

2014 ANNUAL REPORT



Farmshare Austin

December 2014

Message from the Board Chair and Executive Director

We are pleased to share the Farmshare Austin 2014 Annual Report with you. This was our first year in operations and our achievements include:

- Starting our educational farm in eastern Travis County
- Raising the \$50,000 to support our program through a crowdfunding campaign supported by almost 200 individuals.
- Admitting our first class of six students to our educational program, Farmer Starter
- Growing fresh local produce for El Buen Samaritano's food pantry and the Sustainable Food Center.

Farmshare Austin's Board of Directors and staff are dedicated to continuing to build on this year's accomplishments and to creating a sustainable organization that enhances our local food system. In 2015 we are looking forward to admitting our second Farmer Starter class, introducing a volunteer program and making the educational farm more accessible to the community, and expanding our food access strategy so we can feed even more people in Central Texas.

Michael Klug
Board Chair

Taylor Cook
Executive Director

Farmshare Austin is a 501c3 that is accelerating organic farming knowledge to scale organic food access in Central Texas by offering on farm education and training to aspiring farmers, facilitating research for organic and sustainable farming practices, preserving land and natural resources needed for farming, and facilitating innovative giving programs that put organic food on the tables of those who are most food insecure in our community.



2014 Farmerstarter students and staff. Photo Credit: Stuart McSpadden

“Farmshare Austin’s work is critical to ensuring we achieve Imagine Austin’s goal to increase access to fresh health locally-produced foods for everyone.”

**- Edwin Marty
City of Austin Food
Policy Manager**

January

Board of Directors adopts the first annual plan. Goals for 2014 are to launch the Farmer Starter school with an innovative curriculum that compliments our food access mission and delivers produce to Austin's underserved.



February



Farmshare Austin's Board of Directors enhances its talents and expertise with two new members: Errol Schewizer, the Executive Global Grocery Coordinator for Wholefoods, and Steven Hake, Attorney at Law.



March

The Executive Director, Taylor Cook, started with Farmshare in December 2013. Farmer Starter needs more staff to focus on instruction and agricultural production. Marissa Lankes, the Lead Instructor, and Lorig Hawkins, the Farm Manager, join Farmshare in March 2014.

April



Farmshare staff works with the Board of Directors to start planning the Educational Program, Farmer Starter, with the goal of admitting the first class in October. Staff begins researching and creating a unique curriculum tailored for the goals of the program.

May

Farmshare staff begin to tackle farm planning by prioritizing the supplies and equipment that are needed to support the educational program and meet the year's food access goals. Partnerships are formed with El Buen Samaritano and the Sustainable Food Center to help distribute our produce.



June

Farmshare Austin completes a lease agreement with the Board Chair to use his five acre Travis County farm as the home for Farmer Starter. Seeding, improvements, and plans for a wash and pack shed and greenhouse start.

July

Farmshare Austin hosts the first annual Farm Raiser at the Getaway Motor Club. Individuals and organizations from around the community came out to support Farmshare and the launch of the Indiegogo campaign with a night of square dancing, local food and drinks, and the premier of our Indiegogo video shot by Rocket Ship Productions, and a chance to get the campaign off to an inspiring and fun start.



After 45 nail-biting days Farmshare exceeds its ambitious Indiegogo campaign goal! More than \$50,000 is raised from almost 200 individuals and businesses that demonstrated their commitment to healthy local foods and the future of organic agriculture in Central Texas.

Sept.

Following our fundraising success and the application process for the first Farmer Starter class, there is only one short month to build facilities for incoming students. We could not do it all without the help of volunteer carpenters Jose and Alberto Martinez and the dedicated staff.



October



Six extraordinary students from around the county join the inaugural Farmer Starter class. To celebrate this year of accomplishments and the beginning of the program we invite the community to join us for the first Harvest Festival at the our educational farm.

Nov./Dec.

With good weather and help on the farm we begin donating produce to El Buen Samaritano and the Sustainable Food Center. On Thanksgiving alone we coordinated fresh produce for over 1,000 families with El Buen Samaritano and help from Johnson's Backyard Garden.



Board of Directors

Michael Klug, Chair
Adam Butler, Vice Chair
Carrie Kenny, Treasurer
Edie Cassell, Secretary
Steve Hake
Daniel Hope
Brenton Johnson
Matt Leach
Lisa Quintero
Errol Schweizer
Jon Stormberg

Life on the Farm

Farmer Starter students live and work on the educational farm for six months. Weekdays students are in class, working in the fields, getting hands on experience in workshops, or traveling to area farms for off-site learning opportunities. Each student has a private furnished canvas walled tent with a wood burning stove and small porch. Everyone shares a common kitchen and often prepare meals together with produce harvested at the farm and shared staples. The common area and classroom are co-located and transition throughout the day from learning area, to dining room, to study space, and occasionally is rearranged for movie night or a dance party.



Supporters

Farmshare had significant support from local companies and organizations with the Farmraiser and the Harvest Festival including: Annie's, Black Star Co-op, Buddha's Brew Kombucha, Casa Brasil, Commerce Street Supper Club, Counter Culture Café, Easy Tiger, Getaway Motor Club, Hops and Grain Brewery, JBG Organic, Moontower Co-op, Nile Valley Teas, Oh-Kimchi, Rocket Ship Productions, Rogness Brewery, Sarah's Simple Sweets, Texas Farmers Market, Texas French Bread, Texas Keeper Cider, Texas Young Farmers Coalition, The Austin Beer Garden Brewery, The Barn Owls, The Gardener's Feast, The Mediterranean Chef, The Natural Epicurean, Whole Foods, and Wunder Pilz Kombucha.

We are also very fortunate to have business donors support projects and programs:

- Nutiva for sponsoring the Greenhouse
- Wheatsville for the construction of the Wash and Pack Shed
- Presence Marketing/Dynamic Presence for student scholarships
- Dr. Bronners, Clif Bar Foundation, Natural Health Research Foundation, the Warren Skaaren Charitable Trust, and Johnson's Backyard Garden for operational support.

Food Access Strategy

In 2014 Farmshare's vegetables were donated to El Buen Samaritano's food pantry which feeds more than 19,000 individuals every year. We also started a partnership with the Sustainable Food Center's Happy Kitchen (*Cocina Alergra*) and Farm to Family programs which teach individuals how to prepare healthy meals and makes fresh produce more accessible in underserved parts Austin.

Farmland Preservation in Central Texas

A growing population helps make Austin one of the most dynamic cities in the county but it also puts pressure on our resources including land which is needed for new development. In addition to education and food access Farmshare Austin is committed to preserving agricultural land so that the next generation of farmers can grow healthy foods in our region and consumers have the option



to eat locally. The City of Austin's Sustainable Food Policy Board has been active on this issue and Farmshare is participating in their Land Preservation and Code and Ordinance Working Groups. For more information on how you can participate please visit www.austintexas.gov/food

Staff

Farmshare Austin is operating with a small staff that boasts extensive and diverse experiences. To learn more about the team please visit farmshareaustin.org/about/meet-our-team.

Farmer Starter Students

Our first class of six students came to Farmshare from around the state and county. Two students called Austin home before joining us and one was residing in Denton. The other three came from New York, Florida, and Nebraska. They range in age from 20 to 31 and five out of the six are women. In addition to an interest in agriculture all share a passion for health and sustainability. After the program is complete they plan to seek careers in agriculture, pursue higher education, or seek additional training in sustainable and natural farming practices.



The Year Ahead

Farmshare Austin hit several significant milestones in 2014 most notably hiring a highly qualified staff, beginning production at the educational farm, and enrolling students in the first Farmer Starter classes. In 2015 we will focus on strengthening existing programs and creating more opportunities for the community to engage with our work on and off the farm.

Education

- We are committed to providing ongoing support to our graduates and building a well-connected network of alumni
- A second Farmer Starter class will begin in 2015.
- We will continue to expose students to a variety of systems and methods by collaborating with local farms including Johnson's Backyard Garden, Hausbar Farm, Boggy Creek Farm, and Prickly Pair Farm.
- Dedicated classroom and office space will be constructed at the farm to increase the program's capacity and centralize our administrative activities.
- We will make plans to offer Farmer Starter courses twice a year and develop an incubator program for graduates.

Food Production

- Farmshare will work with local partners to implement farm stands for neighborhoods with limited access to healthy food.
- We will strengthen existing food access partnerships, develop innovative practices to minimize waste, and increase our production and donation capacity.

Community

- Farmshare will host its first Community Classes at Boggy Creek Farm in February 2015.
- We will introduce regular volunteer opportunities at the farm to involve more community members in our work and augment staff and board initiatives.

Preliminary 2014 Financials

Revenues	\$148,080
Contributions	\$114,971
In-Kind Contributions	\$8,460
Tuition	\$24,150
Other Revenue	\$499
Expenses	\$97,436
Program	\$88,849
General Administrative	\$6,000
Fundraising	\$2,587
Change in Net Assets	\$50,644

Preliminary financials prior to 2014 tax filing. If needed, Farmshare Austin will re-issue the financial portion of this report at a later date.



Contact

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Visit us on the web at
www.farmshareaustin.org
and follow us on Twitter
([@farmshareATX](https://twitter.com/farmshareATX)) and Facebook ([/Farmshareaustin/](https://www.facebook.com/Farmshareaustin/))

Support Farmshare Austin in 2015

We know from our experience in 2014 that it takes a lot of support and collaboration to make Farmshare's programs successful.

To be a part of our work and continued growth in 2015 please visit Farmshareaustin.org/donate online or contact us for information about sponsorship opportunities.