



CONTACT: Amy Klein at 518-274-8685 or amy@cdcg.org

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Capital District Community Gardens Honors Volunteers at Appreciation Reception

Capital District Community Gardens hosted a Volunteer Appreciation Reception on October 17, 2013 to celebrate the “many hands that make light work” for the local non-profit. Every year, hundreds of volunteers from area colleges, universities, high schools, churches and businesses as well as the larger community help the organization to nourish healthy communities by providing access to fresh food and green spaces for all. Howard Stoner and Nancy Ross, two volunteers who have shown exceptional dedication, were honored with awards at the event.

Howard Stoner, Mathematics Professor Emeritus at Hudson Valley Community College, has volunteered at CDCG for more than 20 years. After signing up for a Community Garden plot soon after the non-profit was founded in 1975, Stoner began volunteering to care for the organization’s gardening equipment. Stoner’s commitment has grown along with the organization itself, which now operates 50 Community Gardens and seven other programs that increase access to fresh food in our region. Stoner has taught classes on food preservation for other gardeners and helped plow land and construct greenhouses at The Produce Project, CDCG’s urban farm on 8th Street in Troy.

“I’ve enjoyed every minute of it,” says Stoner. “It’s been my pleasure to watch young people come to CDCG. Everyone seems to be growing and thriving from their experience here.”

Nancy Ross has been a supporter since the 1980’s. She began volunteering to glean produce from local farms after CDCG launched Squash Hunger, a fresh food donation program, in 2004. Ross looked forward to her retirement from the state in 2011 because it meant she would be able to volunteer on a regular basis. She started volunteering with CDCG’s traveling produce market, The Veggie Mobile, nearly three years ago and has since spent every Thursday helping staff with stocking produce on the truck, assisting customers with their purchases and handing out recipe samples.

“I developed positive relationships with staff and customers immediately,” says Ross. “Every day with The Veggie Mobile is memorable.”

Both Stoner and Ross were presented with artwork that was created by Peter Bowden, writer and photographer for the Times Union's *Gardening* blog. The canvas wall hangings depict many handprints overlapping each other, representing what volunteers mean to CDCG – "*many hands make light work*".

"Howard has been an indispensable part of our organization, not only because he's always there when we need him, but because he provides friendship to our entire staff," says CDCG's Executive Director, Amy Klein. "There have been days when he would stop in just to say hello or offer a hug. Nancy has made a tremendous imprint on our organization and The Veggie Mobile crew. We are so thankful for all the volunteers who put their shoulders behind this organization, helping to propel us forward."

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Capital District Community Gardens is a 38-year-old nonprofit organization that nourishes healthy communities with nearly 50 Community Gardens, The Veggie Mobile, The Healthy Convenience Store Initiative, The Produce Project, Squash Hunger and more.

40 River Street • Troy, New York 12180
518.274.8685 • Fax 518.272.2744 • info@cdc.org • www.cdcg.org