



2023 Annual Report



KENEY PARK SUSTAINABILITY PROJECT



Urban Ecology and Wellness Center



Major Sponsors





2023-2024

PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS



Project ReCanopy was 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.

Hartford Land Bank (Vacant Lot Activation) and KPSP partnered 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.

Solid Ground Training Program KPSP hosted a third cohort of Hartford based farmers providing 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 project is to establish a safe 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 6 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.

Venture Farming Institute: UConn Extension and 3 community-based organizations are working together for 3 years to develop and implement a new cohort-based intensive training opportunity for underserved farmers in Connecticut and Rhode Island. Our project, Farm School CT-RI, will target underserved farmers who identify as Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) and who are either aspiring to farm or are launching their farm business

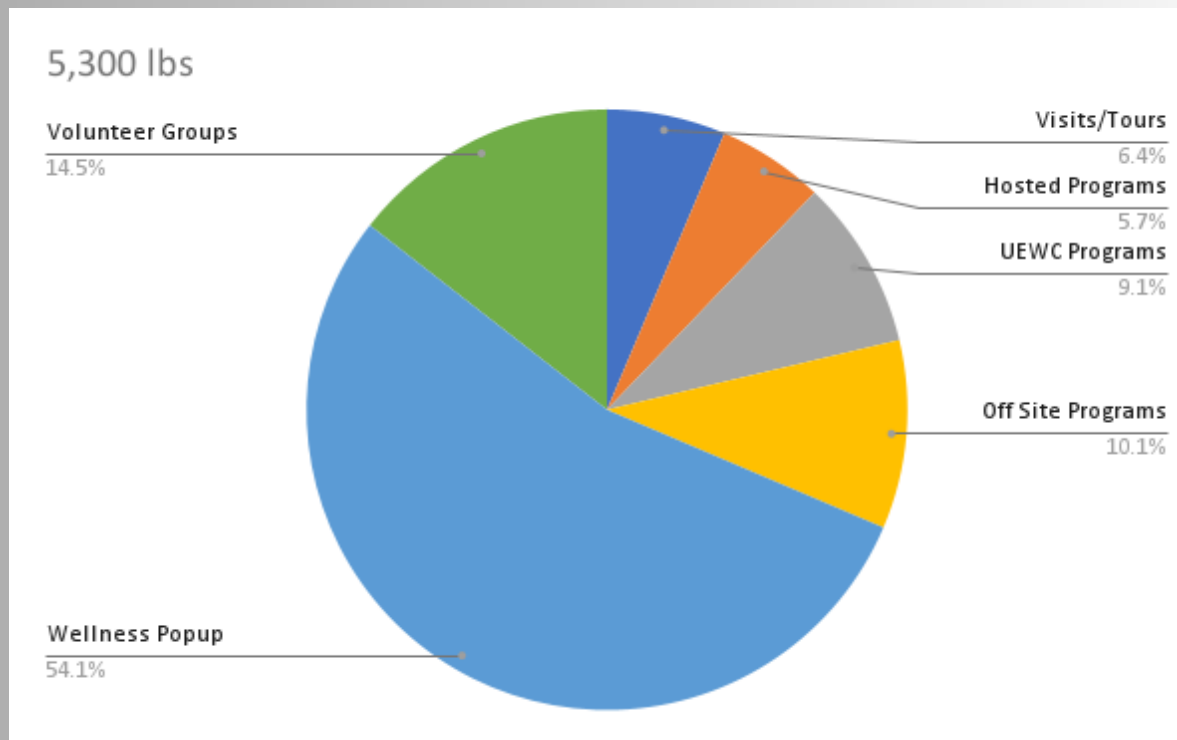
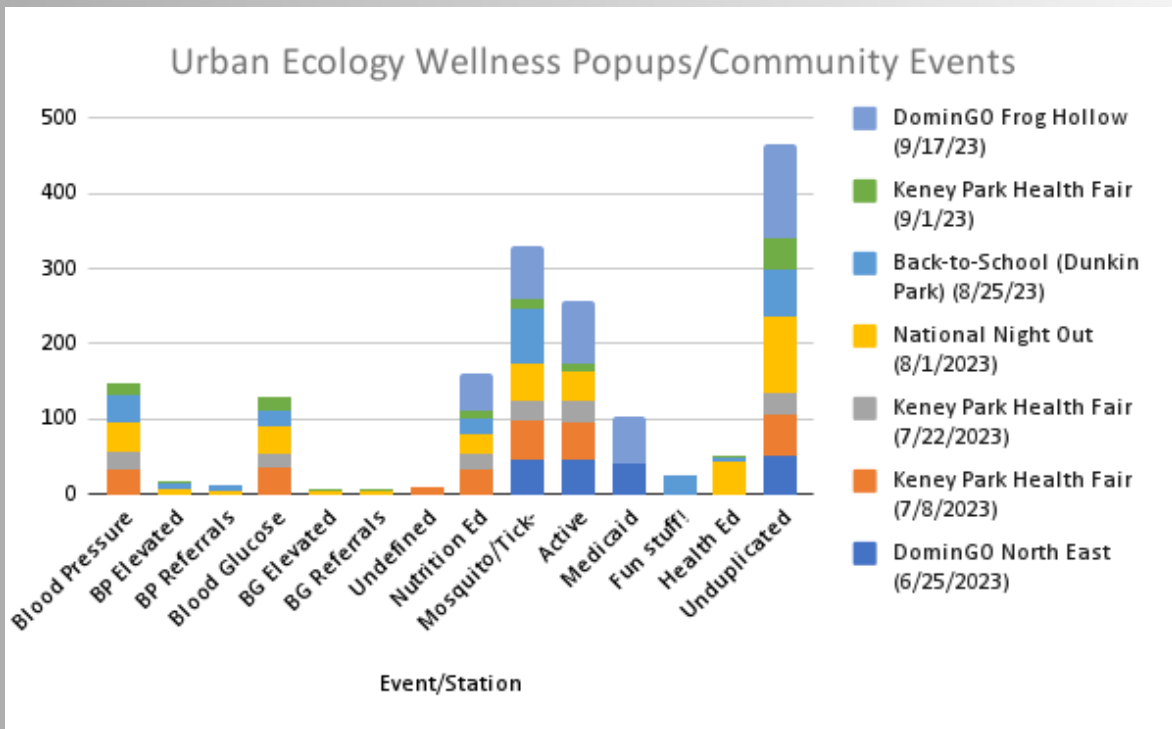
Kendall Foundation (Food Vision Award): KPSP currently serves as a food aggregator for Hartford Public Schools (HPS) and many other stakeholders, with food from our own demonstration garden as well as from our network of urban urban farmers. KPSP will establish and operate a preparation kitchen, in partnership with HPS, developing systems to quantify and meet district needs for culturally relevant produce, processed and ready for cooking or serving. Our goal is a continuum, from seeds in the ground to "chewing and swallowing" - where farmers, aggregators, produce prep and school kitchens are coordinated to meet menu needs.

Wood Materials Management Site Development: ia a landing site in the park, with a portable mill on site to prepare wood products of different sizes, quality, and eventual uses. Local buyers could purchase the wood and any incidental firewood or mulch chips from that landing site. Alternatively it could be distributed for uses by city departments and agencies, such as schools or recreation. Public demonstrations and training programs about how the urban timber will be used can help allay any public concerns about conflicting interests between park protection and tree removal. Additionally, the stakeholders can work with local schools and communities to educate students on the value of nature, the ecological and recreational benefits of urban parkland, and the process of urban park restoration.

Capital Forest Stewardship Initiative: This project assists disadvantaged communities in Hartford, CT, by increasing the urban canopy equitably to a sustainable strategic goal. This project addresses dead/dangerous tree conditions, extreme heat, and deteriorated public parks in disadvantaged communities. Additionally, this project expands community opportunities for training within the green workforce.

Environmental Justice Grant: The Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CT DEEP) will be initiating a new program to work with community organizations in the North End of Hartford to engage with communities overburdened by issues associated with a combined sewer system. This program will include various activities for community engagement and outreach and capacity building.

2023 Program Totals





2023 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 - First Year Medical Students
 UConn - Husky Health
 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 - School of Physical Therapy



2023 Media Coverage

Hartford Courant

<https://www.courant.com/community/hartford/hc-news-hartford-land-bank-urban-farming-agriculture-20230208-fnelhqZyb5fohbkbgmssmlhkzy-story.html>

NBC Connecticut

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

Hartford Courant

<https://www.courant.com/community/hartford/hc-news-hartford-land-bank-urban-farming-agriculture-20230208-fnelhqZyb5fohbkbgmssmlhkzy-story.html>

CT Insider

<https://www.ctinsider.com/capitalregion/article/hartford-s-keney-park-design-new-trail-state-18100196.php>

Hartford Courant

<https://www.courant.com/2023/10/16/a-grocery-story-in-a-ct-city-will-have-income-based-prices-it-could-become-a-model-see-how-it-works/>



2023 Highlights

