

# 2020-2021 annual Report



## KENEY PARK SUSTAINABILITY PROJECT



### Major Sponsors

*J. Walton Russell*  
FOUNDATION







## 2020 -2021

# ANNUAL NARRATIVE



Keney Park Sustainability Project faced many challenges in 2020 and 2021, but thankfully, with your support and some creative thinking, we saw just as many rewards.

We were so disappointed when the start of the pandemic put an end to our maple syrup season and forced the cancellation of almost all of our volunteer groups, but we didn't panic; we pivoted, and we partnered. We turned challenges into opportunities, and we couldn't be prouder of what we had achieved. We implemented our home garden kit program, providing kits to over 100 households, which created a KPSP-at-home activity that not only educated but provided healthy, home-grown food to families in need.

That's just one of the successful virtual initiatives that we implemented in 2020: we distributed hundreds of rain barrels and composters in partnership with the City of Hartford Office of Sustainability through the NFWF Futures Fund Grant, we distributed over 5,000 seed packets with Foodshare, and we provided hydroponic growing kits in partnership with the Waterbury Housing Authority. We increased vegetable distribution by 75% during 2020 to Hartford Public Schools, local Farmers Markets, Mutual Aid Hartford, and our own food stand. In 2021 we grew those initiatives even further, increasing distribution from 100 to 250 home garden kits, including 4' x4' raised beds, 4' x8' raised beds, hydroponic kits, and grow bags.

Another success story came from a partnership with Lauren Little Edutainment, Miicro2Life, Samad Garden Initiative, and Farmer Derick Bedward to create the "I Got Next" Farmers Coalition. "I Got Next" was formed to provide support, share resources and education opportunities for up-and-coming local farmers, and it continues to grow. We also partnered with Leadership Greater Hartford's "Third Age Initiative" to create ongoing work and volunteer opportunities for individuals with intellectual disabilities. We worked with "La Boguedita De La Gente" and FoodShare to provide food donations during the pandemic to more than 400 families weekly throughout the height of the pandemic.

And, while KPSP could pivot to virtual when needed, we also improved our constituents' access to better physical fitness. Thanks to funding from Hartford Decides, we installed 14 fitness stations, and plan to create a digital map to accompany it.

Another in-person, and creative success was our role in Walden, TheaterWorks' first in person production since March of 2020. We helped create the beautiful set by constructing a living green wall, and maintained the plantings throughout the run of the show.

We knew we'd accomplished so much, despite the obstacles created by the pandemic, but others noticed too. KPSP was featured in Paul Shoemaker's "Taking Charge of Change," UConn's Walk With Me podcast, the Hartford Courant, and we didn't just participate in Governor Lamont's GC3 Working & Natural Lands working group; we authored the section on the impact of climate change on vulnerable populations.

And, thanks to the support of another partner, Cigna, in 2020, we began to lay the groundwork for a new venture, the Urban Ecology Wellness Center (UEWC), which launched successfully in 2021. The UEWC hosted The Greater Hartford Arts Council's virtual concert series, partnered with UConn to create the Resilient American Communities Dashboard, hosted a week-long biodiversity camp where students created a pollinator garden as well as several urban ecology activities, it hosted a mushroom growing workshop, a lumber-milling workshop, a bee-keeping workshop... the list goes on and on. I hope that many of you have experienced at least one of these UEWC workshops firsthand.



## 2020 - 2021 PARTNERSHIPS

Saint Joseph University  
University of Hartford "Helping Hawks"  
Cigna Service Operations  
Trinity College "Do It Day"  
Harvard Pilgrim Health Care  
The Hartford Project  
Hartford Yard Goats  
Riverfront Recapture  
Food Corps  
National Park Service  
TheaterWorks Hartford  
Connecticut Science Center  
La Boquedita De La Gente  
Sustainable CT  
DEEP  
Greater Hartford Arts Council



Hartford Decides  
National Fish and Wildlife Fund  
Food Share  
A.N.T Business Concepts  
Perspective Drones  
Lauren Little Edutainment  
Micro 2 Life  
Hartford Food Systems  
COEEA  
Leadership Greater Hartford  
Connecticut Valley Garden Club  
Hartford Garden Club  
Charter Oak Health Center  
United Way  
The Gratitude Choice Project  
Toivo  
Jewish Historical Society of GH



# UConn



UConn - Graduate Student -- Bee Research and Workshop Design and Implementation  
UConn - G.I.V.E.S -- Volunteering & Service Learning  
UConn - Medical School -- Volunteering & Service Learning  
UConn - Medical First Year Students  
UConn - Husky Nutrition  
UConn - National Resources Conservation Academy (NRCS)  
UConn School of Dentistry  
UConn School of Nursing  
UConn Area Health Education Program  
UConn Masters in Public Health  
UConn School of Pharmacy





## 2020 -2021 Media Coverage

### Speaking Engagements:

COEEA Annual Conference

FINE Summit

UConn Career Panel for Sustainable Communities Initiative

### Awards:

COEEA Excellence in Environmental Stewardship Award

Leadership Greater Hartford 's Community Polaris Award

### Publications:

CT Woodlands

Hobby Farms

UConn Today

Paul Shoemaker's "Taking Charge of Change"

The Windsor Journal July 23rd 2021

### Podcasts:

"What Does it Mean to Be Part of A Community" Episode 7

"The Community Award" Community Access

"On The Trail" Walk with Me Episode 3



## 2020 Highlights

100 Home Garden Kits Distributed  
Agricultural Entrepreneur Program  
Keney Park Drone Footage Virtual Tour  
>19,000 lbs of Produce to Hartford Schools  
> 5,000 seed packets donated  
Mobile Teaching Kitchen Debut



## 2021 Highlights

250 Home Garden Kits Distributed  
Walden Play Set Construction  
Four School Gardens Constructed  
Urban Ecology Wellness Center Pilot Season  
"I Got Next" Farmers Coalition  
Leadership Greater Hartford Partnership

