

NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Anke Wessels, CTA Executive Director

ctaoffice@cornell.edu / 607.319.2602

ITHACA, NY—The Center for Transformative Action announces the addition of Healthy Food For All to its portfolio of fiscally sponsored programs.

Conceived in 2006 by local farmers, Healthy Food For All (HFFA) provides sustenance and stability to community members struggling with hunger while fairly compensating local farmers producing the diversity of fruits and vegetables that provide a cornerstone to good health.

During the 2022 growing season, HFFA invested \$150,000 in family-owned organic farms in the Finger Lakes region and helped 1,500 food-insecure youth and adults gain reliable, dignified and affordable access to fresh produce. HFFA prioritizes a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) model, in which consumers purchase a “share” of a farm’s harvest. Participating households receive an abundant quantity and variety of fresh produce each week during the growing season (May/June–November), with the option to extend through March. HFFA’s CSA shares are subsidized up to 100% based on need.



“HFFA has expanded from a fledgling pilot project of just 3 farms working together to provide subsidized CSA shares for 18 households to a robust consortium of more than 10 farms providing summer and winter CSA shares for 325 Tompkins County households,” says HFFA director Elizabeth Karabinakis ’03. “Our additional projects including Food as Medicine in partnership with local healthcare practitioners, as well as partnerships with food pantries and housing programs have emerged as HFFA responds to the most vulnerable members of our community. Through our new affiliation with CTA, we look forward to expanding on that tradition of nimble and responsive program development to address community needs.”

CTA Executive Director Anke Wessels notes that HFFA is a valuable addition to the CTA food security portfolio, which also includes Anabel’s Cafe, Fallen Tree, and the Lyson Center for Civic Agriculture. “The Center for Transformative Action has a 50-year history of galvanizing and supporting bold social justice initiatives that effect deep-seated change through fiscal sponsorship,” says Wessels. “HFFA exemplifies the types of projects we sponsor and we look forward to catalyzing its efforts to bolster the local food system and improve public health while promoting human dignity and environmental sustainability through partnerships among food insecure community members and small, family farms.”

As a visiting lecturer in Cornell’s Charles H. Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management, Wessels teaches a practicum in social entrepreneurship (AEM 3385) focused on food justice. All the students in the class are running Anabel’s Grocery, a student founded, nonprofit grocery store that provides fresh, nutritious, and affordable food to all students. The students source from many local farmers and food producers and are able to keep their prices low thanks to a subsidy fund. Karabinakis has served as a guest lecturer in AEM 3385. HFFA also has longstanding partnerships with Cornell

University Public Health faculty and students, who have been key partners in HFFA's Food as Medicine program, as well as faculty in the Division of Nutritional Sciences and the Center for Sustainable Global Enterprise in the Samuel Curtis Johnson Graduate School of Management.

As a project of the Center for Transformative Action, Healthy Food For All has formed a dedicated advisory board comprised of farmers, members, public health professionals, fundraising experts, and other community stakeholders. Members of the inaugural advisory board include farmer **Donnette "Dee" Baptist**, co-owner of Fort Baptist Farm in Ithaca; **Samantha Castillo-Davis**, a graduate of Cornell's Sloan Program in Healthcare Administration who is now a project manager of Cigna Corp's Evernorth Care Solutions - Medical Solutions; Cornell master's of public health student **Claire Concepcion**, a long-time Ithaca resident and Cornell employee; **Molly Flerlage**, CSA coordinator for the Full Plate Collective; farmer **Paul Martin**, co-owner of Sweet Land Farm in Trumansburg; **Taili Mugambee**, executive director of the Ultimate Reentry Opportunity, also a project of CTA and a longtime HFFA partner; **Elizabeth "Baz" Perry**, associate director for the Division of Nutritional Sciences' Figueroa Interdisciplinary Group (FIG) Lab in Cornell's College of Human Ecology; **Graham Savio**, Agriculture and Horticulture Program Director for Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County; farmer **Nathaniel Thompson**, co-owner of Remembrance Farm in Trumansburg, a founding farmer of HFFA, and a Full Plate Collective partner; and **Meaghan Wright**, CSA manager for West Haven Farm in Ithaca.

About CTA: The Center for Transformative Action (CTA), an independent 501c3 nonprofit affiliated with Cornell University, helps create communities that are socially just, ecologically sound, and work for everyone. We do this by providing educational programs and fiscal sponsorship services to innovative social change initiatives. In CTA's supportive infrastructure, project leaders focus on testing innovative approaches to difficult social problems, establishing viable financial models, and building organizational and programmatic capacity. These projects work to transform the structures as well as the habits of mind that produce inequities in our communities, country, and the world. Through their innovative methods, as well as their successes and challenges, they show us what is possible.

About HFFA: HFFA collaborates with partners spanning the human service, private and public sectors to reach the diversity of community members who have historically been disenfranchised from the Finger Lakes' vibrant local food system, and more effectively reduce barriers to accessing farm-fresh produce. In addition to the half-price CSA shares launched in 2006, HFFA offers free and sliding-scale models. In 2017, Ithaca became the first city in the United States to guarantee access to local produce via free CSA shares for single parents living in poverty and raising young children—a milestone made possible by HFFA with support from the Community Foundation's Women's Fund, Ithaca Garden Club and private donors. In 2018, HFFA launched Food as Medicine to enable households coping with diet-related illnesses to improve their health through produce prescriptions written by participating healthcare providers. In 2020, as COVID-19 exacerbated disparities in access to fresh food, nutrition and health, HFFA tapped its relationships with farmers, distributors, chefs and community partners to address pandemic-related disruptions in the food system and meet an upsurge in need. In 2021, the national No Kid Hungry campaign run by Share Our Strength selected HFFA from among thousands of programs across the U.S. as a winning, innovative approach to improve early childhood nutrition. Today, HFFA supports emerging farmers to expand access to local produce for Gayogohónó and other BIPOC households as well as other marginalized and vulnerable community members through its Farm-to-Pantry, Farm-to-Prison, and Farm-to-Plate projects in collaboration with community partners. HFFA is honored to work with non-profit partners including Calvary Baptist Church, Enfield Food Pantry, No Mas Lagrimas, Southside Community Center, Traditional Center for Indigenous Knowledge and Healing, Ultimate Re-Entry Opportunity, and Village at Ithaca, and expanding partnerships in 2023 to work more closely with Greater Ithaca Activities Center, Groundswell Center for Food and Farming, Khuba International, The Learning Farm and Youth Farm Project.