



For Immediate Release
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Providence Farm Collective (PFC) to Celebrate Harvest and Gratitude on Sunday, October 2nd at their Orchard Park Farm

Farmers from Providence Farm Collective will mark the end of their summer growing season by holding their annual Harvest and Gratitude Celebration at PFC in Orchard Park (5701 Burton Road Orchard Park, NY) on Sunday, October 2nd from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. This event is NOT open to the public, but local media is invited to attend, interview PFC farmers, and take photographs.

What is the Harvest and Gratitude Celebration? It is an opportunity for PFC communities to gather, eat, sing, dance, and play music. Versions of this festival occur throughout many cultures. Dao Kamara, a member of the Liberian Association of Buffalo, which farms at PFC, notes that back in Africa, elders, chiefs, and community members all come together during harvest time, often walking one or two hours from nearby towns wearing harvest-themed costumes. This Harvest and Gratitude Celebration—which Markets Manager Hamadi Ali likens to Thanksgiving here in the States—will become an annual tradition in Western New York thanks to PFC farmers.

The event will encompass a host of cultures and traditions all represented at PFC, including those of Black Americans and the communities of Somali Bantu, Congolese, Karen, Burmese, Burundi, Liberian, Bengali/Bangladeshi, Karenni, and Ethiopian.

Providence Farm Collective and the Western New York Land Conservancy are fundraising this year to “Plant the Future of Farming” in Western New York. To date, they have raised more than \$1.2 million dollars toward their \$2.3 million-dollar goal, including a recent \$275,000 matching gift. Right now, every dollar donated will be matched, dollar for dollar until the matching gift is doubled. The deadline for the campaign is December 31, 2022.

Once the goal is met, Providence Farm Collective will purchase the 37-acre farm in Orchard Park where PFC farmers grow their crops, add needed facilities, and sustain it into the future. The Land Conservancy will place a conservation easement on the farm, protecting it forever.

Providence Farm Collective, a nonprofit that supports Black, immigrant, refugee, and low-income farmers in Western New York who cannot otherwise access farmland, started in 2017 as a grassroots effort by the Somali Bantu community to get back to their farming roots and grow fresh food. It has now grown to encompass refugees from multiple nations and members of the Black community. With its incubator farms and summer youth employment programs, it not only provides Western New York's refugee communities with a place to grow their own food; it also allows them to earn extra money doing something they love, while at the same time teaching cultural farming traditions to future generations.

The Land Conservancy and Providence Farm Collective need donations of all sizes in order to Plant the Future of Farming. For larger donations, naming opportunities include:

- One donor of \$500,000 or more can be recognized on the pavilion
- One donor of \$300,000 or more can be recognized on the barn
- One donor of \$150,000 or more can be recognized on the children's play area
- One donor of \$100,000 or more can be recognized on the market stand
- Donors of \$50,000 or more can be recognized on a shade and tool shelter
- Donors of \$30,000 or more can have a picnic table named in their honor
- Donors of \$20,000 or more can have a garden bench named in their honor
- Donors of \$10,000 or more will have their name placed on a quilt square made by Stitch Buffalo on the quilt display in the pavilion
- Donors of \$2,000 or more will be recognized in the Land Conservancy newsletter and Providence Farm Collective's Annual Report

If you would like to donate to Plant the Future of Farming, you can donate online at wnylc.org or send a check made payable to "Western New York Land Conservancy" to P.O. Box 471, East Aurora, NY 14052. Please call or email if you have questions: (716) 687-1225 or info@wnylc.org.

The Western New York Land Conservancy is a regional, not-for-profit land trust that permanently protects land with significant conservation value in Western New York for current and future generations. The Land Conservancy envisions a future in which open spaces, working lands, wildlife habitat, and scenic beauty are cherished and protected as part of the landscape and character of Western New York. The Land Conservancy is accredited by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission and is one of 1000+ land trusts nationwide, including 87 in New York State. Land trusts have protected over 56 million acres of land. To learn more about the Land Conservancy, visit wnylc.org.

Providence Farm Collective is a non-profit that believes in empowering Just and Equitable Access to Food and Farmland. It cultivates farmer-led and community-rooted agriculture and food systems to actualize the rights of under-resourced peoples. Providence Farm Collective (PFC) has its roots in the Somali Bantu Community Farm, a three-year pilot project. The pilot explored the challenges and opportunities of addressing fresh food insecurity and farmland inequity. PFC supports under-resourced farmers in Western New York needing access to clean, rural farmland, farming and business education, technical assistance, access to markets and the opportunity to farm for income. PFC also offers youth education and employment programs. Website: providencefarmcollective.org.

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