



GLOBAL FOOD INITIATIVE

E-news of the Global Food Initiative

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Summer 2018

New Orleans: Going to the Garden Retreat

Fourteen church-based community gardeners from across the country gathered together in New Orleans, La., to swap ideas, share struggles, exchange stories of success, and talk about the things God is doing in and through their gardens. The retreat was hosted by David Young of Capstone 118. Underwriting for the event was provided by the GFI, with leadership being provided by Nate

Hosler of the Church of the Brethren's Office of Peacebuilding and Policy; Anna Timmerman, a horticultural agent from Louisiana State University; Kyler Blodgett of Propeller, a New Orleans-based non-profit working to support entrepreneurs seeking to tackle social and environmental disparities; and GFI manager Jeff Boshart.

Along with presentations on barriers to healthy food and healthy food systems, tackling inequities in New Orleans by supporting entrepreneurs, and the role of the local church in advocating

for healthy food and healthy communities, participants also spent a day literally getting down and dirty by pulling weeds and helping with some of Capstone 118's garden projects. The retreat included a tour of the city's Lower 9th Ward to hear a brief history of the impact of Hurricane Katrina, learn about the work of Brethren Disaster Ministries in the community, and participate in Sunday morning worship at a local church.

Before leaving, participants expressed new hope for local congregations and their gardening efforts.



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Dominican Republic: Rabbit Project by Nicole Hoover

In March 2018, La Iglesia de los Hermanos (Church of the Brethren in the Dominican Republic) initiated its first training days in its rabbit farming program sponsored by the Global Food Initiative. Trainer Abe Fisher joined Global Mission and Service worker Jason Hoover and Dominican leadership in the communities of Arroyo Salado and San Luis, where a total of 32 church members were

trained how to raise rabbits. Specific topics included breeding, feeding, butchering, cooking, selling, rabbit diseases, and uses of rabbit byproducts. After the training events, 22 participants were selected to receive pre-built cages and a breeding pair of rabbits. The other trained participants will receive their cages and rabbits by this summer. The purpose of the rabbit farming program is to increase meat production in rural Brethren communities and to share the program with surrounding communities, using it as a tool to spread the gospel of Christ.



Nicole Hoover



Ohio: Potsdam Community Garden by Carl Hill

We are excited about planning for our community garden this year. We will again have a generous portion of the garden that is truly “community,” with a few individual plots. Last year, we took produce from the garden around to our neighbors, most of whom do not attend our church. In August, we had a Corn Fest, where we provided a free meal with fresh corn and other vegetables from the garden to the community. More than 50 percent of attendees were from outside of our church body. This year, we are hoping to expand this event and attract more people, and we will add live music to this year’s hoedown.

When taking produce around town, I greeted one family saying, “I’m the pastor at Potsdam Church of the Brethren.” They were intimidated and began backing away. When I added, “I’m here to give you some of the produce from our garden,” they gladly took the fresh food and said, “Thank you.” The garden is a wonderful way to present a positive image of the church to this farm-friendly community. Thanks to the GFI for its support both last year and this year.

Grants Given in 2018

Thanks to generous giving from congregations and individuals, the GFI responded to a wide range of requests in the early part of 2018. The GFI shared \$65,536 for 13 separate projects.

Grants were given with the following designations:

- expenses for the Going to the Garden retreat in New Orleans, La.;
- gardening supplies for community garden projects of the Gijon, Lanzarote, and León congregations of Iglesia Evangélica de los Hermanos (Church of the Brethren in Spain);
- extension and marketing training for the Soybean Value Chain project of Ekklesiyar Yan’uwa a Nigeria (EYN);
- solar panels, storage tanks, a well, and materials to plant 7,900 trees in a nursery in Lassa, Nigeria, to strengthen EYN’s reforestation work;
- refrigerators, freezers, and shelving for a cooperative grocery store for the immigrant community of Lanzarote, Canary Islands, Spain;
- farming inputs for the maize, cassava, and vegetable project of Shalom Ministry (SHAMIREDE) in the Democratic Republic of Congo;
- farming inputs for the maize and potato project of Evangelistic Training Outreach Ministries of Rwanda (ETOMR);
- a tractor, tillage attachments, and hoop houses to enhance the gardening program of Lybrook Ministries with Navajo families in New Mexico;
- gardening supplies for the community gardening efforts of New Carlisle (Ohio) Church of the Brethren, Potsdam (Ohio) Church of the Brethren, and Rockford (Ill.) Community Church of the Brethren.

