

## 2021 Summary - Compost NOW

Dear Sustaining Members,

We continued to grow in 2021, thanks especially to our former Compost NOW Assistant Kali Benbrooks and a committed group of volunteers, garden/farm partners, donors and sustaining members such as yourselves. **We met our stated goal of diverting over 500,000 pounds of food waste from the landfill!**

We operate on a very small budget, usually less than \$10,000. Compost NOW does not receive any funding from the city and relies on individual donations and the occasional small grant to continue the program. We have an amazing network of volunteers, and I am just a volunteer myself as well. Our only staff person, Kali, was part-time through the end of May. Her salary was just \$500/month.

Our other costs were primarily around paying people to transport scraps from collection sites to compost sites. For the first half of the year, Charlie transported scraps from City Park to Schmelly's Dirt Farm for a small fee (except when Edible Schoolyard garden teacher Matt transported scraps directly to Arthur Ashe school once a month, for free). Ben with OG Compost took over hauling scraps from City Park to their own site this past summer.

Schmelly's Dirt Farm transported scraps from Audubon Park and Carrollton from January to June for a small fee. Jacob and Joshua from Dig Easy took over transporting those scraps in the summer, for a similar fee, when Schmelly's took a much-needed break. **Schmelly's has generously allowed us to continue to drop off scraps at their site without charging a tipping fee.**

We also purchased collection bins, paint, signs, locks and chains for new sites in Carrollton and at Paradigm Gardens and ABC Gardens, incurred hundreds of dollars in expenses for Pumpkin SMASH III and paid the annual fee for our website.

We expanded our DIY compost program by distributing over a dozen free [worm towers](#), which allow for vermicomposting directly into raised beds. These were designed and built by Kali, who had previously used them in her own garden. Sara Good-Chanmugan wrote that successful grant application to Tulane.

We hosted two small Volunteer & Supporter Appreciation Potlucks. Kali hosted one (outdoors) in April where we also painted many of our food waste collection bins, and I hosted one (outdoors) in October.

Those food and beverage costs were covered by speaking fees that I personally received from the Tulane Office of Health Research to talk about composting and similar speaking fees from City Park, which I essentially donated back to Compost NOW.

We also held our third annual Pumpkin SMASH III at Rosa Keller Library in November. We had nearly two dozen volunteers and a record crowd. Schmelly's Dirt Farm provided a dumpster for a small fee, which was covered by our month-long Fall Raffle. There are some amazing event photos at:

[https://www.nola.com/multimedia/photos/collection\\_ed9284d2-3f4b-11ec-ad7b-bbfb325f4658.html](https://www.nola.com/multimedia/photos/collection_ed9284d2-3f4b-11ec-ad7b-bbfb325f4658.html)

We recently hired Sara Good-Chanmugan in January as our new Compost Assistant, for a slightly increased number of hours and an increased salary of \$600/month. We miss Kali, but she still volunteers at our City Park location when she can and helps keep our website up-to-date.. Sara has been instrumental in

kick-starting our renewed efforts to add more direct-to-farm/garden sites so we can increase access and convenience to even more people.

Thank you for being part of our community of composters!

Sincerely,

**Lynne Serpe**

Founder and Volunteer

Compost NOW

[www.compost-now.org](http://www.compost-now.org)

[www.facebook.com/compostneworleanswaste](https://www.facebook.com/compostneworleanswaste)

[https://www.instagram.com/compost\\_now/](https://www.instagram.com/compost_now/)

**2021 INCOME:**

Keep Louisiana Beautiful

“Most Innovative Program Award” 2020: \$500

Pearl Foundation: \$2000

Walmart Foundation: \$1642

GiveNOLA Day 2021: \$3297

42 Sustaining Memberships (2021): \$1430

- 10@50 = \$500
- 6@45= \$270
- 4@40 = \$160
- 1@35=\$35
- 9@25=\$225
- 12@20 = \$240

Earth Day Raffle: \$310

Fall Raffle: \$275 (anyone who bought \$20 in tickets automatically got a 2022 membership)

Early Bird Sustaining Memberships (2022): \$20 (one in December)

Screens for Good: \$80 from t-shirt and tote bag sales

***Subtotal \$9554***

NOTES: We received an Algiers Point Association (APA) grant for \$500 in October 2020 and an Emerging Philanthropists of New Orleans (EPNO) grant for \$2225 in November 2020.

Both were used to purchase materials and pay Kali to make outdoor compost bins and indoor worm bins that we distributed free of charge during the 2020/2021 winter and early spring. The APA grant also allowed us to pay a small amount to a local resident to host the collection at ABC Garden (which has now concluded).

We received several small grants and ended 2021 with a surplus of almost \$2000 (nearly half of which came from not-yet-invoiced collection fees) which will be applied to our 2022 expenses.

**2022 ANTICIPATED EXPENSES: \$7240 through June 30, 2022 (plus Pumpkin SMASH IV)**

Salary for Compost NOW Assistant (Sara Good-Cunningham): \$3900  
Dig Easy / Jacob and Joshua: \$660  
OG Compost \$600  
Website annual fee: \$200  
New bins for St Roch Sundays (2311 N Villere) \$75  
New bins, lock and chain for Broadmoor Food Pantry \$150  
New bins, lock and chain for Galvez Community Garden \$100  
Lock and chain for Recirculating Farms \$25  
Lock and chain for Pelican Gardens \$25  
New bins, lock and chain for up to 2 more additional sites: \$200  
Signage for new sites; replacement signage: \$100  
Worms from Laughing Buddha Nursery: \$200  
Schmelly's Dirt Farm / Pumpkin SMASH IV \$200  
Other Pumpkin SMASH IV expenses \$200  
Volunteer and Supporter Appreciation Potlucks \$200  
Annual website fee \$200  
Miscellaneous expenses (shovels, compost cranks, printing) \$150

***Subtotal: \$7240***

**2022 ANTICIPATED INCOME through June 30, 2022**

- Rollover from 2021 \$1960
- Pearl Foundation \$2000
- 30 Half Year Memberships @ \$20/year: \$600
  - We currently have 1 from December and 2 from January
  - The 9 from November came from raffle ticket sales
- GiveNOLA Day: \$3000
- Earth Day Raffle: \$300

***Subtotal: \$8060***

After May, we will be able to better assess our financial situation and decide whether we can continue to operate for the remainder of the year. We continue to apply for grants.

**2022 POTENTIAL INCOME, July - December 2022**

25 more Half Year Sustaining Memberships @ \$20/year: \$500  
Fall fundraiser (in person) \$1000  
Fall / Pumpkin SMASH Raffle: \$300  
Income from sliding scale bin sales (if we bring back) \$1040\*  
We continue to apply for grants

***Subtotal: \$2840 (+ any grants)***

**POTENTIAL ADDITIONAL EXPENSES, \$5940 (depends on income and capacity)**

- Salary for Sara, or another Compost NOW Assistant, July through December \$3900
- Materials for Outdoor Compost Bins (if we bring back): approximately \$20 each @25 \$500\*
- Materials for Indoor Worm Bins (if we bring back): approximately \$15 each @ 20 \$300\*

- Materials for Worm Towers (if we bring back): approximately \$12 each\* @ 20 \$240\*

*Subtotal (expenses) \$7240 + \$4940 = \$12,180*

*Subtotal (income) \$8060 + \$2840 = 10,900 (+ any grants)*

*\*If we get a grant, we can offer the above resources for free. If we do not get a grant, we offer on a sliding scale with the middle amount covering our cost and a lower tier and a higher tier (which helps offset those who can only afford the lower tier).*

**WISH LIST for 2022:**

Electric Bicycle and Cargo Hauler to reduce our reliance on fossil-fuel based transportation.

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January 2021

## SUSTAINING MEMBERSHIP

One of our new [members](#) advised me to explain our costs a little more:

That new Carrollton collection we started last week? That will cost us a minimum of \$600 a year, although given what a success it was on the first day I think the cost will likely double to \$1200 by year end as it grows. I have already had to purchase more bins.

That new Audubon collection we added last month? That will run us a minimum of \$1500 a year and -- again if it continues to grow -- could easily cost us over \$2000.

We pay for bins, we pay to replace bins when they are stolen (it happens), we pay for locks, we pay for chains, we pay to replace bins when they break down, we pay for signs, we pay for our website, we pay for a dumpster at Pumpkin SMASH, and sometimes we pay for reliable transportation of food scraps to our partner farms, and more. These costs can easily add up to \$6000+ a year.

We also pay the amazing and talented Kali Benbrooks a whopping \$500/month to help run the program. Her hire last May before I left town for the summer **was the single best expense, and single best decision I made in 2020**. I was so thrilled when she agreed to continue this year, for now.

But that is also another \$6000 a year that we now need to raise that we did not need to raise the first few years (I volunteer my time).

And we rely on dozens of volunteers who donate **their time**, to host collections or occasionally transport bins. They also keep our costs down. I literally would not have been able to expand this program beyond our first few sites without our wonderful volunteers, who are so enthusiastic and committed to this quirky project of building a community of composters who collectively divert hundreds of thousands of pounds of food scraps from the landfill (we are nearly at 400,000 pounds diverted since we started four years ago).

Anyway, we know times are tough and many of you are just not able to donate. **We thank you for the words of support and appreciation you offer our volunteers when you drop off your scraps!**

We offered a discounted Early Bird Membership starting on Giving Tuesday. Starting January 1st, we began offering [half priced, half year memberships](#) good through June 30th as well as full year memberships for the entirety of 2021. Our sliding scale memberships range from \$20-\$50.

Compost NOW relies these [small donations](#) and the occasional grant (there are just not that many organizations funding composting in the South).

Please consider becoming a [sustaining member](#) if you can. This is a new initiative to help us better plan and be **able to commit to keeping our program going throughout 2021**.

**MEMBERSHIP PERKS:** In addition to a 15% discount at Feet First and a one-time discount at Schmelly's Dirt Farm and a new partnership with Insanitea (which will allow for discounted online purchases only -details still being worked out), we will hold quarterly raffles for all members.

Anyone who purchases (or has already purchased - thank you) a membership through **January 15, 2021** will be entered into our first raffle to win. Right now, odds are really good since we have only single-digit membership....

**1st quarter RAFFLE PRIZE:** Friends of City Park New Orleans Family Level Membership (\$75 value)

This membership is good for 2 adults or 1 adult + 1 guest and up to 6 children. It is an amazing prize, [with a long list of perks](#) including free unlimited admission and discounts to several features and events. *Thank you, Friends of City Park!*