

ANNUAL REPORT

KENEY PARK SUSTAINABILITY PROJECT

URBAN ECOLOGY & WELLNESS CENTER



PARTNERS & SPONSORS



2024 PROGRAMMING

WELLNESS POP-UPS, ENGAGEMENT & PRODUCE DONATIONS

- 15 WELLNESS POP-UPS
- 16 AGRICULTURE ECOLOGY WELLNESS WORKSHOPS
- 4,280 PEOPLE ENGAGED IN WELLNESS POP-UPS
- 14,690 LBS OF PRODUCE DONATED AT WELLNESS POPUPS

VOLUNTEER & ENGAGEMENT

- 565 VOLUNTEERS ENGAGED
- 27 VOLUNTEER GROUPS ENGAGED

KPSP ENGAGEMENTS (SCHOOLS & COMMUNITY)

- 38 COMMUNITY PARTNERS ENGAGED
- 9 SCHOOLS ENGAGED
- 107 STUDENTS ENGAGED
- 168 COMMUNITY MEMBERS ENGAGED DURING WORKSHOPS

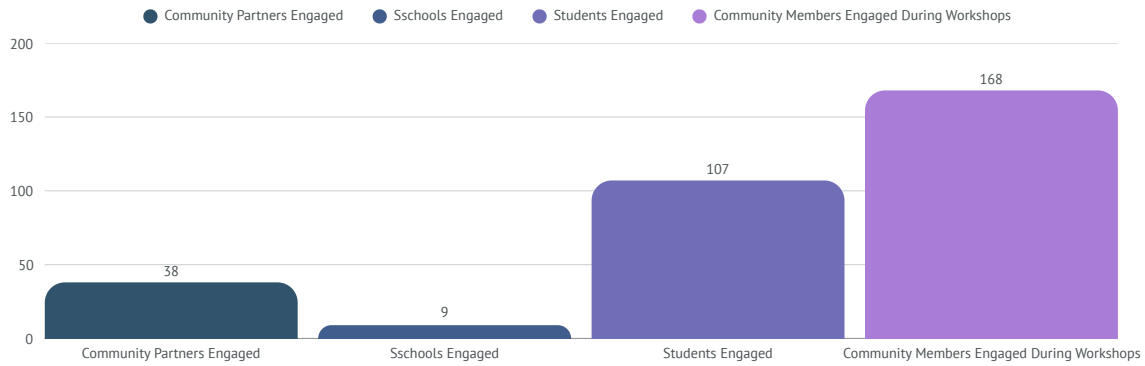
KPSP RESOURCE ENGAGEMENT (RENTALS, BUILDS)

- 116 PARK HOUSE VISITORS
- 5,500 BOARD FEET OF LUMBER MILLED

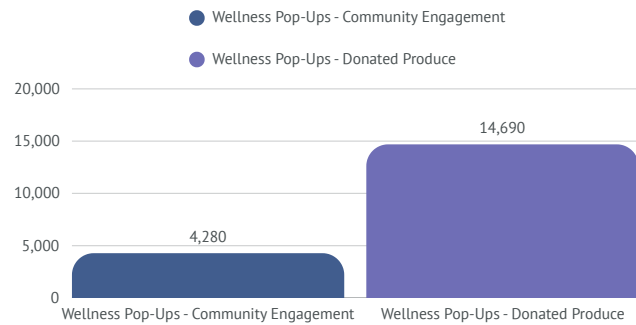
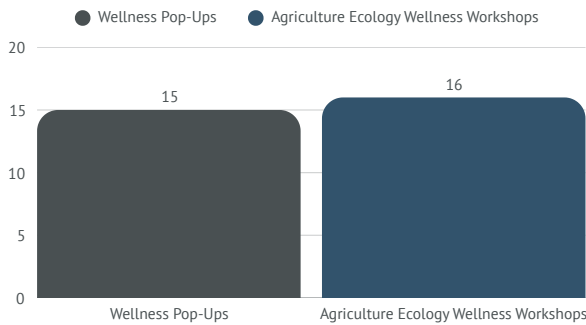
03

2024 PROGRAMMING REPORTING

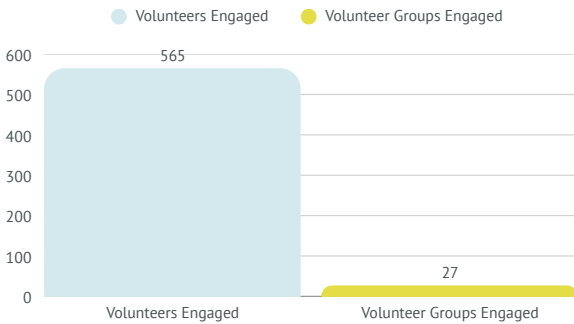
KPSP ENGAGEMENT (SCHOOLS/COMMUNITY PARTNERS)



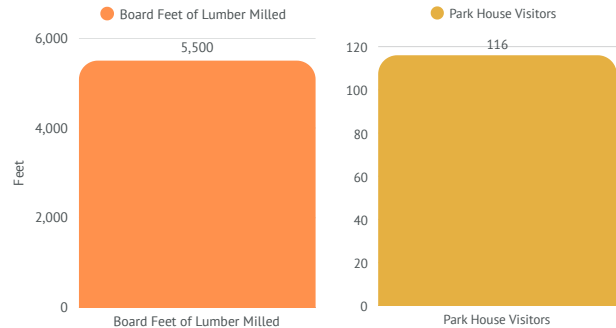
KPSP & UEWC WELLNESS POP-UPS, ENGAGEMENT & DONATIONS



VOLUNTEER & COMMUNITY PARTNER ENGAGEMENT



KPSP RESOURCE ENGAGEMENT (RENTALS/BUILDS)



04

2024 PROJECTS

COLLABORATIVE KITCHEN

(Keney Park Sustainability Project & Hartford Public Schools)

@ Swift Factory

\$ Funded partly by The Henry P.Kendall Foundation

The Keney Park Sustainability Project, collaborating closely with Hartford Public Schools, has secured a grant to establish and operate an innovative prep kitchen. This state-of-the-art facility will serve as a vital hub for aggregating and processing locally sourced produce, specifically tailored to meet the culinary needs of Hartford's school kitchens and cafeterias. By streamlining this process, the prep kitchen aims to ensure that the district's 13,000 students receive consistent access to fresh, high-quality produce grown by local farmers. In addition to enhancing the nutritional standards of school meals, this initiative will create a sustainable market for local agricultural producers, fostering a strong connection between the community and its farms.

For the 2024 partnership season, KPSP provided:

- 310 pounds of fresh produce to local kitchens
- 840 pounds of squash to secondary schools
- 735 pounds of collard greens to schools
- 90 pounds of blueberries for high school smoothies
- 375 pounds of fruit for secondary school meal trays

**HOW IT WORKS****(COLLABORATIVE PREP KITCHEN)**

The KPSP program collects fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables and serves them to over 40 schools, including 8 locations that prepare meals in advance and 15 secondary schools. They also offer meals at around 30 to 50 community sites during summer and after-school programs. With about 17,000 students enrolled, they serve an impressive average of 12,000 lunches, 8,000 breakfasts, 1,000 dinners for at-risk students, and 500 snacks each day.

05

INSTITUTE FOR COMMUNITY RESEARCH (ICR)

"Building Community-Based Organization Power through Assessment, Analysis, and Advocacy" is a joint effort by the ICR Community Research Alliance and the Health Disparities Institute at UCONN. This program works with local community groups to host a series of workshops. The goal is to help these organizations improve their connections, share information about important issues they face, and use that information to strengthen their programs and policies. KPSP has been chosen to participate in the 2024-2025 cohort, focusing on evaluating a program aimed at promoting health and environmental practices in agriculture.

RIVERFRONT RECAPTURE/ RLI (NEW PARK)/ BATTERSON PARK

KPSP is actively involved with Riverfront Recapture, specifically on the River Reach Advisory Committee and the Batterson Park Sub-Committee. By participating in these groups, KPSP has been able to share community feedback and help shape the design of a new park that is located near the KPSP Urban Agriculture Education Site. This collaboration has been advantageous for both KPSP and Riverfront Recapture, and it has also helped to enhance the connection between the Keney Park Community and the river.

EPA G2G (GOVERNMENT TO GOVERNMENT GRANT)

Connecticut is receiving a special grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to support communities in need. This funding will help three local organizations—Keney Park Sustainability Project, Blue Hills Civic Association, and Hartford NEXT—work together to engage and educate residents in Hartford's North End. The main focus is to address flooding issues that the community faces, which are caused by a mix of problems, including sewer systems that overflow. By collaborating with residents, the goal is to find effective solutions to improve the environment and the quality of life in these neighborhoods.

KENEY PARK CONNECTOR

The City of Hartford, along with the Town of Windsor and other local organizations, has received funding from the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CT DEEP) to explore ways to improve trail connections in Keney Park. This project aims to create better paths that link the trails in Keney Park to the Hartford Riverwalk. By doing this, we hope to make it safer and easier for everyone—whether they're walking, biking, or just enjoying the outdoors—to access and travel between these areas. This connection will help to build a larger network of trails for everyone in the community, making outdoor spaces more accessible for residents and visitors alike.

06

FARMERS MARKETS

KPSP has teamed up with Hartford Food Systems to help run the North End Farmers Market. This partnership aims to support local farmers and help them grow their businesses so they can become regular vendors at the market. The Promise Zone Farmers Market has been renamed the Upper Albany Farmers Market and is back this season with two farmers who offer produce that reflects the local culture. One of the farmers, Keith from Reggae Roots Farm, is also a graduate of a farming program designed to help promote and support new farmers.

VACANT LOT ACTIVATION

Arva Quinonez from the Aasaaska Foundation and Lauren Little from Lauren Little Education have taken ownership of their properties provided by the Hartford Land Bank and have started converting them into urban farms. KPSP has assisted with signage, land clearing, design, and maintenance. These new urban farms will serve as a catalyst for urban agriculture education, food production, and community building for each of the associated organizations.

VENTURE FARMING INSTITUTE (VFI)

VFI has completed its first year of training, and the second year is now in progress. VFI offers a special program designed to help underserved farmers in Connecticut and Rhode Island. The Farm School CT-RI program aims to support a growing community of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) farmers in our area. It provides them with essential tools and resources to succeed, such as creating valuable connections, gaining fair access to resources, and receiving financial help. Additionally, this program helps farmers become more resilient, giving them the skills to overcome challenges related to finances, weather, and personal hardships.

**NORTHEM FOOD HUB
HARTFORD FOUNDATION FOR PUBLIC
GIVING (HFPG)**

With support from the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, KPSP, and other partners are creating a plan for a North End Food HUB. This HUB will focus on bringing together and distributing local food products, making it easier for businesses and organizations to supply fresh produce to grocery stores, restaurants, and other customers. We also envision the HUB as a welcoming space where people can eat together, share information, and learn about nutrition and cooking. Additionally, there will be areas for growing food and selling it, separate from the main distribution part of the HUB.



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KENEY PARK NATURE TRAIL

KPSP, Community First Schools, and Cummins Engines volunteers collaborated to restore existing stations and identify new ecologically significant areas along the Keney Park Nature Trail. Together, the team made a meaningful impact on environmental education and community engagement in Keney Park. Students and community members volunteered over 150 hours to clear trailheads, install signage, and identify new features along the nature trail. Additionally, CT Murals partnered to create a mindfulness trail that incorporates artwork along the path.

UConn FORESTRY, UConn NRCA / EPA GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING

A group of educators and professors from UConn Extension has received funding from the EPA to launch exciting community education projects focused on the environment. This initiative aims to support local efforts to create green spaces that benefit everyone. One of the key projects involves working with local indigenous groups to showcase effective methods for improving water quality. This includes building raised garden beds and planting native plants that thrive in our area. Additionally, the team has organized community meetings to share information and engage residents in these important topics.

HISPANIC HEALTH COUNCIL

KPSP proudly partnered with the Hispanic Health Council Family Wellness Center to offer an enriching series of programs focused on Agriculture, Wellness, and Ecology for the vibrant members of the Park Street Community. This diverse programming featured engaging activities such as seed planting, where participants learned about sustainable gardening practices, and bird watching, which allowed them to connect with nature and appreciate local wildlife. Creative workshops in Arts and Crafts sparked imagination, while the popular pumpkin carving sessions brought festive fun to the community. Additionally, the canning workshops equipped participants with valuable skills to preserve their harvests, fostering a deeper connection to food and wellness.

CT GROWN FOR CT KIDS

KPSP received a grant from the USDA to purchase a shipping container, which we plan to operate alongside our new Collaborative Prep Kitchen at the Swift Factory. KPSP has been working closely with the Hartford School District for four years, and next year we will strengthen this partnership even further with the support of the Henry P. Kendall Foundation's New England Food Vision Prize. Together, KPSP and HPS have identified gaps in the local food growing and processing capacity and have created a plan for the prep kitchen to address these gaps. The produce from the new container gardens, which we will purchase and operate with this grant, will be included in the food we deliver to Hartford schools.

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CDC RACIAL AND ETHNIC APPROACHES TO COMMUNITY HEALTH (REACH) PROGRAM

KPSP organized 15 Wellness Pop-Ups, which offered a variety of health and wellness services. These events provided fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables that are culturally relevant, along with helpful nutritional information and cooking demonstrations. The Pop-Ups were held in Keney Park and other locations in the North End community. The educational materials and food choices at the Wellness Pop-Ups were developed in collaboration with Hartford Public Schools and other local partners to effectively promote healthy eating. KPSP also worked to raise awareness about food assistance programs like SNAP and WIC, helping families access important resources while operating the North End Farmers Market.

OTHER COLLABORATIONS

- NORTH HARTFORD TRIPLE AIM COLLABORATIVE
- RIVER FRONT RECAPTURE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
 - RIVER REACH PARK COMMITTEE
 - BATTERSON PARK SUB-COMMITTEE
- ARTISTS COLLECTIVE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

MENTIONS

- "KEY TO THE CITY" BY SARA BRONIN
- UCONN PROVOST AWARD (COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION)
- DOLL HOUSE FOUNDATION 12TH ANNUAL AWARDS BANQUET (ORGANIZATION OF THE YEAR)

OTHER PROJECTS

- SOIL TESTING PROJECT
 - PHD CANDIDATE - HALEY CROSS
- HARTFORD AIR POLLUTION MONITORING PROJECT
 - DR. KRISTINA WAGSTROM AND STUDENTS
- REMOVAL OF INVASIVE SPECIES
 - GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES IN BIODIVERSITY & CONSERVATION COURSE AMBER L. PITT, PH.D - TRINITY COLLEGE

PROGRAMING HIGHLIGHTS



THANK YOU

For more information or to donate, please visit our website.



- P: [860-333-8711](tel:860-333-8711)
- E: info@keneyparksustainability.org
- W: <https://keneyparksustainability.org/>

