

ANNUAL REPORT

2023 / 2024

Local Roots Market & Cafe



**LOCALLY ROOTED,
REGIONALLY CONNECTED,
GLOBALLY INSPIRED**

BOARD MEMBERS

1.

Board Members

- Daniel Baker
- Seth Feikert
- Matthew Mullet
- Mark Pirogowicz
- Rachel Relle
- Zac Rheinberger
- Robb Stutzman
- Seth Walker

Thank You to Outgoing Board Members

- Matt Knight
- Beth Ladrach
- Morgan Lang
- Doug Streeval



BY THE NUMBERS

2.

Market Sales **\$2,006,354.33**

Returned To Producers **\$1,147,144.37**

Net Income **\$87,029.91**

Awarded in USDA Grant Funding **\$518,400**

Active Members **3159**

Active Producers **237**

Employees **25**

New Members **179**

Member Renewals **787**

Capital Campaign Update

Local Roots is thrilled to share an update on our building project, a significant step forward into the future of our cooperative market! As many of you know, we have been working to secure a new location that will better serve our growing membership and community.

Since our last annual meeting, we have successfully secured the location at 146 W. South St in Wooster, where Ride On Bicycles currently operates. Our future home has many notable attractions: the property is centrally located in downtown Wooster, directly across the street from our existing building. Additionally, the property was purchased by FoodSphere Inc, a local nonprofit, who then provided Local Roots with a secure long-term lease on the property. The space is also larger than our current facility, more modern in its design, and better suited long-term for our market's operations. However, significant renovations are needed to make the building fit for operations.

Over the past year, we've explored various design options to accommodate future growth while balancing the uncertainty driven by rising construction costs. Initially, we aimed for a fully-modernized renovation and expansion, including the addition of a new, 4,000 sq. ft. commercial kitchen to be added onto the current building. Unfortunately, this "dream scenario" exceeded our funding capacity, and we've since adjusted our design concept to fit a scaled-down version that maintains our quaint, rustic character while still enhancing our operational layout and creating a vibrant hub for local food. As it stands today, we hope to complete the next phase of our design this winter, and restart construction in summer of 2025!

To date, we have made significant progress in securing funding for the project. Thanks to the generous support of community members, local foundations, and grants – along with a manageable amount of debt – we have secured just over \$1.5M in support of our project! More financial support is still needed, however, and we ask you to please consider gifting at: www.foodspherewooster.org/capital-campaign.



FUNDRAISING GOALS

Dream Goal
For our future sustainability.
\$3,000,000

Target Goal
Minimum required for transition.
\$2,500,000

Total **\$1,582,289**

\$106,858
Market Income Committed

\$205,500
Donations Committed

\$299,712
Donations Secured - Individual & Foundation

\$451,819
Building Purchased & Mortgage Secured

\$518,400
Federal, State & Local Grants Secured

Remaining Funds Needed to Complete Our Target Goal: **\$917,711**



KITCHEN UPDATES

5.

Kitchen and Storage Rent Collected: **\$28,833**

Catering Sales: **\$8,104**

LR Branded Cafe Kitchen Cooler Sales: **\$102,332**

\$64,342 LAST YEAR

**+ \$37,990 FROM
LAST YEAR**

- Breakfast sales totaled over **\$15,000** this year.
- We added Woo Town Bagels and house-made gluten-free sourdough bagels as new options to our breakfast, along with our house made English muffins.
- At the end of first quarter we are on target for sales over **\$20,000** for next year.



Outlook

We are always looking for new chefs and kitchen renters. Interest has increased recently and we are looking forward to having more space for these renters. Our main focus for the upcoming year will be increasing our catering sales.



New This Year

- There are now **20** different renters of the kitchen space, **7** of which are new renters this year!
- We started serving **80** meals a day, **4** days a week to the Boys & Girls Club of Wooster this Fall. Due to the success of the partnership, the club has extended the project through the end of the school year and is looking to continue through next summer and school year!
- Last October the café hired Erin Goodwin, a third employee as part of the café staff. With Erin's help we have dramatically increased our café cooler sales!

Success Stories

Woo Town Bagels, who got their start at Local Roots, opened their brick and mortar location right here in Wooster!

Local Roots was awarded the Main Street America AMEX Grant for **\$10,000** and was able to purchase many new items for the kitchen, i.e. take out sales cooler, **2** food processors, an **8 Qt.** Kitchen Aid Mixer, vacuum sealer, toaster and much more!

EVENTS & HAPPENINGS

7.

Holiday Bazaar 2023

Last winter on Dec. 16th, Local Roots' Holiday Bazaar had the busiest day of sales EVER for our market. Thank you so much to our community for showing up in support of local makers, creators, farmers, bakers and small business entrepreneurs. Another big thank you to all the producers who came out for our "Meet the Makers" series. These vendors set up shop, shared samples and gave folks a behind-the-scenes view into what they do. Another big thank you to our live musicians for the day: Marcus Ladrach of Autumn Harvest Farm and the ensemble from the Wooster High School Choir. It was also a busy day for lunch with Oma Gourd and all our producers worked hard to stock up the store for a weekend of holiday preparations. As a co-op powered by both producer and consumer members, the strength of our community was evident as they came together and enjoyed connecting with one another.

Wayne Winter Hiking Challenge 2024

We want to extend a big thank you to all those who participated in our 2024 Wayne Winter Hiking Challenge! We are excited to share we had 165 participants this year! That's a lot of miles logged on the trail. We heard from many of the participants about their favorite parks, new places they discovered, and familiar paths enjoyed. We know getting into the great outdoors for a hike can be more challenging in the colder months, but there is still so much beauty to be found.

Drive Electric Earth Day (DEED) 2024

We enjoyed showcasing a variety of electric vehicles and offering ride-alongs and test drives, while learning about new electric technologies.

This year's event featured:

- 55 vehicles (a 37% increase from last year!)
- 2 Cybertrucks, 2 Rivian trucks, and a Rivian SUV
- Electric motorcycles, lawn equipment, and an electric fire inspector truck
- Schaeffler's converted pickup truck, which logged 100,000 miles as a gas vehicle and now runs as an EV.

June Member Appreciation Month & Annual Member Party 2024

Every summer Local Roots takes the month of June to celebrate our Co-Op members. During this time we offer discounts on memberships, bonus loyalty dollars and 'Meet the Makers' series on Saturdays where visitors can meet with our producers. Our Member Appreciation Party capped off the month where we were open late and hosted live music from Upstream Drifters. Additionally, Andio Sisters grilled in the parking lot, serving up some delicious summertime fare. Our neighbor, Spoon Bar & Deli, also had a speciality DORA drink available to customers where they donated a portion of the sales to our Capital Campaign.



EVENTS & HAPPENINGS

8.

Field to Fork Capital Campaign Fundraising Dinner 2024

We made some very special memories at our Field to Fork Fundraiser Dinner this past June held at Summerhill Farm. Not only did we raise funds for our Campaign for a New Building to Call Home, but we were also able to highlight local ingredients grown and raised in the beautiful hills we enjoyed the view of while we dined. Another big thank you to our local chefs who worked tirelessly to take these ingredients and craft them into such a special meal; Andio Sisters, Bala Fodor, Betsy's Bakeshop, Local Roots Kitchen, Marris Café, Ol' Dirty Sheets, The Pierogi People and [VEGE]table. Another thank you to Summerhill Farm for sharing their venue with us and making this event so beautiful, stunning, and absolutely memorable. And thank you to Millbrook Meadow Farm for the flowers, which added to the already stunning beauty of the venue.



EVENTS & HAPPENINGS

9.

Wayne Center for the Arts Fall Fest & College of Wooster Faculty and Staff Benefits Fair 2024

Local Roots recently participated at the WCA Fall Fest where we sold delicious fall treats made by Local Roots' Kitchen. We talked to attendees about our membership program and enjoyed connecting with the local arts community. We were also invited back to the College of Wooster's Staff Benefits Fair, where we were able to engage folks about the benefits Local Roots offers to the community and contribute to a raffle basket with items that promote relaxation. This collaborative event was yet another great opportunity for us to do what we love most and engage with our community in a healthy and positive way!

The Staples Food Subscription 2024

Earlier this year, we launched a new food subscription, called The Staples. Each week, participants receive a curated selection of essential grocery items, all in alignment with the Local Roots mission.

- One dozen pasture raised local eggs.
- Local Greens (varieties may include spinach, kale, and different lettuces).
- One loaf of freshly baked bread (rotating varieties/ Gluten-Free option available).
- A surprise item: frozen fruit, veggie or canned item (during winter), or fresh produce item (other seasons).

This is a rolling subscription so folks can sign up anytime and cancel anytime. It is \$25 for the regular option and \$33 for the gluten-free option.



Seasonal Eats CSF Food Subscription 2024

The Seasonal Eats CSF (Community Supported Foods) provided our subscribers with local, seasonal foods, recipes, first access to seasonal favorites, and more! Subscribers enjoyed a bountiful array of fresh, locally farmed produce, artisanal value-added foods, premium pastured/grass-fed meats, and culinary delights. The contents of a share varied biweekly depending on what was seasonally available within our local network. We offered an Omnivore and a Vegetarian option. The CSF ran from May 17-August 23 and cost was \$600 for 8 total shares. Pro-rated options were available.





Holiday Gift Boxes & Charcuterie Kits

This holiday season, we're excited to offer a selection of Holiday Gift Boxes, available through the end of the year. Each box contains specialty food items crafted by local food entrepreneurs, with options for vegan and gluten-free selections. Our market is also excited to offer an array of items perfect for creating a festive charcuterie spread. From specialty cheeses and meats to a variety of accompaniments, you'll find everything you need to build an impressive charcuterie board for your gatherings. Enjoy locally-made selections and discover new flavors that will make your holiday entertaining special.

Whether it's a thoughtful gift for employees, friends, or family, our hand-curated specialty food boxes make a perfect way to show your appreciation—many items are locally made!

Upcoming Events:

- **November 22 - Main Street Wooster's Window Wonderland** We are very excited to collaborate with Wooster City Schools art teachers and students in grades K-7 for this year's window designs. The teachers will be bringing their students on a field trip to Local Roots to paint our windows.
- **November 30 - Small Business Saturday** We will feature our 'Meet the Makers' sessions where customers can have a meet and greet with some of our producers.
- **December 21 - Holiday Bazaar** We are excited to share that this year's Holiday Bazaar will be our biggest one yet! To celebrate our upcoming expansion to the building across the street, the Bazaar festivities will be growing as well and expanding into the new space! We will have room for even more vendors and activities. Additionally, this will give attendees a chance to peek into where we will be moving to. Activities will take place both in our main market and in the new space next to Ride On Bicycle Shop across the street.

Looking Ahead to 2025 The Wayne Winter Hiking Challenge returns this January, and we're excited to introduce a new trail from the Killbuck Watershed Land Trust (KWLT). We also look forward to hosting a Q&A session at the Library with Tate Emerson in February, the director of KWLT, to connect KWLT with area farmers and educate the community about the potential benefits of preserving our precious farmland for the future. Additionally, our Staples and CSF food subscriptions will continue, offering customers a curated selection of local produce, meat, baked goods and pantry items.



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