



# Project Showcase 2017

Rhode Island  
Local Agriculture  
& Seafood Act  
Grant Program







**Dear Reader,**

I am pleased to present the 2017 showcase for projects funded under the Rhode Island Local Agriculture and Seafood Act (LASA) Grant Program. The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, in partnership with the Rhode Island Food Policy Council (RIFPC), is proud to offer these grants, which support the growth of our local food and agriculture economies.

Rhode Island is a place where fresh, local food is in demand! The local food sector supports more than 60,000 jobs and provides a platform for entrepreneurs and innovators to thrive. Continued support from Governor Gina M. Raimondo facilitates opportunities in our state that attract talented individuals to contribute to our local food system. The businesses and initiatives highlighted in this booklet help solidify Rhode Island's commitment to support locally grown, harvested, and produced food.

LASA would not be possible without strong partnerships. We thank our state leaders for their support. We also thank our partners at the van Beuren Charitable Foundation, Henry P. Kendall Foundation, and the Rhode Island Foundation for their contributions. We extend grateful appreciation to the members of the LASA Grants Advisory Committee for lending their expertise and time – as well as the RIFPC for its continued leadership in the design and implementation of this program. We also thank our fellow Rhode Islanders who are eager to eat local!

Congratulations to the 2017 grantees! We are pleased to showcase your vision and your contribution to the local food economy. Here's to you!

**Janet Coit**

*Director, Rhode Island Department  
of Environmental Management*





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# Rhode Island Local Agriculture & Seafood Act Grants Program 2017

## Overview

The Local Agriculture and Seafood Act Grants Program was established by the Local Agriculture and Seafood Act (LASA) of 2012 with the explicit goal of supporting the growth, development, and marketing of local food and seafood in Rhode Island. Launched in 2014, the LASA Grants Program is co-administered by the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management's Division of Agriculture and the Rhode Island Food Policy Council, and implemented through an application process open to farmers, fishermen/women, nonprofit organizations, and producer groups based in Rhode Island. This unprecedented public-private partnership was made possible by \$100,000 in funding from the State of Rhode Island, and an additional \$130,000 in private funds from the van Beuren Charitable Foundation, the Henry P. Kendall Foundation, and the Rhode Island Foundation.

Department of Environmental Management Director Janet Coit assembled a diverse LASA Grants Program Advisory Committee, with representation from across the food system including agriculture, aquaculture, and seafood. The 2017 LASA Grants Program received 67 applications, with grant requests totaling \$894,574. The strong response underscores the need for a sustainable funding stream that will continue to support and strengthen the growing and vibrant local food system in Rhode Island.

Members of the 2017 LASA Grants Program Advisory Committee:

**Ken Ayars**  
*Committee Chair*  
*RI Department of Environmental Management*  
*Division of Agriculture*

**David Dadekian**  
*Eat Drink RI*  
*Rhode Island Food Policy Council*

**Jules Opton-Himmel**  
*Walrus and Carpenter Oysters LLC*

**Max Greene**  
*Conservation Law Foundation*  
*Rhode Island Food Policy Council*

**Mike McGiveney**  
*Rhode Island Shellfishermen's Association*

**Pat McNiff**  
*Pat's Pastured*

**Sheila Brush**  
*Grow Smart Rhode Island (retired)*

**Shayna Cohen**  
*Karen Karp & Partners (KK&P)*

**Dan Jennings**  
*RI Commerce Corporation*





# THE BACKYARD FOOD COMPANY

WARWICK

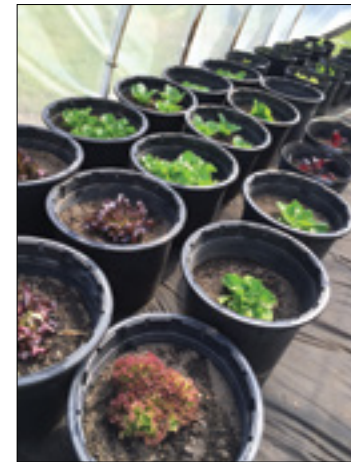
**AWARDED: \$6,890**

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## GREENHOUSE FOR EXPANDED PRODUCTION

In 2014, Matt McClelland and Loubnen Sukkar co-founded The Backyard Food Company (BYFC) making small batches of their condiment products at the Hope & Main incubator kitchens in Warren. After a few years of business development and marketing, BYFC products now can be found in over 300 retail locations across New England and beyond. BYFC's relishes, salsas, pickles, and jams are made using Rhode Island-grown ingredients and old family recipes. In order to meet the demand for more product, the company sources many of its ingredients by contracting with local farmers, but McClelland and Sukkar are also working to identify and increase the number of ingredients they can grow themselves.

LASA funding will allow the Backyard Food Company to build a second greenhouse at their location in Charlestown. In 2015, BYFC recycled, deconstructed, and transported six 100-foot hoop houses with the intention of erecting them in stages, to grow ingredients for their food business. Startup costs developing the business and marketing the first products left BYFC with limited funds, so only one greenhouse was built. It was used as a test garden to grow peppers, lettuce, tomatoes, onions, cabbage, cucumbers, and herbs. Construction of a second greenhouse will help the BYFC keep up with product demand and expand their growing operations to support a new line of products.



Photos | Loubnen Sukkar

*“BCYF is poised for more growth. We are expanding our product line with six new products and have employed a team of demo specialists to educate consumers about the healthy aspects of locally produced products. It is an equally important goal for us to begin growing more of the ingredients to ensure a more consistent and cost effective product.”*

*—Loubnen Sukkar*



# BRANDON FAMILY FARM

WEST KINGSTON

AWARDED: \$5,229

## PAWPAW ORCHARD

Albert Brandon started Brandon Family Farm in 2014. Today the farm produces over five acres of vegetables and small fruit in West Kingston. Brandon Family Farm is certified organic and strives to use the best techniques for insect and disease management, soil conservation and fertility management. Brandon Family Farm produce is sold at farmers markets, restaurants, and some local supermarkets.

Brandon Family Farm applied for LASA funding to develop a new commercial scale orchard for pawpaws, a highly nutritious and native North American fruit regaining popularity in the locavore food movement. The pawpaw, a green mango-sized fruit with a tropical custardy taste, is North America's largest native fruit and one that is ideal

for organic growing, as it has few pests and disease problems. Once ripe, pawpaws do not have a long shelf life, making them ideal for local shipping to nearby markets and restaurants. Pawpaw trees are an excellent source of additional revenue for small Rhode Island farms because individual trees might bear between twenty and forty pounds of fruit a season.

LASA funding provides Brandon Family Farm with just over 200 pawpaw trees, the mulch for weed control and protective tree tubes. The orchard serves as a conservation model by being planted with other native species to provide beneficial insect and pollinator habitats, increasing yields and reducing pest populations across the farm.



*“I believe there is potential for growth in the Southern New England pawpaw market as a local and sustainable alternative to imported fruits, and pawpaw trees could provide a good income to area farms. It is said that George Washington’s favorite dessert was chilled pawpaw fruit.”*

*—Albert Brandon*

# CHARLIE’S SUGAR HOUSE

COVENTRY

AWARDED: \$3,000

## IMPROVED ACCESS TO SUGAR HOUSE

Charlie Chase has been making maple syrup since he was 14 years old. He grew up on his family’s farm, selling Christmas trees for thirty years. His syrup is sold wholesale to fifty stores around the state. To connect more directly to his customers, Chase recently built a 30 x 40 foot pole barn sugarhouse. The structure is large enough to hold fifty people at a time for a maple syrup making tour. The sugarhouse also houses a retail store where Chase sells his maple syrup and other maple syrup products.

LASA funding helps Chase increase his retail operations by improving vehicle access to the new sugar shack.

The funding helps modify the original parking area from a 50’ x 200’ grass field to into a dry, paved parking area using recycled concrete. This gives Sugar House visitors convenient and easy access in all kinds of weather. When spread and graded over the field, the recycled concrete will compact and allow water to drain effectively, eliminating muddy conditions in the parking area. A second road access point allows cars and buses to enter and exit the parking area safely (a big plus for school buses).



*“This project will allow me to grow my retail farm stand with a better, drier parking lot. Retail provides me with new sales channels in addition to wholesale. People want to know their farmer and what better way than to come see me while I make my syrup.”*

*—Charlie Chase*



# COMMERCIAL FISHERIES RESEARCH FOUNDATION

SAUNDERSTOWN

AWARDED: \$18,255

## EDUCATE LOCAL FOOD BUSINESSES, CHEFS, AND CONSUMERS ABOUT SUSTAINABLE RHODE ISLAND SEAFOOD

The Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation (CFRF) was started in 2004 by a group of Rhode Island fishermen who wanted to collectively address the challenges facing their industry, including by-catch reduction and resource sustainability. The CFRF conducts and communicates with consumers about research that benefits the fishing community, and helps maintain sustainable fisheries.

LASA funding provides the CFRF with the resources to run a workshop for culinary professionals about the availability, preparation and procurement of local seafood. Funding

also supports the CFRF's development and distribution of a Rhode Island Seafood Guide for culinary professionals and seafood consumers. Rhode Island fishermen harvest over 100 million pounds of seafood every year, but over 95% of it is exported out of state. At the same time, over 85% of the seafood consumed in our state is imported. By working to educate local food businesses, chefs, and consumers about the bounty of sustainable, fresh, and healthy seafood harvested in Rhode Island, the CFRF helps realize a better Rhode Island seafood market potential.



*"In 2016, the CFRF investigated new sales channels for scup and other local seafood products. All food businesses interviewed expressed interest in selling or serving more local seafood, but needed further education about the availability, sourcing, and preparation of local fish and shellfish."*

—Anna Malek Mercer





# HOCUS POCUS FARM

CHEPACHET

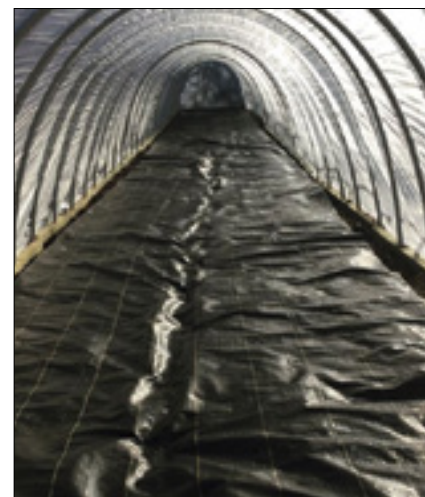
AWARDED: \$6,578

## EQUIPMENT FOR TRANSITION TO NO-TILL FARMING

Hocus Pocus Farm is a two-acre, chemical free vegetable, herb, flower, and chicken farm in Chepachet that supports a 45-member CSA and sells directly to restaurants and other retail outlets. In 2017, the Hocus Pocus CSA was the only one serving the town of Cumberland and only one of two CSAs serving Chepachet. Hocus Pocus Farm is a founding member of the New Roots Farmers Cooperative and is committed to conscientious land stewardship. In transitioning the land away from its prior use as a Christmas tree farm, Hocus Pocus farmers Courtney Sartini and Sophie Soloway built their soil with organic compost and fertilized it with a farm-made fish emulsion on site.

LASA funding is providing Hocus Pocus Farm with the equipment to fully transition to no-till farming for all their crops. No-till farming is a technique that sustainably manages crops each year without disturbing the soil through tillage or plowing. Plowing is a major cause of soil erosion and the churning up of soil associated with conventional tillage releases a significant amount of carbon dioxide into the air. Farmers practicing no-till farming conserve water, reduce erosion and use less fossil fuel to grow crops.

Hocus Pocus anticipates that their transition to no-till techniques will increase their profitability by reducing labor, reducing irrigation needs and improving their soil structure.



*“The New Roots Farmers Cooperative (NRFC) prioritizes and emphasizes small farm sustainable land stewardship. LASA funding helps us transition to no-till methods and will increase our capacity to produce restaurant-quality produce with a focus on high-value greens. This, in turn, will help guarantee the viability of the new co-op.”*

—Sophie Soloway

# HURRICANE HILL FARM COLLABORATIVE

CRANSTON

AWARDED: \$19,836

## GREENHOUSE FOR USE BY TENANT FARMERS

Hurricane Hill Farm is a historic 1750s farm located on forty-eight acres in Cranston. As a private landowner wishing to personally address Rhode Island’s land insecurity issues for new farmers, owner Drake Patten leases some of Hurricane Hill Farm’s acres to small and beginning farmers in a tenant collaborative structure committed to exchanging support and knowledge. Hurricane Hill Farm’s cooperative structure is rooted in the belief that new and beginning farmers in Rhode Island need a supportive network to succeed, and need public awareness and support to thrive.

LASA funding supports Hurricane Hill’s construction of a 2,000 square foot greenhouse with heating and cooling capabilities for use by the tenant farmers. The new greenhouse stands in a two-acre area of the farm not suitable for agriculture, but perfectly suited for support buildings and public parking. The greenhouse allows all three tenant farmers to extend their growing seasons, expand their markets and diversify their crops. Adding a greenhouse (and the utilities infrastructure to support it year-round) is an important investment in Hurricane Hill Farm’s commitment to creating a growing and long-lived tenant program and increasing public access at the farm’s location.



*“Hurricane Hill Farm is committed to building the land’s capacity for small and beginning producers, maximizing the potential to create vibrant opportunities for public education around sustainable agriculture and improving capacity to provide long-term fiscal sustainability for future farmers.”*

—Drake Patten



# JERUSALEM SHELLFISH COMPANY

ASHAWAY

AWARDED: \$10,000

## EXPANDED COOLING AND STORAGE CAPACITY FOR SHELLFISH GROWERS

In 2007, Graham Brawley of the Jerusalem Shellfish Company brought together half a dozen independent Rhode Island oyster farms, together covering about 50 acres in different bodies of water, to create the Ocean State Shellfish Cooperative (OSSC). In addition to supporting the founding farm members, the OSSC also coordinates sales efforts for eight associate oyster farms, ultimately increasing Rhode Island oyster visibility in a broad range of marketplaces. Each farm raises a particular variety of oyster, all unique in taste and characteristics. The OSSC promotes all of the locally harvested products from these Rhode Island shellfish farms in the marketplace, while educating the public about how Rhode Island oyster farms play a significant role in maintaining a vital coastal ecosystem.

LASA funding helps the OSSC restore a walk-in cooler space, enabling the production of one ton of ice per day. Ice is an essential component of the shellfish industry; all farms must adhere to strict icing and chilling procedures to ensure safe handling of the product. LASA funding also supports the purchase of portable coolers capable of delivering ice to all of the farms working with the OSSC, expanding cooling and storage capacity for all OSSC members. Being able to produce large quantities of ice and efficiently coordinate ice supply to each of the farms is essential for the OSSC's growth, especially given the geographical radius of the participating farms.



*"This grant will increase participation in the oyster farm co-op by providing small oyster farmers the means to develop year round consistent markets that demand the freshest and safest oysters. Making ice and having a storage cooler for that ice makes the effort more efficient and less costly over the long term."*

—Graham Brawley

# LITTLE RIVER FARM

WAKEFIELD

AWARDED: \$3,500

## CATERPILLAR TUNNELS FOR SEASON EXTENSION

Robert Payne and Camille Abdel-Nabi started Little River Farm in 2013 on a five-acre parcel of leased land in Exeter. Little River Farm sells organically grown vegetables and herbs at farmers markets, distributes wholesale to restaurants, and the small farm has a sixty member CSA. Little River Farm uses innovative bio-intensive and conservation tillage techniques and was named Southern Rhode Island Conservation District's "Organic Producer of the Year" in 2016.

LASA funding provides materials for the assembly of five caterpillar tunnels, or hoop houses, built over crops in the field for season extension. Caterpillar tunnels – so named because of their segmented appearance – are

one of the least expensive season extension techniques. They maximize the use of available farmland year round. Caterpillar tunnels are easier to use than alternative low tunnels because caterpillars require less ventilation, give plenty of space for harvesting, and have better resistance to strong winter winds in New England. They are simple to set up and usually provide a return on investment after the first harvest.

The newly installed caterpillar tunnels help supply the Aquidneck Growers winter market with fresh, local organic produce from Little River Farm. They also help provide year round income for the farm and year round produce for local customers.



*"We see caterpillar tunnels as the most promising technology to expand winter sales in winter markets. Organic produce is in high demand at farmers markets during the winter and well-planted caterpillar tunnels are a sure way to supply customers during that time."*

—Robert Payne



# LITTLE STATE FLOWER COMPANY

WEST KINGSTON

AWARDED: \$8,949

## NEW EQUIPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

Little State Flower Company (LSFCo) is a specialty cut flower farm established by Anna Jane Kocon in 2014. It grows premium cut flowers and plants, with a focus on soil health and organic growing practices. The wedding and event industry in Rhode Island imports nearly all of the cut flowers and plants used for floral design work. Imported flowers and plants not only have a large carbon footprint upon arrival, but they are often grown in countries that do not have strict labor laws or restrictions on pesticide and fertilizer use. Most imported plants and flowers are fumigated upon entry into the U.S., creating an end product that is unhealthy for florists and customers to handle.

LSFCo addresses the need for healthier, local and more sustainably grown products for the floral design market.

LASA funding helps LSFCo add new equipment and essential infrastructure to a newly leased three-acre growing space on Aquidneck Island. The funds allow LSFCo to centralize production and set up two wooden sheds on the property – one used to house tools and equipment, and the other converted into a walk-in cooler conveniently close to the harvesting sites. The walk-in cooler centralizes LSFCo's production and creates a professional setting for florists and other customers to pick up their orders.



*“At the end of our second year of production, LSFCo had maxed out the planting space needed to properly grow our annual flowers organically and sustainably. Our recent acreage expansion at Frank Chase Farm provides an opportunity to expand production and provide more products to the Rhode Island floral design industry. Our recent acreage expansion provides a professional environment in which to conduct business and propel us to the next level of success.”*

—Anna Jane Kocon

# MOONROSE FARM

PROVIDENCE

AWARDED: \$6,362

## COLD STORAGE EXTENDS SHELF LIFE AND ALLOWS EXPANDED PRODUCTION

Moonrose Farm is a chemical-free farm and apiary providing vegetables and cut flowers to a 50-member CSA and several local restaurants. Farmers Melissa Denmark and Jordan Goldsmith began growing vegetables and flowers on family property in Dartmouth, MA in 2015. In 2016, Moonrose joined other beginning farmers in a small farm lease at Hurricane Hill Farm in western Cranston. Today, Moonrose Farm works thoughtfully to harmonize feeding the land and feeding the people, while combining the agricultural and culinary talents and expertise of the two founders.

LASA funding provides all the supplies and materials for the farm to convert a 12-foot enclosed trailer into a mobile insulated space and walk-in cooler. The new cooler is

a shared equipment structure for Moonrose Farms and the other members of the New Roots Farm Cooperative, a collaboration of several small farm businesses run by women. A refrigeration unit to sort and store produce and flowers enables all the farms in the co-op to increase their volume and extend the shelf life of their products.

Collaboration and a focus on community are essential aspects of the Moonrose Farm mission. The new mobile cooler, built with the aid of a strong community of friends and colleagues, directly benefits several new Rhode Island agricultural businesses and fosters future collaborations between small, new Rhode Island farms to work together to compete in a competitive wholesale market.



Photos | Jordan Goldsmith

*“In 2016, we harvested and distributed our produce to restaurants on the same day. This was very inefficient. Having an option for cold storage will allow us to collect and sort orders the day before delivery, ultimately allowing us to reach more customers, expand our delivery, and reduce our waste stream.”*

—Jordan Goldsmith



# MOORESFIELD OYSTER FARM

NARRAGANSETT

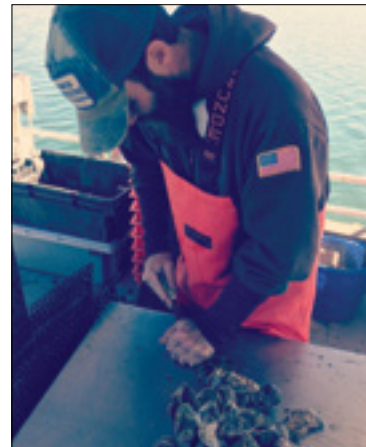
AWARDED: \$15,072

## GROWING THE BUSINESS FROM EQUIPMENT TO MARKETING TO FOOD SAFETY

Ian and Stesha Campbell are the brother and sister co-owners of Mooresfield Oyster Farm, a small aquaculture farm located on Point Judith Pond. As founding members of the Battle of the Fishermen event at the Washington County Fair, the Campbell siblings are committed to presenting a positive message about the shucking, dock-line throwing, bait-stringing, and pot-hauling skills of resourceful Rhode Island fishermen and those who make a living in the Rhode Island shellfish industry. As a startup business, in 2014 Mooresfield Oyster Farm often came up with creative and sustainable ways to repurpose equipment needed for the success of their new operation. With a little bit of elbow grease and new paint, discarded buoys

headed to the landfill became new floats for marking the rows of Mooresfield Farm's oysters, and old lobster pots found new life as oyster cages.

LASA funding provides the oyster farm with new oyster racks and growout bags to replace the over 200 recycled lobster pots used since the launch of their first harvest. The funding also allows Mooresfield Oyster Farm to put a greater emphasis on the marketing of their branded product so they can increase sales. The funding also supports consulting services for the creation of a Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) plan so the Campbell siblings can expand Mooresfield's markets and sell directly to high-volume restaurants year-round.



*"We believe that the shellfish and fishing industry of Point Judith is an integral and historical part of our local economy and is vital to future ecosystems. Being on the water has been everything to us since we were little kids. The water has taught us invaluable lessons, been the backdrop to our fondest memories and provided some of our favorite foods."*

*—Stesha Campbell*

# NORTHERN RHODE ISLAND CONSERVATION DISTRICT / SNAKE DEN FARM

JOHNSTON

AWARDED: \$19,613

## CREATION OF NEW LEASES AND INCREASED FARM MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

Lack of access to affordable farmland is one of the single biggest challenges for agricultural producers in Rhode Island. In 2013, the Northern Rhode Island Conservation District (NRICD) signed a long-term lease with the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (DEM) to manage a land lease program at Snake Den Farm, a 147-acre farm located in Johnston. The Snake Den Farm land lease partnership provides small and beginning farmers with viable and cost-effective agricultural land and infrastructure for their growth and expansion. The program's "whole-farm" system at Snake Den offers business opportunities to beginning farmers and encourages communication and collaboration between all the farm enterprises located at the farm. Between 2014

and 2017, the NRICD signed long-term leases on thirty acres of Snake Den Farm land (with an additional 15 acres being temporarily managed).

LASA funding helps NRICD expand their successful land lease program for beginning agricultural producers by supporting creation of two to three new, long-term, and affordable leases. New leases increase collaborations between all the leaseholders to maintain and improve shared resources, cooperate in the whole-farm decision-making process and increase educational and outreach events to support new and beginning farm enterprises in the state. The expansion also allows for an increased farm manager presence with leaseholders.



Photo | Amanda Harding

*"The NRICD has supported new farmers leasing land on Snake Den with a shoestring budget, part-time help and volunteer assistance. The current model is unsustainable if we want to grow and thrive. LASA funds allow us to better support the needs of Rhode Island's new farmers and offer more affordable leases and educational programs."*

*—Kate Sayles*



# OCEAN STATE OYSTER HATCHERY

WAKEFIELD

AWARDED: \$9,000

## GENERATOR TO PREVENT AGAINST POWER OUTAGES

There are sixty-one oyster growers in Rhode Island and, until recently, they all had to order their yearly seed stock from out of state oyster hatcheries. With the launch of Ocean State Oyster Hatchery (OSOH), there is now a local option for seed for the Rhode Island oyster industry. As the only commercial oyster hatchery within the state of Rhode Island and one of only a handful of oyster hatcheries located between Maine and Florida, OSOH directly addresses the high oyster seed demand and provides a native seed that has origins in Rhode Island waters.

LASA funding supports the purchase of a commercial-grade generator for OSOH, providing a safeguard for

the hatchery against potential power outages. Oyster hatcheries need continuous aeration, water exchange and light for seed to survive, so uninterrupted power is crucial for success. The new generator starts up automatically the moment power is lost, fully ensuring that the hatchery runs continuously. An uninterrupted production of local oyster seed at OSOH keeps this new sales channel of native Rhode Island oyster seed flowing into the marketplace, boosting local seed sales and, in turn, fostering collaborations and connections between all Rhode Island oyster farmers and the state's only commercial hatchery.



*"It would be immensely disheartening to see investment in Rhode Island's first oyster hatchery lost due to an unanticipated power outage. The promise of a full and uninterrupted production season brings a plethora of opportunities for OSOH and the further expansion of the burgeoning Rhode Island aquaculture industry."*

—Christian Durfee

# PAT'S PASTURED

EAST GREENWICH

AWARDED: \$12,500

## IMPROVED FREE-RANGE, PASTURE-RAISED EGG PRODUCTION

Founded by farmer Patrick McNiff in 2002, Pat's Pastured raises high quality pasture-raised and grass-fed livestock. Well-known across the state, the staff at Pat's Pastured works hard to improve the land they farm on while sharing skills and resources with customers, neighbors and peers through educational programs and community events. While the flock of laying hens at Pat's Pastured does provide a steady source of income, egg production has very narrow profit margins. There are significant barriers associated with producing pasture-raised eggs year-round using a system that provides a healthy and humane treatment of chickens.

LASA funding supports the farm's efforts to purchase a new chicken coop that increases efficiency, decreases food waste, and allows the birds to continue to move all over the hundred acres of leased land, preserving their pasture-raised lifestyle. The new coop combines the business of egg production with the free-range pasture-based model employed at the farm, ultimately increasing the amount of high quality pastured free-range eggs that are available in Rhode Island. The new coop will house nests for 650 hens (about half of the flock) and will allow farm staff to collect eggs quickly, reducing labor. Pat's Pastured will keep detailed records on the efficiencies gained using the new coop and will become a resource for other local farms interested in improving egg production.



*"The demand for local eggs is extremely high. Customers love our eggs and our wholesale and retail sales grow each year. This new coop system will allow us to grow the business in a sustainably profitable manner while keeping our birds unconfined and our eggs cleaner and more market-ready."*

—Patrick McNiff



# POINT JUDITH KELP COMPANY

NARRAGANSETT

AWARDED: \$6,000

## SCALE UP PRODUCTION OF SEAWEED-BASED PRODUCTS AND EXPAND OUTREACH

David Blaney founded Point Judith Kelp Company in 2015 to grow, harvest and promote locally raised sea vegetables like sea lettuce, Irish moss, and sugar kelp. Sea vegetable farms have environmental, health, and economic benefits. Kelp farms naturally extract nitrogen, phosphorus and carbon dioxide from the sea, reducing the risk of excessive nutrient build-up and helping to de-carbonize our local waters. In many parts of the world, sea vegetables are popular health foods and nutritional supplements and often serve as natural cosmetic additives. A vibrant Rhode Island kelp industry helps boost the state's fishing economy by providing a source of winter revenue for sugar kelp producers.

LASA funding supports the efforts of Point Judith Kelp Company's "Kelping the Ocean State" marketing program to introduce more Rhode Island consumers to the benefits of sea vegetables. The funding helps scale-up production of seaweed-based products including cosmetics, plant food, and pet food, and supports efforts to expand partnerships with local grocery stores and farmers markets to bring kelp and kelp-based products directly to consumers. The outreach efforts increase the sea vegetable industry in Rhode Island and give consumers more information about the benefits of including seaweed-based products in their lives.



*"Creating a sustainable and profitable sea vegetable industry requires that more people meet and enjoy these umami-flavored ocean greens. Using sea vegetables is a new idea to most Rhode Islanders and the industry has immense potential to expand."*

*—Captain David Blaney*



# RI SEAFOOD MARKETING COLLABORATIVE

PROVIDENCE

AWARDED: \$20,000

## PROMOTION OF RI SEAFOOD

Rhode Island's commercial fishing industry, which includes both wild harvest and aquaculture operations, generates about \$200 million in annual sales and supports about 7000 jobs. To support continued industry growth, the State, along with its partners, developed the RI Seafood brand to identify Rhode Island products in the marketplace. The RI Seafood logo guarantees seafood was landed in the Ocean State and supports the commercial fishing industry. To date, 27 businesses are signed up to use the RI Seafood Logo. This year's initiatives included the 2nd annual Quahog Week,

highlighting Rhode Island's wild harvested shellfish. As part of the week, 36 participating restaurants and markets featured quahog-inspired dishes and held special events. The wrap party, held at Narragansett Beer Headquarters, was a uniquely Rhode Island celebration of the perfect pairing: Quahogs & Narragansett Beer. The website [www.seafoodri.com](http://www.seafoodri.com) was redesigned and a survey of brand users was conducted to help inform the Seafood Marketing Collaborative's next steps.



*Quahog Week partners included Dave's Marketplace, Discover Newport, Eat Drink RI, Eating with the Ecosystem, Go Providence, Isle Brewers Guild, Johnson & Wales University, Narragansett Beer, Narragansett Bay Lobsters, RI Commerce, RI Department of Environmental Management, RI Shellfishermen's Association, Save The Bay, Tomaquag Museum, and the University of Rhode Island.*

# RHODE ISLAND SHELLFISHERMAN'S ASSOCIATION

COVENTRY

AWARDED: \$1,931

## IMPROVED EQUIPMENT FOR SEEDING PROJECT

The Rhode Island Shellfisherman's Association (RISA) has represented the shellfish industry since the 1980s. It is dedicated to the improvement of the working conditions of shellfishermen in Rhode Island, the promotion and marketing of Rhode Island shellfish products, and the enhancement and preservation of Narragansett Bay. As part of a joint project with Roger Williams University and the Rhode Island DEM, RISA is working on a public enhancement shellfish-seeding program to grow shellfish for sustainable harvesting. Over the past twelve years, the seeding effort has led to the planting of over eight million

baby clams and oysters in Narragansett Bay and Point Judith Pond.

LASA funding helps RISA upgrade the equipment associated with the statewide seeding project. The funding allows RISA and its partners to perform repairs and purchase replacement and spare parts for the project's upweller (a piece of marine equipment that functions kind of like an incubator for shellfish seed as it grows).



*"By collaborating with RWU and DEM, RISA hopes to bring back the wild harvest of oysters in Narragansett Bay for both commercial and recreational harvesters. Bringing back the wild oyster will improve water quality in the Bay and also create a sustainable harvest for everyone going forward."*

*—Michael McGiveney*



# SANCTUARY TEAS & HERBS

PROVIDENCE

AWARDED: \$12,160

## EQUIPMENT, MARKETING, TRAININGS, AND OUTREACH BENEFITTING REFUGEE FARMERS

Working in partnership with Rhode Island refugee farmers from around the globe, Sanctuary Teas and Herbs produces culinary herbs and wellness teas in Providence. Co-founders Christina Dedora and Eliza Sutton started their business with the goal of creating an agricultural network of mutually supportive refugees growing and producing high quality fresh and dried, sustainable and locally sourced tisanes and herbs as part of the Rhode Island food system. Sanctuary Teas & Herbs are distributed through markets and a CSA program.

LASA funding provides new tools for refugee farmers that partner with Sanctuary, and contributes to the purchase

of equipment for herb and tea processing. The funding supports materials to assist in the marketing and packaging of Sanctuary's final products, and helps provide a series of trainings for farmers working with Sanctuary in harvesting and herb processing techniques that meet Sanctuary's quality standards for using efficient and sustainable practices. Finally, Sanctuary co-founders will work closely with local chefs and food business consultants to develop outreach and sales plans to address a growing market demand in restaurants and retail outlets for locally sourced teas and herbs.



*“Sanctuary offers an extraordinary line of teas and tisanes whose essence enhance health, comfort and peace. Our objectives include collaboration with community organizations serving Rhode Island refugee producers so we can pay refugee farmers a fair price for herbs they grow for the Sanctuary, ensuring greater economic opportunity for newly arrived refugees.”*

—Eliza Sutton

# WALRUS AND CARPENTER OYSTERS

NARRAGANSETT

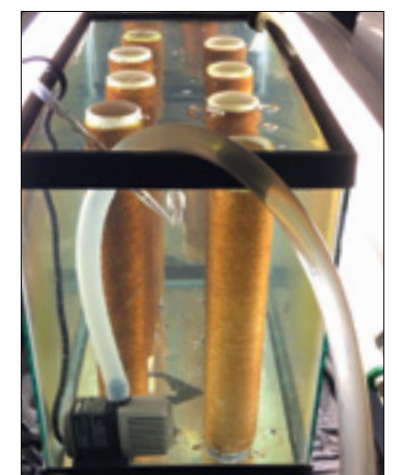
AWARDED: \$12,000

## EXPANDED SUGAR KELP PRODUCTION

Founded in 2009, Walrus and Carpenter Oysters is one of the largest producers and distributors of oysters in Rhode Island. In addition to farming two trademarked oyster brands, Walrus and Carpenter Oysters distributes oysters from partnering Rhode Island farmers), coordinates Rhode Island agro-tourism events, and grows sea vegetables. In 2016, Walrus and Carpenter harvested and sold their entire first crop of sugar kelp to local chefs. The edible seaweed market is growing and there is an emerging demand for domestically grown and locally sold edible seaweed like sugar kelp.

LASA funds help Walrus and Carpenter expand sugar kelp production and provide a network of growers with no-cost

seed lines for sugar kelp. This offers an opportunity to encourage more Rhode Island aquaculture farmers to start growing kelp with significantly reduced up front costs and technical requirements. Increasing the number of shellfish farmers producing sugar kelp and other edible seaweed in the state is important for the Rhode Island aquaculture industry because it reduces the risks associated with relying on only one crop. Sugar kelp farming also gives oyster farmers in Rhode Island the ability to work year-round – oysters are grown in the summer while sugar kelp grows in the winter.



*“Oysters make up 99% of aquaculture production in Rhode Island. We believe the market for farmed sea vegetables is growing and that local ocean farmers are in an excellent position to meet this demand. The growth of a sugar kelp industry in Rhode Island will create new jobs and increase economic activity in a way that does not deplete natural resources or pollute our environment.”*

—Jules Opton-Himmel



# WEST ELMWOOD HOUSING DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

PROVIDENCE

AWARDED: \$17,015

## SANKOFA COMMUNITY KITCHEN

Since 1970, the West Elmwood Housing Development Corporation (WEHDC) has worked with residents in the West End neighborhood of Providence to build houses and improve lives of those in the community. In 2011, the WEHDC's Board of Directors established the Sankofa Initiative to respond to economic and nutritional inequities in the West End's immigrant communities. Approximately fifty individuals now grow food in community gardens and a greenhouse at Sankofa Community Farm. The Sankofa World Market (held once a week during the summer months) provides a sales venue for local West End growers and is visited by an average of 185 shoppers every week.

LASA funding supports the WEHDC's development of a Sankofa Community Kitchen. This incubator kitchen

space provides equipment for the preparation of value-added products and extends the shelf life of produce from the farm and the community gardens. Sankofa growers often have excess produce that cannot be consumed or sold immediately. These items store well or might be ideal ingredients for value-added products created in the Community Kitchen. By preventing spoilage or waste of locally grown produce, there is an increase of healthy food available to residents of the West End. Growers can also access additional points of sale beyond the seasonal once-a-week Sankofa World Market. Finally, a Community Kitchen provides an additional space for nutritional education for residents.



*“Outfitting the kitchen allows growers to prepare and sell their goods in addition to extending the life of their produce. Extending the life of produce helps increase sales thereby increasing incomes and family financial security in the West End neighborhood.”*

—Emily Koo

# WESTBAY COMMUNITY ACTION

WARWICK

AWARDED: \$4,510

## COLD STORAGE FOR INCREASED PRODUCTION AND SUPPORT FOR FARM STAND

Westbay Community Action is a non-profit anti-poverty agency formed in 1966 as part of President Johnson's War on Poverty. Located in Warwick, the nonprofit provides adult education, heating assistance, and nutrition programs to 10,000 low-income residents of Kent County. One of Westbay Community Action's booming nutrition programs is the two-acre Westbay Farm. Westbay Farm grows 25,000 pounds of vegetables using organic methods. Seventy percent of the produce is distributed free to the 800 families that visit the food pantry each month. The remaining produce is sold at markets around the area, generating income to help support farm operations.

Westbay Farm has tripled local food production since 2010 and works directly as a member of the West Warwick Health Equity Zone to improve the health of local residents.

LASA funding provides three commercial refrigerators, expanding cold storage for crops after harvest days. Additional funding will support the start of a new and permanent weekday farm stand located at the food pantry. This new farm stand is open to pantry clients and accepts discount coupons and SNAP EBT (formerly known as Food Stamps), but also offers fresh, local produce to the general public by adding a second farmers market to the neighborhood.



*“As production has increased, Westbay Farm's lack of refrigeration has become a problem. Crops spoil when we deliver more produce than the pantry can distribute due to a lack of adequate refrigeration. Refrigeration would enable us to harvest appropriately sized zucchini and store it, rather than wait to harvest monstrous zucchini that few pantry clients want.”*

—Steven Stycos



# WILD HARMONY FARM

EXETER

AWARDED: \$11,600

## EGG WASHER FOR INCREASED EFFICIENCY

Ben Coerper and Rachel Slattery raise and sell cattle, pigs, chickens, turkeys, maple syrup, and eggs on the certified organic and GMO-free Wild Harmony Farm in Exeter. Wild Harmony is a polycultural farm that fosters healthy food, a healthy community, and a healthy environment. The Wild Harmony farmers are passionate about educating customers and the public about the many benefits of a robust local food system, and how the grass and pasture-raised farming techniques at Wild Harmony contribute to a more sustainable and healthy environment.

LASA funding is helping Wild Harmony efficiently expand their laying chicken flock through the purchase of an organically certified egg washing machine. Adding an egg

washer to the farm will significantly reduce labor, helping Wild Harmony meet the growing demand in Rhode Island for local, organic, pasture-raised eggs. By offering the egg washer to other nearby egg farmers to use at no cost, Wild Harmony Farm contributes to increasing the quantity of local, Rhode Island eggs that are available to consumers.

Wild Harmony eggs are sold to several local natural food stores and restaurants, but Coerper and Slattery have discovered that there is a seemingly limitless demand for their eggs. By increasing their efficiency, they can increase their volume, allowing the farm to lift current order limits they have in place with their customers.



*“With our current flock of 110 laying hens, it takes us about an hour every day to wash the eggs by hand. With this machine, we can expand our flock to 1,100 birds. More efficient egg production makes our eggs more profitable, helps increase sales of our other products and supports other local egg producers by allowing them to use our machine.”*

*—Ben Coerper*

Little State Flower Company, West Kingston





# LASA 2017 Applicants

The LASA Grants Advisory Committee reviewed an impressive pool of applicants, with 67 grant proposals submitted for the 2017 Grants Program. The Committee would like to recognize all applicants for their time, energy, and engagement in this process.

**Bruce Hamblin**  
Smithfield  
Equipment and improvements at Sweetland Farms

**Samantha Vallone & William Morin**  
Chepachet  
Lumber-milling equipment for on-site infrastructure development

**William Cregan DBA Seakist Oyster Farm**  
Jamestown  
Oyster seed and staff

**Briane Hallene**  
Kingston  
Greenhouse and raised beds

**Gilded Tomato Company**  
Rehoboth  
Greenhouse and indoor space for workshops/educational offerings

**Water Way Farm**  
Barrington  
Expansion of lavender and hives, equipment for product development

**Donald J. Kohlman**  
**DBA Goose Hollow Farm**  
Hope Valley  
Materials to develop aquaponics system, supplies for greenhouse infrastructure

**The Compass School**  
Kingston  
Develop an organic farm for school and community use

**Fresh Local 52 LLC**  
Providence  
Indoor vertical farming prototype development and staffing

**Michele Kozloski, Zephyr Farm**  
Cranston  
Goats and movable fence panels, supplies

**Partnership for Greater Providence**  
Providence  
Pop up space at Boston Public market including promotional materials and space rental

**Rhode Island Shellfisherman's Association**  
Coventry  
Airtime for TV commercial promoting local shellfish industry

**Justin Bristol**  
Wakefield  
Expand inventory and storage system, food safety technology and supplies, improve renewable tech for solar carts

**Rachel Playe**  
Providence  
Build a drying room for medicinal herbs

**Sidewalk Ends Farm**  
Providence  
Farm camp for young women

**Urban Greens Food Co-op**  
Providence  
Advertising campaign for locally sourced offerings

**New England Grass Fed, LLC**  
Hope Valley  
Infrastructure including corral and catch pen and other items for low-stress animal husbandry, fund to build a timber-framed farmstand

**The Worm Ladies of Charlestown, Inc**  
Charlestown  
Expansion of products including worm casings and compost tea

**Deep Roots Farm, LLC**  
Chepachet  
Outreach materials, technology to facilitate convenient payment

**Hillandale Food Hub**  
Westerly  
Delivery and procurement vehicle

**Burrillville High School**  
Harrisville  
Supplies for development of a school community garden

**Farm Fresh Rhode Island**  
Pawtucket  
Project to expand local food access in corner stores

**Rhode Island Organic Farmer Training Facility**  
Pawtucket  
Funds to support one apprentice in training program for the year

**Kelly Ramirez, Social Enterprise Greenhouse**  
Providence  
Staff time and supplies such as outreach materials for three projects including "Best for RI" campaign

**African Alliance of RI**  
Providence  
Support for the introduction and marketing of specialty food products, includes marketing materials and cost of production

**Christopher J. Pearson**  
Wakefield  
Equipment and materials including tunnel house frame, compost harvester, and weed barriers

**Fox Point Pickling Company**  
Pawtucket  
Equipment as part of larger project to build a new kitchen space

**Community Health Innovations of Rhode Island**  
Providence  
Develop garden "grow a share" program including a feasibility study and business plan

**Susan J. Boucher**  
Foster  
Materials for farm expansion including fence, beehives, hoop house, and other supplies

**AYERS Foundation**  
Westerly  
Purchase of utility trailer, collection bins, outreach materials and staff time

**Revive the Roots**  
Smithfield  
Project to become community-scale producer of niche fruits and berries

**Ester de Araujo Andrade Bishop**  
Tiverton  
Funds to build 10 double tractor/feeder setups

**Casey Ryan**  
Mapleville  
Purchase of walk-in refrigerator and materials for concrete foundation

**Nicholas J. Hunsaker & Molly M. Andrus**  
East Greenwich  
Equipment to process, melt, and bottle local honey

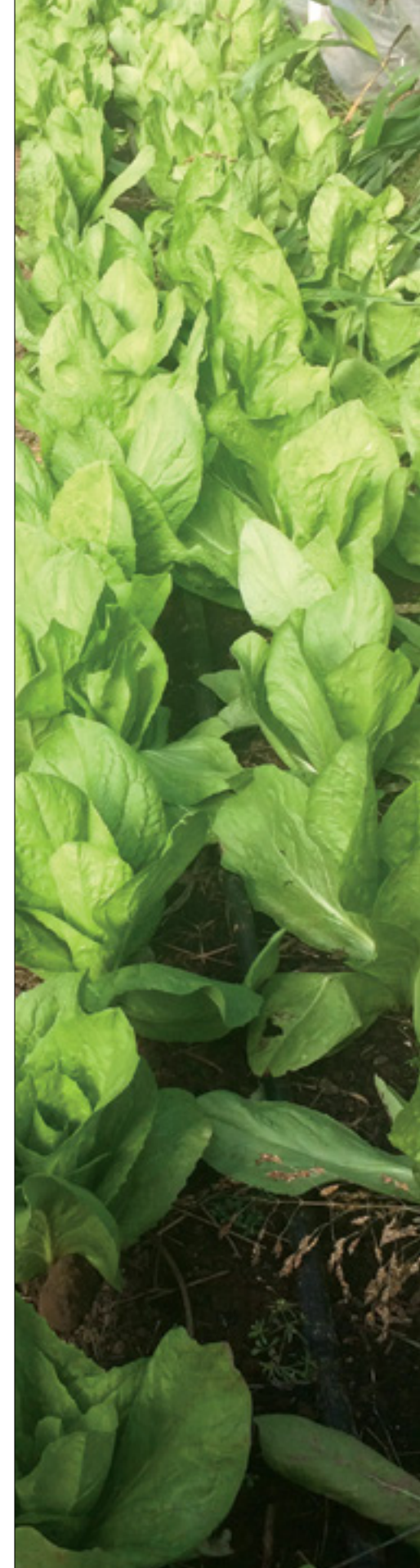
**Sweet Pea Farm**  
Cumberland  
Mobile walk-in cooler

**Behan Family Farms**  
Ashaway  
Collaboration with Ocean State Oyster Hatchery for new sales channel

**Michelle Cruz, Natural Creola**  
Providence  
Labeling equipment and materials for product processing, cookbook development, staff time

**Genesis Center**  
Providence  
Cold storage and improved produce wash stations and processing stations for Culinary Opportunity Center

**Prisere LLC**  
Warwick  
Supplies and labor to install rain gardens and fund contract with graphic designers



Little River Farm, Wakefield



The **Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management** is committed to preserving the quality of Rhode Island's environment, maintaining the health and safety of its residents, and protecting the natural systems upon which life depends. Together with many partners, we offer assistance to individuals, businesses and municipalities; conduct research, find solutions, and enforce laws created to protect the environment.

[www.dem.ri.gov](http://www.dem.ri.gov)

The **Rhode Island Food Policy Council** envisions a day when Rhode Island will be a national model because of the strength of its local food system and its success at achieving community food security and optimal public health. We envision a Rhode Island where safe, nutritious and culturally appropriate food is accessible and affordable in every Rhode Island community, and in which an increasing proportion of the state's food supply is raised, caught, and processed locally.

[www.rifoodcouncil.org](http://www.rifoodcouncil.org)