



a project of United Community Centers

### Since 1998 ENYF has:

- Provided approximately 707,223 pounds of fresh food to our community through our two markets
- Generated over \$1,200,000 for local vendors and regional farmers through our markets
- Worked with 200 gardeners representing 40 community gardens and 50 backyard gardens
- Engaged nearly 200 local youth in leadership development through paid internships
- Hosted over 6,300 volunteers and visitors at our farm to learn about food justice and community-led urban agriculture

Dear friends,

This year, *East New York Farms!* turned 15. As we reach this milestone, we have exciting news to share with our friends and members. As many of you know, I will be leaving my position as ENYF Project Director this fall. **I am thrilled to announce that David Vigil, our former Farm Manager and current Youth Program Director, will be taking over as our new Project Director.** David is a capable and committed leader, and his seven years with ENYF have prepared him well for this role. David's promotion also opened up an opportunity for Roy Frias to join our staff as Youth Program Director. Though a new staff member, Roy is not new to our program at all. **Roy was an intern with ENYF from 2002—2006, a volunteer, and an 'extern' in our alumni program.** A recent graduate of the Public Allies fellowship, Roy is passionate and skilled, and we are so deeply proud to have him join our staff.

**When this project started in 1998, we had no idea how much we would accomplish. The first day of our market featured two urban growers** with a small selection of produce set up on two tables on a sidewalk. **Now we host two weekly markets with an average of 15 vendors each week, supplying our community with an average of 65,000 lbs of fresh, locally-grown and homemade foods each year.** Our Saturday market has grown so large we've been able to secure a permit to close Schenck Avenue between New Lots and Livonia through the summer and fall. This ideal location - right between UCC Youth Farm, Schenck Park, the New Lots Branch of Brooklyn Public Library, the # 3 train and multiple bus lines – has enabled us to grow from so much more than a source of fresh produce to a vibrant center of community activity, where we host farm tours, children's activities, music and dance performances, gardening workshops, a much-loved annual hot pepper eating contest, and more.

The gardening movement in East New York has also been growing. In the beginning, we worked with 14 gardeners each year, a small but committed group who were knowledgeable about gardening and produced enough to have a surplus to sell at our market. As we've expanded our capacity, **we're now able to work with over 95 gardeners each year, representing over two dozen community gardens and 30 backyard gardens and huge range of experience, from beginning gardeners to seasoned farmers.**

Over 40 of these gardeners sell through our farmers market. Others host workshops and public events in their gardens, or serve as Community Educators leading cooking demonstrations throughout our community. People often ask us, *How did you get so many people involved?* Luckily we are able to say that people mostly find us. That has always been a strength of ENYF – we build on our community's assets, and take our direction from the interests and energy of our neighbors. So many people in East New York know something about growing food! Whether they grew up farming or gardening in the South, the Caribbean, Central America, South Asia, or West Africa, our community members bring so much passion and knowledge to our work. **A beautiful article in the New York Times last fall (The Seeds They Carried) that referred to them as "...some of the most devoted and prolific gardeners in the City of New York."** For people who have either never heard of East New York, or have never heard anything positive about East New York, this article was a chance for them to learn about our resilience and resourcefulness.

**In addition to shining a positive light on East New York in general, our work over the last 15 years has also highlighted the positive contributions of young people, who are too**

often villainized and too rarely invited to be part of community solutions. **We have offered intensive paid internships, lasting anywhere from 9 months to 4 years, to nearly 200 young people in our community.** Working together they have managed their own ½ acre farm (producing over 36,700 pounds of vegetables since it was started in 2000), and assisted community and backyard gardeners to build new raised beds, construct compost bins, install rainwater harvesting systems, and sell their produce through our collective “Share Table” for gardeners at our markets. They’ve hosted over 6,000 volunteers and visitors, including many from local schools and afterschool programs, to educate them about urban agriculture and food justice in East New York.

We have also been amazed by what our youth interns have done after the program. In a recent survey of our alumni, we found that 96% were either employed or enrolled in college or training program, or both. **Among them are many college students and college graduates, a student majoring in agronomy and architecture, peer health educators, a New York City Teaching Fellow, a Gates Millenium Scholar, a human resources manager, a professional chef, a registered nurse, a farmers market manager, community garden members, parents who shop at the market for healthy food for their families, and a lot of registered voters!**

**We have also had the privilege to see and support the growth of urban agriculture and food justice work throughout our city and our country.** We now field dozens of inquiries every year from groups starting up youth gardening programs, community farmers markets, and urban farms. As this movement has grown nationwide, we’ve been able to connect to a powerful network of peer organizations with whom we share best practices. We also share our experience with dozens of researchers and at local, regional, and national conferences. We are proud to be able to contribute our unique approach - working intensively with both youth *and* adults, providing support to growers throughout our neighborhood *and* operating our own farm, and running two thriving farmers markets that rely on an extraordinary partnership between urban *and* rural growers. We've been able to create real positive change for our East New York *and* provide a strong model for community-led urban agriculture locally and nationally.

I am so proud of what we’ve been able to accomplish together during my 10 years here, and of our strong membership and staff who will continue to grow the East New York Farms! Project. **Lastly, I want to take this opportunity to thank you for your support over the years, and ask you, at this exciting time of celebration and transition, to invest in our next 15 years. Your contributions of any amount will give us the stability and flexibility to continue building a just food system for our community.**

With gratitude,

Sarita Daftary  
ENYF Project Director

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*To donate, please visit [www.eastnewyorkfarms.org](http://www.eastnewyorkfarms.org) to find our Network for Good donation link, or send a check payable to 'United Community Centers' with 'ENYF' in the notes line to: United Community Centers; 613 New Lots Ave; Brooklyn, NY 11207*

***Can you invest in our next 15 years of growing food, community, and resilience? Contributions of any amount are appreciated!***

**\$10 could buy 2 lbs of cover crop for gardeners**

**\$25 could fund supplies for one raised garden bed**

**\$50 could buy groceries for our weekly summer lunches, prepared by youth interns**

**\$110 could pay the stipend for one of our Community Educators to lead a cooking demonstration about fresh local foods and how to get involved in East New York Farms!**

**\$200 could buy supplies for Children’s Activities at our markets for 3 months**

**\$500 could support a project member to share our work and network with other food justice leaders at regional and national conferences**

***Visit [www.eastnewyorkfarms.org](http://www.eastnewyorkfarms.org) for more information on how to donate***

