

2022 Annual Report



KENY PARK SUSTAINABILITY PROJECT



Urban Ecology Wellness Center

Major Sponsors



J. Walton Bissell
FOUNDATION





2022

PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS



Project ReCanopy is a new initiative created in partnership with River Front Recapture to aid the City of Hartford and surrounding towns in their mission to restore the urban forest by creating a public private partnership through community collaborations, youth engagement, proper training, and ongoing maintenance. ReCanopy secured funding through the CT Urban Forest Council and CT DEEP to plant over 120 trees and train up to 10 youth in tree planting and maintenance.

Outdoor Rx CT is a collaborative project with Dr. Della Corcoran, a West Hartford pediatrician, who has created OutdoorRxCT in response to a lack of follow-through she saw in patients in accessing nature. For this project, the Keney Park Sustainability Project (KPSP), and its new Urban Ecology and Wellness Center, will work with OutdoorRxCT to tap existing systems to improve Hartford residents' use of parks and other resources, and thereby their connection to nature.

Hartford Land Bank (Vacant Lot Activation) and KPSP are partnering with three respected and established urban farm organizations in Hartford, with the goal of revitalizing three separate vacant lots into active urban farms and community gardens. This project will benefit Hartford residents immensely by providing educational opportunities, access to gardening, affordable and healthy fruits and vegetables, and aesthetic improvements to blighted lots.

Hartford Public Schools (School Gardening Program) KPSP partnered with Breakthrough North Magnet School, Annie Fisher STEM, Hartford Public High School, Milner Middle School and Lauren Little Edutainment to increase school access to vegetable growing. Schools installed raised beds, hydroponic systems, grow beds and growing carts for the students and teachers.

Cigna (Real Estate / Mass Design Group) have partnered with KPSP to provide architectural and real estate services for the development of the Urban Ecology Wellness Center at Keney Park. These projects are the next phase in KPSP's organizational evolution, adding to their previous success in activating the Keney Park Urban Agriculture Education and the Keney Park Wood Materials Management sites. Urban Ecology wellness Programs at Keney Park intends to heal the Hartford community by providing opportunities for individuals and families to engage in activities that promote a deeper connection to nature and the environment. UEWC provides urban ecology activities that aim to help residents learn about their environment and connect with nature, as well as wellness activities that provide a unique opportunity for participants to allow nature to heal and transform them. The 2023 wellness popup events and produce giveaways served over 2500 residents and donated over 20,000 lbs of produce.

Maker Space CT KPSP has partnered with Maker Space CT to utilize their equipment and staff expertise to fabricate custom benches and signage from Lumber processed at the Keney Park wood materials management site

Home Garden Giveaways KPSP has over 300 Home Garden recipients. In 2022 KPSP offered seeds, seedlings, soil, mulch, woodchips, rain barrels and composters to the home garden recipients.

Solid Ground Training Program KPSP will host a cohort of Hartford based farmers collaborating to provide 6 all-day Urban Farm training to new farmers in Bridgeport, New Haven, and Hartford, CT. These farmers represent a collective 30+ years of agricultural skills that include soilless growing systems, community outreach, food justice, land access, farm management, and soil-based systems under natural light. Our instructional approach supports a peer-to-peer learning environment that creates a safe space for learning. At the completion of these training sessions, participants will deeply understand Urban Farming. This was the second year of the three-year grant program.

National Park Service (Keney Park Connector) The goal of this grant is to recommend revitalizing a connection from Love Lane in the southwestern portion of Keney Park to the Windsor Avenue entrance in the northeast corner using mostly existing roadways. From here a properly designed street crossing would give access to the Riverfront Recapture's Riverwalk path system and lead all the way into downtown Hartford. This project will also connect the Keney Park trails to state and national trail systems.

2023 Volunteers supported multiple projects in Keney Park as well as the surrounding community. Volunteers removed over 8 tons of debris from trails, roads, and streams within Keney Park. Volunteers also maintained more six miles of trails with the support of the City of Hartford, in addition to supporting the operations at the Keney Park Urban Agriculture Education Site.

Products:

Hartford Flavor Company- Keney Park tart cherries were procured to create limited batch of Artisanal tart cherry vodka.

Fresh Start Pallet Company- A black walnut tree milled at the Keney Park wood materials management site was later crafted into charcuterie boards and wine caddies.

KPSP custom benches – Maple and Cherry Slabs milled at the Keney Park wood materials management site will be used to create custom live edge benches.



2022 Partnerships

Saint Joseph University
 University of Hartford "Helping Hawks"
 Cigna Service Operations
 Trinity College
 Hartford Yard Goats
 Riverfront Recapture
 Food Corps
 National Park Service
 Connecticut Science Center
 DEEP
 Spring Valley Farm
 Amazon
 Hartford Yard Goats (HYGYAP)
 Konover Companies
 Cheshire Academy
 Avon Old Farms
 Green Bank
 Fox 61
 Leadership Greater Hartford
 Connecticut Land Conservation Council
 CT Health Foundation
 Windsor Historical Society
 Central Area Health Education Center
 Garden Club of America
 Outdoor Rx CT



Hartford Decides
 Hispanic Health Council
 Food Share
 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
 Jewish Historical Society of GH
 Maker Space CT
 Copper Beech Institute
 Big Red Book Truck
 Road to Resilience
 Discovering Life Skills Creatively
 CT River Conservancy "Source to Sea"
 Husky Nutrition
 Hartford Health Initiative
 Hartford Land Bank
 Hartford Public High School
 Hartford Flavor Company
 Cigna ODLP



UConn

UConn - G.I.V.E.S -- Volunteering
 UConn - First Year Medical 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
 UConn - Department of Natural Resources and the Environment
 UConn - Engineering - Lumber Drying Kiln, Biochar production
 UConn - Media and Design - Outdoor Rx CT App Development
 UConn -



2021 -2022 Media Coverage

Journal Inquirer

https://www.journalinquirer.com/living/local-cleanups-scheduled-for-earth-day/article_e2b5fc0e-c170-11ec-839e-2bff1adc6a2e.html

UConn Urban Services Podcast

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1nzHQp9CByVzBxvwnkBoX9ZfcMD2F3S-E/view?usp=share_link

Spreaker .com

<https://www.spreaker.com/user/9808944/polaris-herb>

Hartford Courant

<https://www.courant.com/community/hartford/hc-news-healing-powers-nature-hartford-20221208-3mqv3udgznhbdmjz6z6swdphuq-story.html>

Hartford Courant

<https://www.courant.com/community/hartford/hc-news-hartford-land-bank-urban-farming-agriculture-20230208-fnelhq7yb5fohbkbkgmssmlhkzy-story.html>

NBC Connecticut

<https://www.nbcconnecticut.com/news/local/hartford-groups-turn-to-urban-farming-for-redevelopment/2973474/>



2022 Highlights

