



2017

ANNUAL REPORT

edible flint INTRODUCTION

HISTORY

The mission of *edible flint* is to support Flint residents in growing and accessing healthy food in order to reconnect with the land and each other.

Formed in 2009 in response to community identified needs for coordinated access to food garden resources and information. *Edible Flint* is a network of people and organizations collaborating on healthy food access, productive reuse of vacant land and education in local food systems. The network engages in efforts that support residents' ability to connect, grow, and access healthy food. In 2014, *edible flint* became a 501 (C) (3) non-profit organization to help us find support for our mission through grants and donations from the community. Making the most of the social capital that we've built through these years, residents see *edible flint* as the centerpiece of the local food system as a leader on food garden engagement and education. With our mission in mind, *edible flint* established work groups which support community identified programs and projects to help people growing food for themselves and their community. Individuals involved with *edible flint* are called participants and the organization operates on a consensus decision making process. Our participants collaborate on signature programs and projects including *edible flint* Garden Starters training classes, vegetable kits and garden services; our Annual Food Garden Tour and our Demonstration Garden.



STRATEGIC PLANNING New in 2016, guiding *edible flint*

Our *edible flint* vision for 2020 is to be an economically and environmentally sustainable organization, cultivating the model of a community food system in the Flint region through advocacy, expertise, and partnerships.

The four goals that we are working on are:

- **ADVOCATE** to bring more value to growing food & farming for sale & self
- **BUILD** organizational processes
- **REVITALIZE** by re-engaging past and new participants
- **EXPAND** support services



2017 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

During 2017, *edible flint* reached 4,200 residents through these presentations, programs and events. The organization has a newly redesigned *edible flint* website (with the assistance of a MSUE student intern); created and distributed *edible flint*'s fourth Annual Report; numerous publications promoting various 2017 *edible flint* programs and events; and works closely with the *edible flint* Leadership Board on funding, partners, communications and evaluation processes. At *edible flint*'s 4th Annual Meeting last March, representatives of all 5 city wards joined existing Board members for a total of 15 community representatives on the Leadership Board.

Food access and public safety have been significant factors in *edible flint*'s programming over time, as the 1,267 food gardens in Flint that *edible flint* has supported through either veggie kits, garden services, or both over the last 7 years (124 of which are community gardens) have contributed to blight elimination and healthy food access for residents. *Edible Flint* Garden Starters Program – soil lead testing results within the City of Flint, 459 gardens sampled from 2011-17; over 92% are safe, below 300 ppm.

In the past year, two new, innovative food access initiatives have developed through the collaboration of engaged partners. The Flint Fresh Mobile Market is offering a way for Flint's residents to access healthy foods in underserved neighborhoods with transportation challenges.

This mobile market provides a small, nimble and adaptive option with the ability to work around the limitations of a traditional retail operation, and was planned with a community participatory mapping exercise to define the areas of the city in highest need for increased access to healthy, lead mitigating foods. It is a nonprofit market that accepts most forms of food assistance benefits. The Flint Fresh Veggie Box program, a subscriber-based produce delivery program aimed at ensuring that more Flint residents have access to fresh food began May 2017, also supports local growers producing vegetables for sales who have access to new markets and sources of revenue through it. By last fall, 500 veggie boxes had been sold, and were delivered to homes and businesses in Flint. In the spring of 2018, the new Flint Fresh Food Hub will become the base of operations for the Mobile Market and the Veggie Box program, through the rehabilitation of an old building on the east side of Flint. This warehouse facility will aggregate, store, process, distribute and market locally produced foods – contributing to job development and the local economy. By bringing together produce, meats and dairy products from multiple producers, the food hub can generate the volume required to cost-effectively sell to larger purchasers like restaurants, grocery stores, schools and hospitals.

PRODUCER'S NETWORK POSITION new in 2017

The Producers Network Coordinator supports an urban producer's network focusing on training specific for 13-20 new and existing growers to build their capacity to grow for sales, including sales to the Flint Fresh Veggie Box program. Focused on small scale farmers, instruction on developing personal business plans; marketing plans; future crop planning; pricing for profit; season extension growing; harvesting and storage and food safety risk assessment was delivered. The Producers coordinator supports the Flint Fresh Veggie Box Program by assisting with program administration and delivery of the veggie boxes to the residents of Flint.



GARDEN STARTERS

GARDEN STARTERS Kits and Services

The Garden Starters workgroup in Spring 2017 sold 330 veggie garden kits to Flint and Genesee County residents, which were picked up at a Distribution Day and Community Garden Celebration event at the Neighborhood Engagement Hub (NEH). This event included educational demonstrations on rain barrels, Master Gardener Volunteers shared veggie gardening tips, health and nutrition awareness, and available tools to borrow from the NEH's Tool Shed. The *edible flint* veggie kits contained **30** types of vegetables for a 1,500 sq. ft. garden. The garden services (City of Flint only) included tilling (**25** gardens), soil testing (**34** tests) and compost delivery (**377** yards) for **75** gardens in Flint (18 were new gardens in their first year of establishment). **192** participants in the overall Garden Starters programs were new this year. Within Flint's growing season, a 1,500 sq. ft. plot can provide most of a household's yearly vegetable needs, through fresh consumption and food preservation. **58** irrigation hose filters were distributed through grant funding from the water crisis. A collaboration with the Oasis water delivery team (a partnership with Genesee County Parks, NEH, *edible flint*) resulted in

water deliveries to **66** gardens providing a source of water for gardeners where access to irrigation water was limited or cost prohibitive.

The *edible flint* Neighborhood Ambassadors, a garden mentorship program was launched in April of 2017 to further support Flint residents during the growing season. The Carolyn Meekins Garden and the Whaley Children's Center Garden (**25** residents participated) were two projects supported by the work of Neighborhood Ambassadors. Through partnerships with the Meekins Garden Team and Summerfield School, the garden's hoop-house and two outdoor gardens were planted this year and **36** Head Start families had the opportunity to learn how to garden and encouraged to have their own growing space. Through the dedicated hours given by 2 neighborhood ambassadors, weekly produce was donated to Head Start staff and families by the Carolyn Meekins Garden Team. In addition to community garden support, **8** senior citizens living in the Ballenger Square Neighborhood were assisted by mentors through the season. The neighborhood ambassadors act as guides into urban food gardening and build personal relationships with individual gardeners in the city to create a stronger, citizen led community of gardeners.



GARDEN STARTERS Education Program

For eleven weeks in the winter and spring of 2017, 42 students enrolled in the 2017 Garden Starters Training classes. These classes focus on local food systems, organic and sustainable food gardening, pest management practices, soil health, composting, harvesting, food preservation, cross-cultural communications, and accessing land and resources for growing food. The program had **22** graduates. The education doesn't stop after the course is completed, however. A Spring Tool Care workshop was held in conjunction with the Neighborhood Engagement Hub (NEH) and its community Tool Shed.

GARDEN STARTERS DEMO GARDEN



The *edible flint* Demonstration/community garden is in its 4th year of production across from Hurley Medical Center, and is supported through the extensive efforts of two key volunteer managers and the Garden Starters Training Coordinator, along with key volunteer groups and individuals (MSU students, Whole Food employees, and Google employees volunteered this year). The *edible flint* demonstration garden produced **1,988** pounds of produce this year (which is tracked and recorded along with several other community gardens to measure annual impact). This produce is primarily distributed to nearby low income neighbors who rely on the garden's fresh produce to supplement their daily diets, and through a new initiative at Hurley titled the Food Pharmacy, intended for hospital patients who are food insecure. The demonstration garden is an educational space, with hands-on workshops held last fall covering topics including garlic planting, cover crops, and fall garden preparation. Events are hosted in this garden space, including *edible flint's* Annual Food Garden Tour and Be a Tourist in Your Hometown in the summer and the *edible flint* Harvest Celebration in the fall. The nearby Unicorn community garden recorded **1,903** pounds of produce grown, which is also distributed to neighbors, senior citizens and residents in need.



The *edible flint* demonstration garden produced **1,988 lbs of produce** this year



GARDEN TOUR



The 2017 (9th Annual) Food Garden Tour highlighted the way our community is addressing a number of challenges by showcasing a diversity of gardens that are transforming neighborhoods by removing blight, increasing property values, employing people, increasing food access, improving diets and decreasing grocery bills by coordinating a bus and bike garden tour on July 26. This year, **190** people participated in visiting **15** different innovative and inspiring food gardens across the City of Flint, wrapping up with a community celebration that took place at the Flint Farmers Market including food, music and fellowship. This year's tour included the 5th Annual Partners in Healthy Living Fair, with **20** community partners. The Tour promotes cross neighborhood communications, community problem solving, and supports the vision and principles of Flint's Master Plan and *edible flint's* strategic plan.

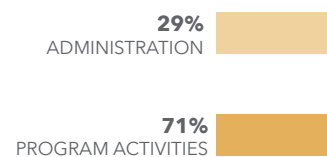
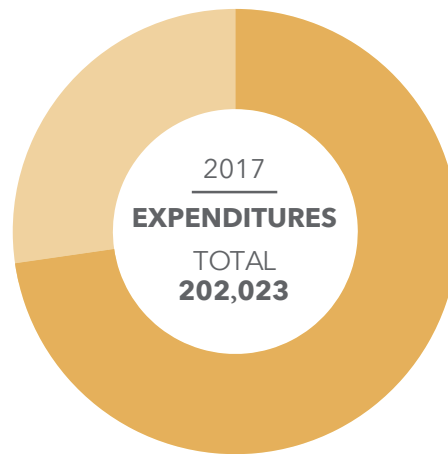
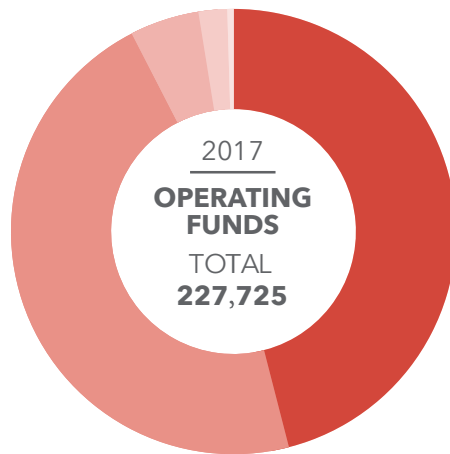
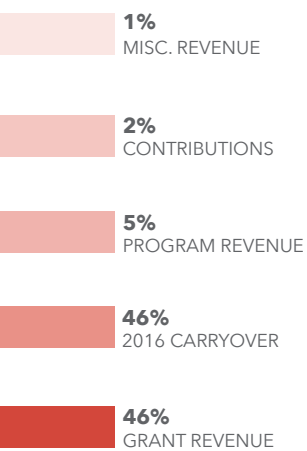


Continuing this important local food systems work and supporting *edible flint's* further development as a non-profit organization through implementation of its strategic plan is our passion. With the endorsement of the Flint community in the belief that *edible flint* is helping their families and community to be healthier and more engaged in positive change, the higher profile/awareness we've raised through the Flint water crisis, and the new vision we've created, we intend to be responsive to the needs of the Flint community for years to come.

“ **190 people** participated in visiting **15 different** food gardens



FINANCIAL REPORT 2016-2017



THANK YOU! To our funders, supporters, participants and friends. The work of this organization would not happen without you! Thank you for helping us to support Flint residents in growing and accessing healthy food in order to reconnect them with the land and each other!



SUPPORTING PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS Collaborating with community partners in 2017 has been the key to the *edible flint* network. Local partners include the Ruth Mott Foundation; Community Foundation of Greater Flint; Flint Farmers Market; Flint YMCA; Genesee Conservation District; Genesee County Land Bank; Genesee County Health Department; Genesee Health System; Greater Flint Health Coalition; Mott Community College; MSU College of Human Medicine; MSU Extension; Genesys Regional Medical Center; Mr. Gaines Garden Program; Genesee Intermediate School District; Neighborhood Engagement Hub; National Kidney Foundation of MI; Flint Area Reinvestment Office; Genesee Farm Bureau; Mass Transportation Authority; Crim Fitness Foundation; Food Bank of Eastern MI; Indian Trails; Dort Federal Credit Union; University of MI Flint & AA-Project Healthy Schools; ForMar; Flint Children’s Museum; Hamilton Community Network; Taste of Health Nutrition, Flint Fresh and the Local Grocer.

STATE LEVEL PARTNERS IN 2017 INCLUDE MI Farmers Market Association via the Flint Coordinator position for the Hoophouses for Health program; MI Food and Farming System’s Women in Agriculture Farm Development Center in Grand Blanc at Genesys Regional Medical Center – a facility to train women farmers in scaling up their farm businesses for retail sales; and the MSU Center for Regional Food Systems, and its Food Hub and Farm to Institution networks.



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