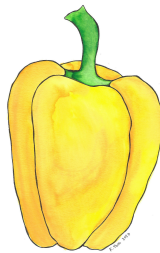
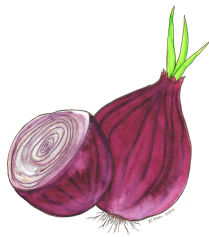
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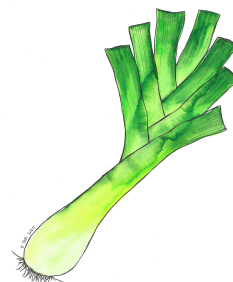
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Who We Are



In 2020 Heart & Soil Collective was founded in response to COVID19 and lack of fresh food access for senior residents in Lanesborough, Massachusetts. Our goals are to address food insecurity in union with supporting local farms and hosting educational experiences connecting children and adults to the land where their food grows.

Since 2020 our food security programming has expanded to serve seniors and families across the Berkshires, reaching 60 homes per week through two seasons in 2023. Produce is purchased from Berkshire County small farms and delivered directly to local homes at no cost to participants. Along with food security programming, we support and maintain a community garden in Pittsfield, MA.

Food insecurity is on the rise in Berkshire County with increases from 10.2% in 2022 to 12% in 2023. Our direct-to-customer model of purchasing produce from small farms and delivering to homes has many benefits to the community:

- Provides locally-sourced nutrition to seniors and families, many with income, mobility or food access limitations
- Creates new revenue streams for small farms
- Eases travel and packaging expenses for farms
- Decreases food waste
- Enhances community support through collaboration with existing organizations
- Offers meaningful volunteer opportunities

Our Mission

Heart & Soil Collective's mission is to connect people to the land where their food grows, making healthy food and hands-on nature experiences accessible to all. We meet this mission through food security and educational programming built on three core beliefs:

Access to fresh, healthy foods is essential for good health. Programming at Heart & Soil focuses on providing fresh, locally grown food directly to homes in our community helping keep our neighbors healthy and secure.

Growing your own food provides peace of mind. Heart & Soil offers educational programs on planting and growing healthy food and being present in nature, empowering and inspiring the community to learn new skills.

Connecting to the land helps us connect to each other. Our community of life-long learners at Heart & Soil are always looking to provide access to new skills through hands-on workshops and classes. Get your hands in the soil, and heal your soul.



2023 Highlights

2023 was a year of growth for our small nonprofit - we began work on a Strategic Plan to outline and solidify long term goals, hired our first employees, and saw tremendous program expansion through an injection of grant funding - as outlined below:

- Became beneficiaries of a two-year grant to support food security program expansion through United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Local Food Promotion Program (LFPP) in collaboration with Berkshire Agricultural Ventures.
- Expanded Community Produce Program deliveries and launched Winter Community Soup Program through partnership with 6 local farms, an increase from 2 farm partnerships in 2022.
- Hired two Summer Interns and a part-time Program Coordinator to further support program expansion.
- Took the first steps in creating a Strategic Plan with consultation from Paper Crane Associates.

Our Community Produce Program saw dramatic growth in 2023 supported by grant funding through Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation and the USDA/ LFPP which allowed us to deliver free, fresh produce purchased from small farms to 60 homes in Adams, Lanesborough, Pittsfield and Dalton as well as families receiving care through Pediatric Palliative Care, Hospice of the Berkshires.

Community Produce Program Impact in Numbers

10,400

**Pounds of Fresh Produce
Delivered**

10,400 pounds of fresh produce delivered at no cost to participants.

Fresh produce was delivered to 60 homes for 16 weeks in 2023, getting locally grown food directly to seniors and families and keeping viable produce from ending up in the compost as additional produce was purchased and gleaned for soup making throughout the year.

\$10,000 paid to six local partner farmers.

Purchasing directly from farms allows us to provide the freshest, most locally grown produce to our seniors and families, cuts travel and packaging expenses for farms and decreases food waste.

\$10K

Paid to Farmers

60

Homes Reached

60 homes across Berkshire County reached each week.

In 2023 we expanded weekly produce deliveries from 24 homes in Lanesborough to 60 homes, reaching 115 individuals, across four Berkshire County towns.



"Out of all my customers, Heart and Soil Collective is my favorite by far. The Community Produce and Winter Soup Programs perfectly align with my objective as a farmer, which is to provide food to those who need it most. Knowing how much intention and time they put into giving back to the community makes my work all the more satisfying."

Zack, Farmer at Rock and Root Farm

Being Recognized in the Community

Heart & Soil's Managing Director, Kristen Tool, received the Steve Green 'Neighbor of the Year' Award through Northern Berkshire Community Coalition in recognition of her work with Heart & Soil Collective and in the community.



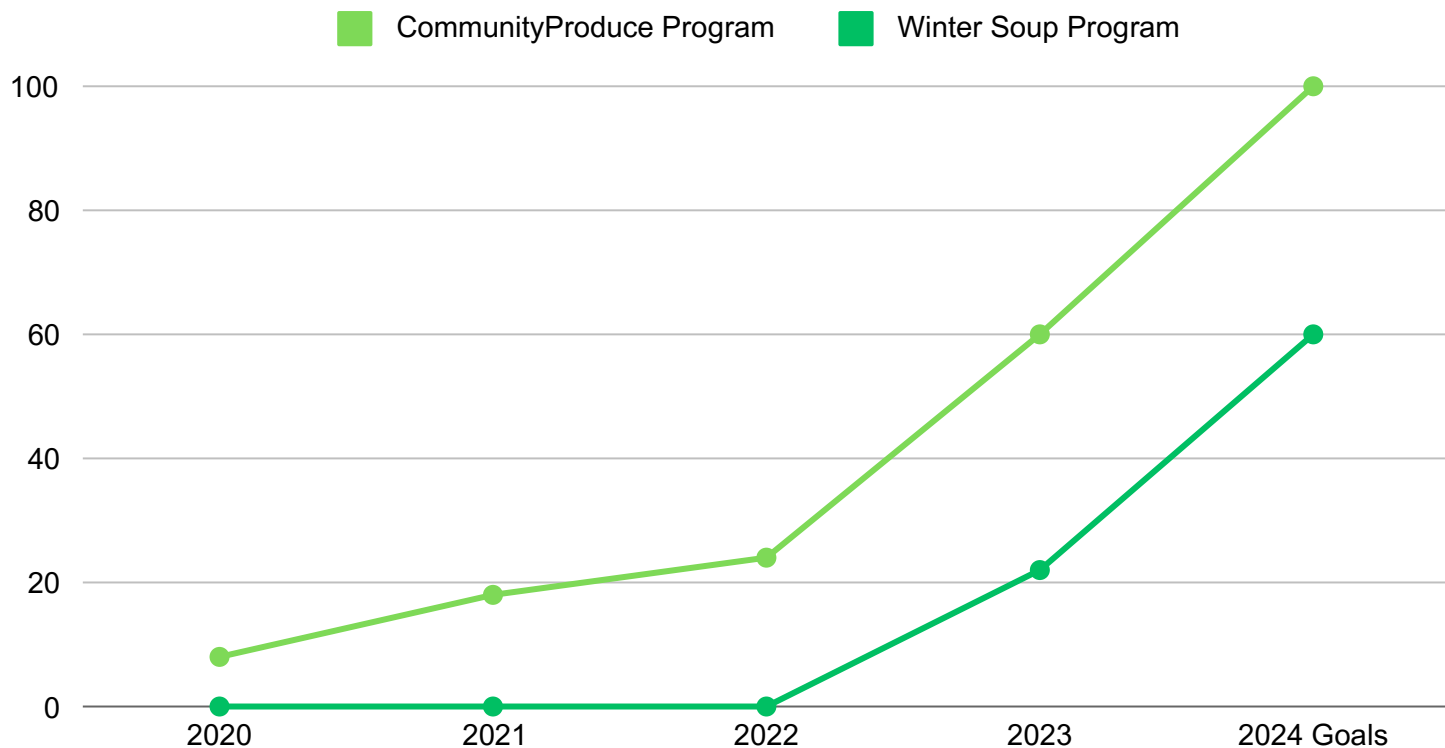
Program Overview



Programming Focused on Food Security

In 2020 Heart & Soil Collective delivered fresh produce to 8 homes per week for 12 weeks. In three short years our Community Produce Program has grown 7.5 times and expanded to create Winter Community Soup Program. 12% of households in Berkshire County faced food insecurity in 2023-roughly 16,000 people. Community Produce and Winter Soup Programs help ease food insecurity by providing locally sourced, nutrient dense food directly to seniors and families at no cost.

Our largest program during 2023 was Community Produce Program, where produce is purchased from small farms and delivered weekly to seniors and families at no cost. See Community Produce Program's growth since 2020 below:



Heart & Soil Collective delivered fresh produce at no cost to 60 homes, reaching 115 individuals in 2023. Our Winter Community Soup Program reached 45 individuals in 24 homes. Our goals for 2024 are to deliver produce to 100 homes and soups to 60 homes.

Our Impact in Words from Participants



Maryellen
Program Participant

"I have been enjoying the wonderful food delivered to me the last couple of years. The local summertime vegetables are amazing and so fresh right into the fall. After a holiday break the winter soups start coming to me. So delicious! Homemade is the best. I love the recent butternut squash soup. I have always home cooked. I am 84 now and I do not drive. I cannot garden anymore. I also have trouble walking, shopping and I am low income. So fresh from the farm is wonderful for me as is the free delivery. This is a wonderful service and I thank you.

Bless you."

For participants, Heart & Soil Collective's programming provides accessible nutrition- and so much more. Along with fresh food delivered right to their door, our programming offers safe social interactions between participants and volunteers who make deliveries- which has been particularly impactful for our seniors who are not as mobile.



Linda
Volunteer

"As a retiree who was once a very active and involved business owner & parent, retirement has left me with time I never had available before. Volunteering to do things that are different from what I used to spend my time doing uses skills I have and is a good way to fill the time I have in a purposeful, productive, fulfilling way. Volunteering for Heart and Soil Collective not only offers me that opportunity but has introduced me to new people, new concepts and most importantly new visions of what I can do to make a difference in not only my life but the life of others."

Heart & Soil Collective offers meaningful volunteer opportunities as community members have a chance to learn about the farms in their neighborhoods, share conversation, laughs and recipes while helping to cook soup or packing vegetables and have room to meet their neighbors through farm-to-door deliveries.



Meg

Farmer at Full Well Farm

"We are so grateful to have gotten to work with Heart and Soil this season. Our mission is to make our locally grown produce as accessible as possible to the North Berkshire community, and Heart and Soil helps us to achieve that through their Community Produce program. With the help of Kristen and her team, our produce is able to be eaten and enjoyed by more people than ever. We can't wait to continue growing this relationship this season!"

For our Partner Farms, Heart & Soil Collective supports their businesses by putting money in their pockets and provides low-effort/ high-impact publicity as participants learn about the farms in their neighborhoods. Our direct-to-customer delivery model decreases farm expenses for travel and packaging and by purchasing after market produce for soup making decreases food waste.

Community Garden Collaborations

With goals of connecting people to the land where their food grows, supporting Community and School Gardens fits perfectly with our mission at Heart & Soil Collective.

In 2023 we worked for the second year with 18 Degrees Family Resource Center (FRC) in Pittsfield, MA to expand six existing raised garden beds, adding perennial pollinator plants as well as annual vegetables. Our Summer Interns helped with planting, weeding and weekly maintenance and garden beds were accessible to be harvested by children and families who attend school and programming at the FRC.

The strawberry beds were so prolific this year we were able to thin 75 plants that were donated to a Community Garden in Bennington, VT and sent home with families- evidence of the impact a small garden can have!

Along with planting at 18 Degrees, Heart & Soil Collective provided seedlings and seeds to Pittsfield Community Gardens to help support their organization's gardens across the city.



Community Connections

Learn about our Community Connections

Heart & Soil Collective partners with local organizations for food security programming and to provide educational experiences. Working with established organizations allows us to reach seniors and families through organizations they already know and trust, enhances each organization's programming and strengthens community. Learn about our 2023 community connections and how each supports our programming below.



Partnerships with 6 Berkshire County Area Small Farms

To provide the freshest and most locally grown produce for our food security programming we partner with small farms. In 2023 we partnered with 6 local farms to purchase seedlings, fresh produce and after-market produce for soup making.

Our Partner Farms: Holiday Brook Farm, Full Well Farm, Bittersweet Farm, Rock and Root Farm, Shaker Creek Farm and Windy Ridge Organic Farm

Berkshire Jail and House of Corrections Aquaponics Education Lab

Collaboration with the Aquaponics Education Lab at Berkshire Jail allows us to provide fresh lettuce for our Community Produce Program. Directors, Board members, partner farmers and volunteers had an opportunity to tour the Aquaponics Education Lab and learn about the process and innovative facility where lettuce is grown.



18 Degrees Family Resource Center (FRC)

The FRC provides free support services and a safe space to learn, play and connect for children and families across all backgrounds. In our second year supporting their community garden we planted and maintained six raised beds of vegetables and berries, adding perennial plants to create a pollinator garden. The garden space is open to families and has been used for educational programs planned by 18 Degrees and Heart & Soil Collective.

Berkshire Agricultural Ventures (BAV)

A partnership with BAV this year has connected us with two years of funding through the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Local Food Promotion Program (LFPP). These funds have allowed us to triple our weekly produce deliveries through Community Produce Program and will support food security program growth through 2024.



Pediatric Palliative Care, Hospice of the Berkshires

A collaboration with Pediatric Palliative Care (PPC), Hospice of the Berkshires allows us to provide fresh produce and hearty soups that are delivered by PPC staff to families receiving care across the Berkshires. In 2023 our Community Produce Program reached 11 families, providing free produce shares from June through October.

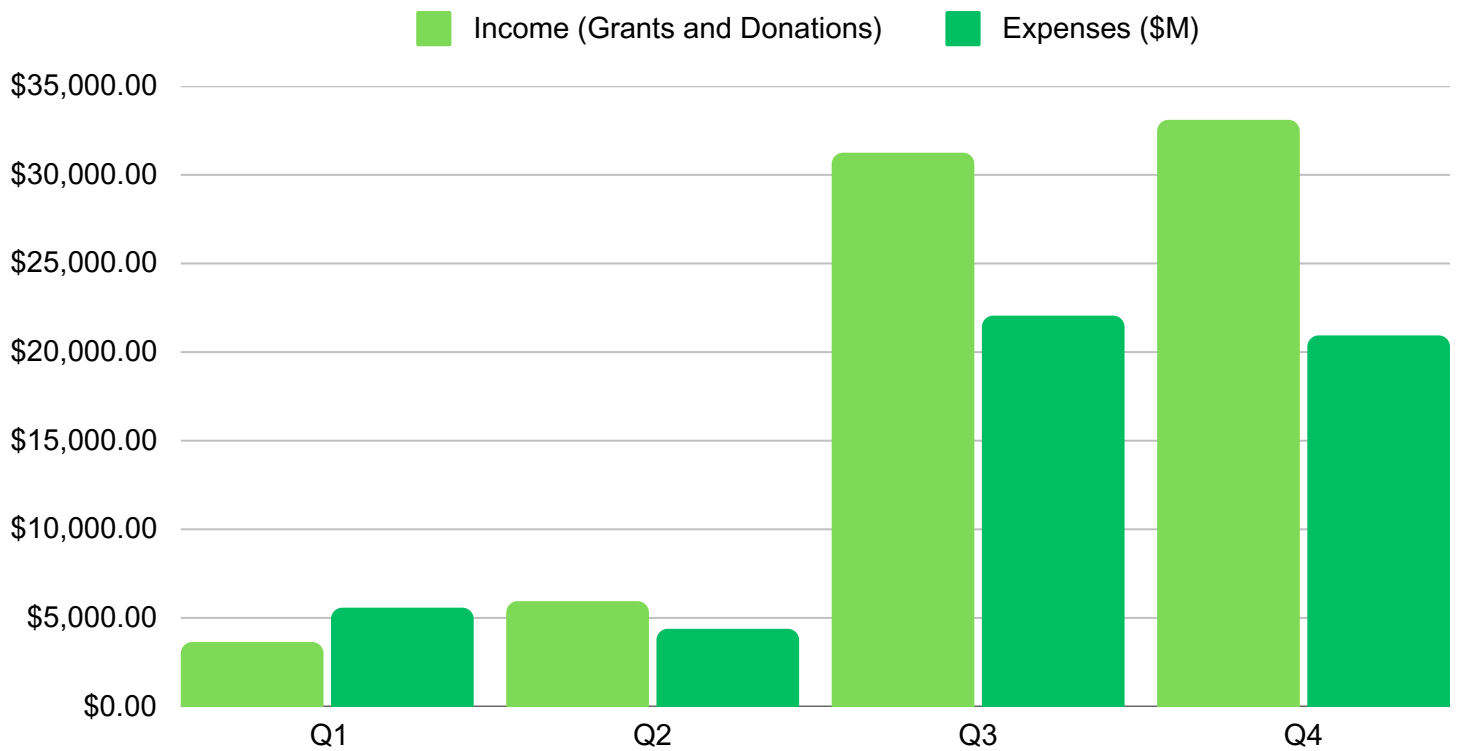
Municipal Partners

Lanesborough and Adams Councils on Aging help us to reach seniors in the communities they serve. Lanesborough Ambulance Crew volunteer to help with produce and soup deliveries, building trusting relationships in non-emergency situations and providing wellness for seniors and families checks when needed.



Our Financials

2023 Quarterly Income and Expense Breakdown



3rd and 4th Quarter saw tremendous program expansion, with increases of six times in both income and expenses supported by funding through the USDA's Local Food Promotion Program (LFPP) grant in collaboration with Berkshire Agricultural Ventures.

2023 Income: \$73,939.68 vs. Expenses: \$52,960.68

In 2023 we began work to diversify revenue streams to include merchandise like vegetable stickers featuring watercolor illustrations by our Managing Director, as well as cards and cooler bags. In 2024 we will launch a 'store' on our website where community members can purchase Heart & Soil Collective gear as well as adding hands-on workshops and classes for children and families.



Grants and Fundraisers



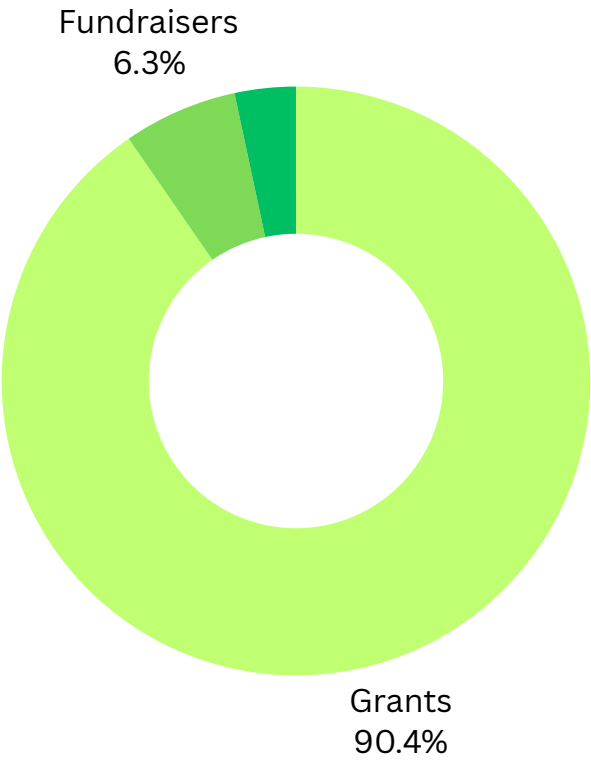
Heart & Soil Collective was awarded three grants in 2023, and became beneficiary of funds through a two-year USDA Local Food Promotion Program (LFPP) grant in partnership with Berkshire Agricultural Ventures, making up over 90% of our annual income.

\$61,528.25 Year 1 funding through Berkshire Agricultural Ventures USDA/ LFPP: Community Produce Program and Winter Soup Program expansion, Job Creation, Strategic Plan

\$2500 Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation's Green Pastures Fund: Community Produce Program Expansion into Adams, MA

\$2300 Mass Cultural Council: to create a Pollinator Garden at 18 Degrees

\$500 Motorama: Food Security Programming Support



Grants: (90.2%)	\$66,828.25
Fundraisers: (6.3%)	\$4631.37
Donations: (3.4%)	\$2480.06

Along with grant funding Heart & Soil Collective received \$2480.06 in donations from individuals and held fundraisers including an Online Auction as well as launching our ‘Sponsor A Senior’ business donation drive bringing in \$4631.37 in fundraising revenue.

‘Sponsor A Senior’ Business Donors

We launched our ‘Sponsor A Senior’ donation drive by reaching out to businesses in the communities we serve. Those who donated were featured on our website and invited to join Board, Directors, partner farmers and volunteers for ‘soup flights’ to taste test four recipes to be prepared for our Winter Community Soup Program. Through ‘Sponsor A Senior’ \$1740 was raised toward food security programming. We are grateful to the businesses below who supported us in 2023 and will be making ‘Sponsor A Senior’ an annual fund drive.

Guido's Fresh Marketplace



Donnybrook Country Club



Injected Solutions



Monarch Realty



A Von Schlegell & Co



Adams Community Bank



Rotary Club of Pittsfield

ROTARY CLUB-PITTSFIELD, MA.



SERVICE ABOVE SELF

Thursdays at 12:10 PM
Mazzoni's Restaurant
1015 South Street
Pittsfield, MA 01201
United States of America

In 2022-2023, the Club has evening meetings on the 3rd Thursday of each month. Check the Club Calendar for meeting details.

Inaugural 'Sponsor A Senior' Soup Dinner

To thank our 'Sponsor A Senior' business donors and celebrate the end of another successful season of Community Produce Program we invited business donors, Board members, staff, volunteers community partners and farmers to our first ever Soup Party. The evening featured four of the soups set to be prepared for our coming Winter Community Soup Program in 'soup flights' for everyone to taste and give feedback- it was hard to pick only one favorite soup! It was a wonderful evening of conversation and networking and will be an annual event.



Goals For 2024



Looking Ahead to 2024 and Beyond

2023 boosted our small nonprofit in ways we never expected- with a Strategic Plan and incredible program expansion the New Year is looking bright! In 2024 it is our goal to expand Community Produce Program by partnering with two additional small farms and reaching an additional 40 homes in towns across Berkshire County. Goals of expansion for Community Winter Soup Program are planned through deliveries from 24 to 60 homes.

Our long term and on-going programming goals are to continue expanding Community Produce and Winter Soup Programs into more Berkshire County towns, partnering with farms in each community and providing fresh, local food to homes across the Berkshires each year.

In the coming year Heart & Soil Collective is set to begin hosting workshops and classes to help meet our mission of connecting people to the land where their food grows, with a goal of scheduling six workshops in 2024.

Food security is a challenge that won't be solved by any one organization alone, and won't be fixed overnight. Heart & Soil Collective is committed to continuing playing our part in addressing food insecurity across Berkshire County by supporting small farms, getting fresh and locally grown food directly to homes, partnering with organizations who support others and creating educational opportunities to empower community members to grow their own food and be connected to the land.

*100

Home Deliveries

Food Security Programming Expansion

In 2024 we have goals of expanding Community Produce Program deliveries from 60 to 100 homes, Winter Community Soup Program deliveries from 24 to 60 homes and partnering with an additional 2 small farms to support food security programming across the Berkshires.

Hands-On Workshops

One of our biggest goals for 2024 is to begin holding hands-on workshops for children and families that meet our mission of connecting people to the land where their food grows. We have a goal of facilitating at least 6 workshops in 2024.

*6

Workshops Planned

*1

Strategic Plan

Creation of a Strategic Plan

In 2023 we began the process of creating a Strategic Plan for our small nonprofit with consultation through Paper Crane Associates. In 2024 our Strategic Plan will be finalized, giving our organization strong focus on future growth and the steps to take to get there.



"For me, this is a blessing, every little bit helps. Thank you."

Barb, Community Partner



Contact Us

To learn more about our impact and programming reach out at: heart.soilma@gmail.com

Heart & Soil Collective, Inc

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