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The Land Conservancy and Providence Farm Collective to Host Author and Filmmaker Natalie Baszile, a Champion of Black Farming in the United States, for June 21 Virtual Event

The Western New York Land Conservancy and Providence Farm Collective (PFC) are partnering to host author and filmmaker Natalie Baszile. The online event will feature a special conversation between Baszile and local farmers of color, including Allison DeHoney (Buffalo Go Green/Urban Fruits & Veggies), Mahamud Mberwa (Bwedo Farm), Dao Kamara (Liberian Community Farming Project), and Hamadi Ali (Providence Farm Collective).

When: June 21, 7:00-8:00 p.m.

Where: Online. This event is free and open to the public, but in order to receive the link to attend, registration is required.

How to register: visit <https://www.wnyc.org/nataliebaszile>

This year, the Land Conservancy and PFC are partnering on a joint \$2.3 million-dollar fundraising campaign. The main focus of the campaign is to provide equitable access to protected farmland for farmers who could not otherwise access land and who have been historically excluded from farmland ownership. Natalie Baszile's work is a celebration of Black farmers, their deep connection to the land, and their significant contributions to agriculture in America. She is the author of the novel *Queen Sugar*, now a critically acclaimed television series on the Oprah Winfrey Network (OWN) directed by Ava DuVernay. The novel was named one of the San Francisco Chronicle's Best Books of 2014, and nominated for an NAACP Image Award.

Last year, Baszile published *We Are Each Other's Harvest*, which Ibram X. Kendi (*Stamped from the Beginning, How to be an Antiracist*) called “groundbreaking and amazing.” This collection of essays, poems, photographs, quotes, conversations, and first-person stories reveal the long, rich agricultural history of Black farmers and their connection to American land from Emancipation to today.

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. The farm moved from an East Aurora location to an Orchard Park location in 2021. 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.

Nearly 300 PFC farmers grow their produce at the 37-acre farm PFC leases in Orchard Park. Once the campaign goal is met, Providence Farm Collective will purchase the farm, add needed facilities, and sustain it into the future. The Land Conservancy will place a conservation easement on the farm, protecting it forever. The deadline for the campaign is December 31, 2022.

This event is made possible by the following generous sponsors:

Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus
The Aurora Theatre and Scott & Kathy Bieler
The Bank, a wedding venue and boutique hotel in East Aurora
Renee Bush & Bruce McCombe
KeyBank Foundation
National Grid
Wegmans
The Western New York Foundation

The Western New York Land Conservancy is a regional, non-profit land trust that has protected more than 7,000 acres of land with significant conservation value in Western New York for the benefit of future generations. We envision a future in which forests, farms, meadows, and waterways are connected, cherished, and protected in Western New York. Our clean air, clean water, and fertile soils will equitably support the health and wellbeing of future generations of every living thing. The Land Conservancy is accredited by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission. For more information on upcoming events, volunteer opportunities, or the mission of the Western New York Land Conservancy, please call (716) 687-1225 or 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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