



Interfaith Sustainable  
Food Collaborative

# Earth Stirs For Spring

March 2022 Newsletter

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## CSA Farms Looking for Partners

Community Supported Agriculture programs saw a surge in demand at the start of the Pandemic. Many people came to see their local food system in a whole new light. Interfaith Food thinks of CSA weekly produce box programs as Congregation Supported Agriculture that connects consumers with fresh, local and seasonal produce while supporting the bottom-line for local farmers. We have worked to connect congregations and faith-based social service agencies since 2013. The most exciting programs develop close relationships between the farmers, and members of a congregation. This can include Sunday school visits to a farm, or a farmer coming to services to teach.



Farms to Grow CSA Pickup Site in Oakland

Interfaith Food has supported several models to make sure CSA boxes can be affordable for all members of a congregation's community.

Is your congregation interested in CSA? Now is the time to plan, promote and launch your project. We can provide planning assistance, outreach materials, and most importantly connections to local farms. To discuss this more call Paige at (707) 634-4672.

Already have a CSA, work with Interfaith food to refresh and promote. We have staff capacity to support a tasting, cooking demonstration or nutrition education.

### **Farms to Grow, our long-time partner, is Looking for Congregations to Participate in a Winter/Spring CSA**

Purchase freshly harvested affordable produce grown by Black farmers and other underserved farmers in California. *Current host site* pickup locations are in Oakland and San Francisco, but Farms to Grow is open to new faith-based sites in all of the following cities where they currently deliver to individuals: in Oakland, San Francisco, Alameda, Albany, Berkeley, El Cerrito, Emeryville, Hayward, Kensington, Richmond, and San Leandro. Email Anita

Jackson marketing@armstogrow.com to become a host site. Signup at [www.farmstogrow.com](http://www.farmstogrow.com) to become an individual Subscriber today!

Interfaith Food is currently updating our list of farmers seeking faith-based CSA partners. Farmers please fill out this survey [HERE](#)

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## **News re. Staff From the Advisory Board...**

As members of the Advisory Board we want to provide a special update regarding our founder and Executive Director, Steve Schwartz. Steve has decided to run for State Assembly in the 12th Assembly District made up of Marin County and part of Sonoma County. While he is running he will continue to do his duties with Interfaith Food, implementing programs and coordinating the staff team.

If you want more information on Steve's race please go to [www.SteveSchwartzAssembly.com](http://www.SteveSchwartzAssembly.com) or call 707 353-1933. If Steve is elected to the Assembly in November, the soonest we would transition to a new Executive Director would be January, 2023.

In the meantime, we want to assure you that the Interfaith Sustainable Food Collaborative's work is moving forward as usual with diverse partnerships and robust programming. As we come out of the hardest times of the pandemic, you'll be seeing growth in our work around senior nutrition, faithlands and more. Our staff team including Steve, Paige and Megan will be available for in-person planning assistance, project support and organizing our conference and other events.

We recognize the valuable contribution of our Americorps\*VISTA members, and heartily thank Stephanie Felton and Laura Oprisch who finished their year serving with Interfaith Food, while we extend a warm welcome to Megan Zywicz who started early this year.

We are celebrating our 10th Anniversary this year, and we look forward to seeing you soon!

Josephine Borgeson, Episcopal Deacon

Rev. Daniel Green, St. John's's Episcopal, Petaluma

Advisory Board Members

## **Spring Garden Refresh Assistance and Resources**

It's the time of year to start planning your gardens! Interfaith Sustainable Food Collaborative would like to offer support and resources to those looking to refresh or continue their gardens this year. We know that many community gardens were put on hold during the height of the pandemic and we would especially like to offer assistance to those looking to restart their gardening programs, or those looking to make long term improvements to their gardens. Interfaith Food team members can provide assistance with planning, creating seeding schedules. In addition if you would like to

integrate nutrition education into your garden project, we would like to help. This can be done in concert with a harvest day, and include a 'cook-off' or tasting.

We can assist with accessing resources for your congregational garden project such as hand tools, seeding trays, row cover, shade cloth, or watering timers. We can also help with building new garden infrastructure or improvements such as raised beds, or composting bins. Your congregation may be eligible to receive \$500 or more for operating or infrastructure costs. We can also assist with planning, coordinating, and limited hands-on work as well.



Faith Lutheran Garden

Gardens support communities in a number of ways including as a way to be more involved in your local food systems, and also as a way to build community and de-stress. Interfaith Foods team member, Megan, is an AmeriCorps VISTA member with farm and garden experience and is ready to help you get your garden project off the ground. Please contact her at [megan@interfaithfood.org](mailto:megan@interfaithfood.org) for assistance with your garden needs. We are excited to offer our support, and can't wait to watch your gardens thrive this season.

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# Accessing USDA Cash Assistance After Fires, Drought, and Winter Storms

## Free Workshop at EcoFarm Conference

**March 9, 10:00am-12:00pm**

[Register for FREE Here](#)

Fires, drought, and winter storms can deliver a crushing blow to a small-scale farm or ranch. The USDA has a variety of programs to help farmers cover their losses, but what does it take to access these? Many farmers are 'leaving money on the table' because they are not aware of programs that can help them, or the application process seems too difficult or confusing. This short course will give farmers and ranchers the "ins and outs" of 4 key USDA programs that you may qualify for today, or may want to access in the future. The programs we'll discuss include: a) Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey, Bees, and Farm-raised Fish (ELAP); b) Emergency Conservation Program (ECP); and c) Livestock Forage Program (LFP). The workshop will include 3 parts: panelist presentations; questions and answers; and then a 90-minute 'clinic' with one-on-one support for individuals preparing applications. Speakers include two USDA experts who will be available to answer detailed, specific questions. Feel free to reach out to the Interfaith Food team either by phone or email.

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## Salary Ranges Increased for Open Interfaith Food Positions!

Interfaith Food is hiring for two professional positions based in Sonoma County: Outreach and Policy Associate; and a Communications and Reporting Associate. Both include medical benefits, a retirement contribution and paid vacation. Interested individuals should contact [Steve@interfaithfood.org](mailto:Steve@interfaithfood.org) for full position descriptions. *In addition, we are recruiting one Americorps\*VISTA position to start in Spring 2022.*

## Interfaith Food Welcomes Two New Team Members!



## Paige Hotchkiss-Needleman

Program Associate Paige Hotchkiss-Needleman is back with us after interning in 2017. Paige is a gardener and advocate. Reach out to learn more, share your ideas, and see if we can help make it happen! Contact Paige at [paige@interfaithfood.org](mailto:paige@interfaithfood.org) to get the ball rolling!



## Megan Zywicz

Interfaith Food welcomes Megan, an AmeriCorps VISTA member with farm and garden experience and who is excited to help you get your garden project off the ground. Contact Megan at [megan@interfaithfood.org](mailto:megan@interfaithfood.org)

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### **Farm to School Incubator Grant Includes New Funding tracks for Early Education and for Producers**

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) Office of Farm to Fork recently released a draft Request For Applications (RFA) for their Farm to School Incubator Grant program. The grant has four funding tracks, with two new tracks being introduced this year. These are a Farm to Early Care and Education Grant (Track 3), and a Farm to School Producer Grant (Track 4). Organizations, including faith-based non profits, that provide support to Early Care and Education providers, or run multi site child care centers are eligible to apply for Track 3. Interfaith Food would like to hear from any one interested in applying to any of the four grant tracks. Furthermore, the draft RFA is open for public comment now until March 7th, and we encourage those interested in Farm to School programming to review the draft RFA and submit their questions, comments, or suggestions along with proposed solutions, where applicable, directly to [cafarmtoschool@cdfa.ca.gov](mailto:cafarmtoschool@cdfa.ca.gov) Once the grant is finalized, we expect the grant application period to be from about March to May, and that awards will be announced this Summer. Please be in touch with Interfaith Food staff soon if you are interested in the Farm to Early Care and Education track (Track 3) and want to discuss opportunities to pursue partnerships. We are excited about the significant funding, up to \$30 million, for Farm to School programming this year and encourage those interested to apply. Please find the link to the grant website [here](#) and feel free to reach out to Interfaith Food at [info@interfaithfood.org](mailto:info@interfaithfood.org) for support.

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## Contact Us

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