2024 People's Summit
TOUR SUMMARY REPORT

The People's Summit on Food Systems & Urban Agriculture: Food Vision 2030, builds on the momentum of our organizing efforts over the past year. The People's Summit prioritizes the engagement and input of residents most affected by food insecurity and food apartheid, and it features the participation and collaboration of local organizations focused on food, agriculture, and health equity.

As part of the People's Summit, we organized local food justice tours on Friday, August 16, and Saturday, August 17.

On Friday, August 16, we visited the Food Literacy Project and Common Earth Gardens for the tour titled, "Multigenerational Approaches to Farming & Land Access."

The mission of the Food Literacy Project focuses on youth transforming their communities through food, farming, and the land.

Our tour group was welcomed on Friday morning at the Food Literacy Project's farm located off Paradise Lane in southwest Jefferson County.

FLP shared their story as a farm-based organization that has experienced numerous successes with their programming, especially with their Field to Fork Program and the Youth Community Agriculture Program, or YCAP. However, FLP emphasized that, over the past few years, they have experienced some major challenges related to securing land tenure. They described their vision for "a forever home" where they can become deeply rooted, allowing them to more effectively contribute to realizing healthy and equitable communities where people and places thrive.

The People's Summit tour group divided into three groups for a walk around the farm. Participants learned about the food crops and medicinal plants that FLP is growing. One of the groups engaged in a field work brigade before lunch. The collective effort was dedicated to weeding a large patch of squash.

Thanks to FLP for hosting us!

After lunch, we visited the Incubator Farm of Common Earth Gardens, located off Millers Lane and Cane Run Road.

Common Earth Gardens collaborates with the diverse and multicultural community of Kentucky to increase land access for growing food, developing new farm businesses, and building healthy community networks.

As the tour group arrived at their space, CEG shared about their work with New Americans to facilitate community garden access at 11 different sites across the county. They also provide technical training and support with local marketing. At the Incubator Farm, CEG partners with the Louisville Metro Sewer District (MSD) which owns the land, and this year MSD approved the expansion of CEG's space at this site.

The tour group walked up the hill to this new space, where families are producing corn, beans, and squash in a large collective field. CEG described the benefits of this intercropping method and also some of the positive aspects of experimenting with communal production, as most farmers affiliated with CEG tend to work in smaller plots designated for their own family's use. The field was a magnificent sight to see!

Thanks to CEG for receiving us at the farm!

On Saturday, we visited Change Today, Change Tomorrow and the West End Women's Collaborative for the tour titled, "Mutual Aid in the West End."

The mission of Change Today, Change Tomorrow centers on eradicating the food justice and public health barriers that plague the Black community.

CTCT welcomed the tour group at their corner lot on Date St, in the California neighborhood. We learned about some of the main initiatives of the organization, such as the food rescue and food access work as part of their program "Feed the West," in addition to their base-building working groups that are regularly convened to discuss and plan actions around topics most important to community members. CTCT also started a West End farmers market this year to support the construction of an alternative food economy in the West End.

Our tour group divided into teams for two main projects on site. One team focused on general garden work involving weeding and preparing ground for new garden beds to be established. The other team dedicated themselves to building a three-compartment wooden compost bin, which was successful particularly thanks to the willingness, knowledge, and tools of participants with construction experience. The compost bin will recycle the nutrients of food waste and, over time, generate a fertile soil amendment for use in the garden.

Thanks to CTCT for hosting us!

After lunch, we visited the "ELA house" of the West End Women's Collaborative, located on Hale Avenue in the Chickasaw neighborhood.

The West End Women's Collaborative is dedicated to creating and sustaining artistic, peaceful spaces in the West End of Louisville.

Upon arrival at the site, the tour group went inside for an art activity that involved painting bricks with a one-word message to current and future generations. The bricks would later be placed outside in the Peace Labyrinth, an area designed for mediation, harmony with nature, and positive social connection. Participants painted messages such as: Unity; Solidarity; Patience; Create; and Grow.

We then went outside to work on the Peace Labyrinth. The goal was to add fresh mulch to the space, and the task did not take very long because we had many hands and tools. This really showed the power and impact of collective work.

The tour concluded with a conversation about the meaning of mutual aid. Participants also shared reflections about the messages that we wrote on our bricks. The conversation provided space to wrap-up two days of tours and build excitement for the full-day conference of the People's Summit, which we are celebrating today!

We want to give special thanks to the Louisville Tool Library for providing us with the tools needed for two days of garden work. It's true: there's plenty if we share.

Thanks to all of our tour hosts and participants for making these two days a big success and a good time to remember.