

The Caring Community



“Helping the community where we can and bringing people together to do good things... Imagine the community you want to live in, and then spend a little time every day taking small steps to create it!”

The Caring Community Winter 2022 Newsletter

www.thecaringcommunity.love

Sustainability Award Winners!



L-R: Susan Moss, Katy Cain, Cynthia Schaefer, Alejandra Jeldrez, Kiana Raphael, Kerrie Sullivan [Susan’s note: And don’t we clean up well? So used to seeing us all wearing old clothing, galoshes/boots, and a layer of soil!]

From the Town of Davie’s website:

Congratulations to this year’s 2021 Sustainability Award winners, who were presented with an award during the December 1, 2021 Town Council meeting!

Winners include:

- Cindy Rust - Sustainable Garden
- Claudia Cifuentes and Jennifer Meyer - Garden a la Carte
- Alejandra Jeldrez - Hope Outreach Food Bank Garden
- Katy Cain - Gleaning for Good
- Jody Reed - Air Potato Beetle Biological Control Release
- Eric Swalley - Solar Steam Powered Hydrogen Harvester

The Town of Davie is committed to ensuring the sustainability of our community’s resources and environment. From the preservation of the Town’s rural heritage to raising awareness about climate change,

community-wide action is necessary to fulfill this very important goal. To continue supporting this goal, the Town established the “Sustainability Awards” to honor businesses, individuals and non-profit organizations which support sustainability within our community.



“Hope & faith flower from cheerful seeds of the old year to the sprouting garden of new year’s dawn. ~ Terri Guillemets



Volunteer Appreciation Day!

Please join us for our Volunteer Appreciation Day event on Saturday, January 22 from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. at Robbins Park, as we honor those who have given of their time, talent, and treasure... as well as welcoming others who might want to find out more about us. Healthy and yummy snacks, gift bags, raffle prizes, and the joy of community! Make volunteering a New Year's Resolution... ☺

Our name, The Caring Community, might sound a little cheesy to some of you. If you talk to some of our volunteers, you might think that we are a little Pollyannaish. We are. Most of us. We welcome and embrace curmudgeons, pessimists, and gloomy Gus's also! Everyone gets love in the garden!

COMMUNITY GARDEN EFFECTS ON HEALTH FACTS & STATISTICS	
Physical Health	Mental Health
-Increased intake of vitamin D	-Relieves stress and anxiety
-Lower risk of health conditions	-Boosts mood and energy
-Promotes exercise	-Improves brain function

When I find myself challenged by the state of the world, or the sad and stark statistics of hunger in our county, I remember what one of my kids said to me. "What can you say yes to?" That simple question, blended with my favorite book title ever: "the answer to how is yes", is what The Caring Community is all about.

One bite at a time. That's how you eat an elephant. (We don't really eat elephants, and you shouldn't either!) You'd be delighted at how deeply nourishing it is to be doing something about a challenge that seems insurmountable. That's what The Caring Community does. We eat elephants, one bite at a time. It's surprisingly satisfying!

Food. For many of us, food is a matter of choices. We go to the grocery store and we pick out what we want. When it's time for dinner, the question might be: "What do you feel like eating tonight?"

For far too many families, the questions are much, much harder. Instead of: "What do you feel like eating tonight?", it's much more likely to be: "How will I feed my children today?"

Food inflation in 2021 is at record levels. Fuel and housing costs have skyrocketed, and many more people will go to bed hungry. During the holiday season, food waste skyrockets. An estimated 200 million pounds of turkey will be wasted on Thanksgiving in the U.S.

As you are reading this, the holiday season is over. Food banks and homeless shelters will have experienced a sharp rise in donations and volunteers, as people seek to add meaning to their holidays. Many people only volunteer at Thanksgiving or Christmas. Not at The Caring Community!

We grow food and glean food all year long. We have a powerful group of core volunteers that show up, week after week to do tasks that make us tired, sweaty, achy, and happy. We have a lot of wonderful volunteers that show up when they can, or when the spirit moves them, to help.

We get back so much more than we give. It's the way the world works. We'd love to see you in the garden, or anywhere you'd like to help out. Collectively, we do a whole lot of good. We eat a lot of elephants!

If you think you'd like to be part of The Caring Community, click here to volunteer. If you'd like to donate to help fund our work, click here.

Cynthia Schaefer is an herbalist, homesteader, founder of Flurban Paradise and GrowSocial, and community organizer for various organizations such as The Caring Community and South Florida Edible Gardening and Sustainable Living. Find her at Flurbanparadise.com

Kiana Raphael, COO and website manager of The Caring Community, raphael.kiana@gmail.com

As we ended 2021, it was a pleasure to see all the work The Caring Community accomplished. The last quarter we once again participated in the SeedMoney grant fundraiser, where we managed to raise \$1,118 between November 15 and December 15 – a whopping 215% over our original number! The seed money is from a Maine-based nonprofit which provides grants and training to food garden projects across the world. We've participated in this fundraiser for the past three years and we will continue to do so. We thank everyone who helped us attain our goal this year and look forward to reaching an even greater milestone for the next year.



In addition to our fundraiser efforts this past quarter, The Caring Community also is gearing up to plan its Volunteer Appreciation day! As a way to recognize and celebrate all the wonderful hands that have helped us over the years, we want to show our volunteers how much we are grateful for everything they do because, truly, without them we would not have made it this far.

Alejandra Jeldrez, HOPE Outreach Food Bank Garden Leader, ajeldrez777@gmail.com

This season was full of celebration! From receiving an award to winning the battle against iguanas, we have certainly experienced many victories.



The pollinator garden is doing great. We have added more plants and it is already full of blooms. We have also been adding lots of Tithonia sticks throughout the property, which will soon be full of green leaves that can be used as chop-n-drop, a permaculture method of adding biomass to the garden. Each pound of Tithonia leaves has the same amount of nitrogen as a pound of chicken manure. We had a great Mulching Event in October. A huge pile of hardwood and palm mulch was brought to our garden by a friend and we hauled mulch for hours. It was a great workout and it improved the look of the garden tremendously. It is a huge transformation. I hope you visit us soon so you can see it for yourself.

Iguana prevention update: in case you are not aware, iguanas love greens and fruit, getting into our garden beds and eating our precious vegetation, leaving nothing but a stem behind, so we had to devise a way to keep them off our produce. As I mentioned in our previous newsletter, we recently installed two structures to keep our greens safe from the gluttonous reptiles, so we could test which of the two was more efficient before deciding which one to install throughout the garden. One was a wobbly chicken wire fence, which failed to keep the baby iguanas out, as they can fit through holes of chicken wire. The second is making hoops out of 10ft PVC pipes, which are covered with insect netting (very similar to tulle cloth), which then gets weighted down at the perimeter of the garden bed by other PVC pipes and bricks. The second method was more successful and we

installed those same hoops in almost all of our garden beds. Now we are harvesting plenty of greens for our local food banks.

In our winter garden, the seedlings that were donated from Little River Co-op in November were flourishing four weeks after planting! We have been harvesting bok choy, kale, tokyo bekana, arugula, mustard greens, cilantro, dill, sweet potato greens, papayas and bananas. Each week we have harvested an average of 30 pounds, which we donate to The Cupboard Food Pantry and to Davie United Methodist Church (which does a food drive on Fridays).

I am proud to announce that Hope Outreach Food Bank Garden was granted the "Town of Davie Sustainability Award", received on December 1 at the Davie City Hall Council Meeting (see p. 1). Five other individuals and organizations received the award too. It was inspiring to see what others are doing to improve our community and I was grateful to have the opportunity to show what we are doing. It was a heartwarming experience.

Alex Rakita, The Caring Community Davie Educational Garden at Robbins Park, Asr1025@yahoo.com

The Davie Community Garden project is growing very nicely. We're getting small but consistent harvests to the food banks. This past quarter we've added signs to the garden, and are hoping that some of you fabulous people step up to be a weekly maintenance volunteer!

We planted the raised beds with herbs. These beds are standing beds, and easily accessible to people who aren't able to get down to garden. Fresh herbs can really make a meal special, so we hope that the food bank recipients enjoy this extra flavor and nutrition in their meals.



We're excited to host The Caring Community Volunteer Appreciation Day on Saturday, January 22 and show off our garden. We've invited Mayor Paul and Vice Mayor Whitman. and are looking forward to showing them the wonderful work that our volunteers have done.

This garden has huge potential as both a teaching garden and a producer for food banks. Reach out if you'd like to help with any of that!

Scott Holtzman, South Creek Sanctuary Food Bank Donation Garden, scottholtzman@mac.com

During the fall newsletter, I wrote about slowing down and growing with more presence and awareness, both for my own benefit and the benefit of the community at-large and those who receive the food grown here at the Sanctuary.



I am happy to report that plan worked... ten-fold! As I slowed down, made great attempts to listen to the land around and what was happening in my inner space, I watched as the garden began receiving more and more support from the external world to shape it for great success and abundance, not only for this season, but quite possibly, years to come!

There was great energy and inspiration that came when some volunteers helped with raising the new iguana barriers. Our time together produced a more complete and sustainable solution than I was even thinking possible on my own! Then came the donations of seedlings - first shared by sister Hope Outreach Food Bank Garden, then by Little River Cooperative. All in all ~500 plants were donated to the Sanctuary! I would never have dreamed last year that growing that much was possible or would be provided! Lastly, a great wwoofer (wwoofusa.org) showed up to help with planting as well as mulching and finishing the construction of the brick framing around the iguana barrier!

I have already started harvesting some of the planted lettuce and I look forward to seeing how the growth moves through the winter and what kind of joy and learning can be experienced during this period. Until next time ... stay true.

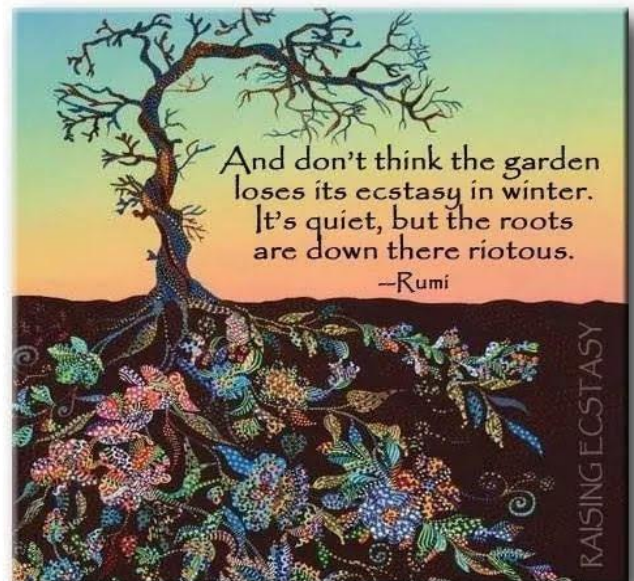
Katy Cain, Gleaning for Good/Society of St. Andrew (soSA) SE Florida Area Coordinator, sflgleaning@endhunger.org 954-643-4502



Our main news is our great need for volunteers. Our gleaning season in Palm Beach County begins in December, and our farmers would like to increase their donations. This means we need even more hands to help harvest lettuce, cabbage, and corn in Belle Glade. Our gleaning days are Thursdays and Saturdays, 8:30-10:30 a.m., though if there is a group with an interest in volunteering a different day, we will do our best to accommodate. Our calendar and sign up page are here: <https://endhunger.volunteerlocal.com/volunteer/> We'll see you in the field!

Total Gleaned Produce for 2021:

Broward: 12,928
Palm Beach: 74,212



If you use Amazon, you can help The Caring Community at NO cost you. Instead of going to Amazon.com, go to <https://smile.amazon.com>, and when prompted, enter The Caring Community Inc Pembroke Pines as your designated charity. For every \$100 you spend on Amazon Smile, we get 50 cents. Every little bit counts, and adds up!

Spotlight on Scott Holtzman, South Creek Sanctuary Food Donation Garden



Susan: *When did your love for gardening begin?*

Scott: My affinity for gardening began, well, probably, when I was in college, although I didn't really take it on so deeply because I moved to New York City after that, and was more interested in other things that place offers. Once I moved back out to the suburbs, I planted a couple of plots. My affinity really took off four years ago when I moved to Florida and had a big yard and realized there was almost no limit to what and when you can grow!

SM: *When did you become involved with The Caring Community? How has your role expanded?*

SH: I became involved with TCC about 3 or 4 years ago, mainly by helping at the Hope Outreach Food Bank garden when I could do so, but also through some other projects. After I purchased my home, and began to convert the space I cared for into a food forest of sorts, I realized I was working with way more space than I needed to feed myself and my family, so I was inspired to create an organic food bank donation garden with some of the space and get the community involved. Some time after, TCC and I agreed it made sense to put South Creek Sanctuary Food Bank Donation Garden under the TCC umbrella.

SM: *What is your best lesson/takeaway from your involvement with the community?*

SH: My best lesson is that even though at times it may feel like the changes you are making are only drops of water in a proverbial bucket of possibilities, that with time and consistency, things do begin to shift and all of the sudden, all those drops begin to fill the bucket and one day you look up and see quite a bit has been accomplished! If I can add one more, it's that as you work toward what you feel is the greater good, the universe meets you halfway. The amount of support

available is endless in most cases. There is always always support for us to further support each other.

SM: *What is your greatest wish/hope for the sustainable gardening movement in South Florida?*

SH: My greatest wish and hope is that the *entire* community in South Florida (and the world, for that matter) becomes sustainable and local and goes back to simpler ways of living, connected with nature and each other, without killing and destroying the very things that enrich our human experience.

Calendar of Events – January/February/March 2022

*****HOPE Outreach Food Bank Garden, Marando Farms, 5151 SW 64th Ave., Davie FL** (behind the barn)

~Saturday, January 29 – painting/decorating stepping stones for garden beds

~Saturday, February 12 – planting of perennials /comfrey/ ground covers

~Saturday, March 5 – Spring Planting

We also meet every Friday from 9:30 to 11:30 to weed, harvest, mulch (whatever needs doing!)

*****Robbins Preserve Park Lodge, 4005 S. Hiatus Rd., Davie FL** (across from the playground)

~Saturday, January 15 – Garden Clean-Up

~Saturday, January 22 – Volunteer Appreciation Day, 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. (see p. 2)

*****South Creek Sanctuary Food Bank Donation Garden, 551 Palmetto Dr, Coconut Creek FL**

Every Saturday in January/February/March, from 9:30 to 11:00 a.m. – harvesting greens, herbs, vegetables, fruit

*****Gleaning for Good (various locations)** (see p. 4)
Thursdays and Saturdays, 8:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

*****Bring your water and gardening gloves.** Optional items to bring: trowel, pruners, if you have them.

La Zoola Pop-Up Market

~Sunday, January 16, 1:00 to 4:00 p.m., Riverside Market South, 3218 SE 6th Avenue, Fort Lauderdale FL

February 20/March 20 (locations to be determined)

Come buy, barter or trade local! Fresh grown fruits and veggies, plants, prepared foods, tinctures, tonics, arts and crafts and much more! FREE to vend and attend!!!

To volunteer, please go to the link below to fill out and submit the form. After your response is received, someone from our organization (another volunteer) will contact you to discuss upcoming events/volunteer opportunities:
<https://love.us1.list-manage.com/subscribe/post>

Movie and Book Recommendations

Kiss the Ground (Netflix) “Released in September of 2020 and narrated by and featuring Woody Harrelson, this inspiring and groundbreaking documentary reveals the first viable solution to our climate crisis. By regenerating the world’s soils, we can completely and rapidly stabilize Earth’s climate, restore lost ecosystems, and create abundant food supplies. Using compelling graphics and visuals, along with striking NASA and NOAA footage, the film artfully illustrates how, by drawing down atmospheric carbon, soil is the missing piece of the climate puzzle.”

Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants by Robin Wall Kimmerer “Drawing on her life as an indigenous scientist, and as a woman, Kimmerer shows how other living beings—asters and goldenrod, strawberries and squash, salamanders, algae, and sweetgrass—offer us gifts and lessons, even if we’ve forgotten how to hear their voices. In reflections that range from the creation of Turtle Island to the forces that threaten its flourishing today, she circles toward a central argument: that the awakening of ecological consciousness requires the acknowledgment and celebration of our reciprocal relationship with the rest of the living world. For only when we can hear the languages of other beings will we be capable of understanding the generosity of the earth and learn to give our own gifts in return.

How to get out of a Banana Jam by Claire Measel

5 cups of mashed banana
2 cups of sugar
2 Tablespoons lemon juice

This is a jumping-off point for Banana Jam. All the ingredients go into a saucepan and cook for 15 minutes over medium-low to medium heat. It should be bubbling. Make sure to stir regularly so it doesn't scorch the bottom. Remove from the heat and let cool. Store in glass jars in fridge. Some people actually use a hot water bath to seal the jars but I find it doesn't last that long.

Many liberties may be taken with this recipe. Cinnamon and ginger could be added, orange juice, coconut or vanilla... the possibilities are endless. It goes well with a simple cookie, waffles, or on toasted bread with Nutella, maybe? Mmmmm!

“Live in each season as it passes; breathe the air, drink the drink, taste the fruit, and resign yourself to the influence of the earth.” ~ Henry David Thoreau



Suggestion for a Day by Rosemerry Wahtola Trommer

And if today we speak at all,
let us speak in golden leaf.
Let's converse in low clear stream,
whisper in rose-hip pink.

if we speak at all today,
let's slip mulch between each word,
aware that what we say will grow—
how powerful the words we sow.

And if we speak at all,
let's speak in mountain, speak in field,
speak only words that lift and heal,
speak only words that lift and heal.

And if we speak,
let's listen for the quiet in between—
plant tulips bulbs in the silences.
And crocuses. And grace.

And any words with thorns in them,
let's set them down. Let's lose them.
And if our words don't open like sky,
let's let the sky say everything.

Check out our Facebook pages for upcoming gardening meet-ups and/or events.

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