



Athens Land Trust

Land for Conservation & Community

685 N. Pope Street • Athens, Georgia 30601

www.athenslandtrust.org

706.613.0122

Newsletter

Spring 2016 • Volume 19 • Issue 1

Congratulations to Barbara and Aubrey!



Heather Benham (l) and ALT Board Vice President, Kirrena Gallagher (r), pictured with new homeowners Barbara Fortson and Aubrey Underwood

After almost five years of planning and hard work, it is an honor to announce our newest homeowners, Barbara Fortson and Aubrey Underwood. Barbara and Aubrey first entered into Athens Land Trust's affordable housing program in 2011 as lease-purchasers and have worked tirelessly towards the goal of homeownership ever since.

"Athens Land Trust has been wonderful to us and their staff would be willing to do anything to help people," says Barbara. "They're doing a good job helping people get homes and should keep up the good work!"

ALT would like to give a special thanks to Charlie Fleming, Mortgage Lender at First American Bank and Trust. Charlie always puts in the extra effort with Athens Land Trust homeowners, making sure they get the best loan product and have a thorough understanding of the process. Charlie also regularly volunteers at ALT's Homebuyer Education Workshops, teaching prospective homebuyers throughout Northeast Georgia about the mortgage loan process. First American Bank and Trust is one of ALT's lender partners providing mortgages for the Affordable Housing Program.



Barbara and Aubrey's former home



Barbara and Aubrey's new home

ALT 2015 Highlights

Because of your support, ALT is able to make continued progress toward protecting our environment, providing permanently affordable housing, and increasing agriculture-based economic opportunities and access to healthy food. Here are some of the positive ways we impacted the communities we serve in 2015:

- \$112,885: Annual tax revenue generated by properties owned or developed by ALT
- 117 clients served by our housing counseling and homebuyer education classes
- 273 acres protected in 4 counties including 49 acres of farmland and 25 acres of public greenspace
- 45 micro-entrepreneur opportunities started or supported and 15 business plans prepared
- 2,500 volunteer hours logged by 420 garden volunteers
- 1 new market started (St. Mary's Produce Stand) and expansion of 3 markets
- 48% increase in sales at our West Broad Farmers Market and 50% increase in attendance
- \$20,000+ in SNAP/WIC dollars spent at our markets
- More than 2,200 Clarke County students impacted by our Community Agriculture Program including the Young Urban Farmers Program, FoodCorps activities and farm field trips.

ALT NRCS Partnership Welcomes Deborah Sheppard

Deborah Sheppard joined ALT as our Farmland Protection Specialist in November 2015. In this role, she helps educate farming communities about the importance of farmland protection as a means of preserving livelihoods and local economies. By building partnerships with farmers, representatives of local governments, and non-profit allies, Deborah is working towards growing the conservation program's collaboration with NRCS by expanding the ACEP-ALE program in Georgia. Deb holds a BS in Horticulture from UGA and an MS in Public and Urban Affairs from Georgia State University. As a Georgia native whose career includes founding and directing non-profit organizations dedicated to water quality protection, clean energy policy and implementation, and environmental education, she brings over 30 years of statewide conservation advocacy experience and resources to ALT's land conservation program.



Deborah Sheppard

Athens Land Trust

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Williams Farm Manager, Ryan Vaughan
Project Oversight, George Wright

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Athens, Georgia 30601-2331
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www.athenslandtrust.org

Our Board meets on the third
Monday of each month at 5:30 PM in our office;
the meetings are open to the public.

www.facebook.com/athenslandtrust

Upcoming Events and Announcements

Save the Dates!

West Broad Farmers Market
Saturdays, April 30th - December 10th
New hours: 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

**Second Saturday Community
Workdays at Williams Farm**
May 14th, June 11th, July 9th, Aug. 13th,
& Sept. 10th from 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

Fish Fry at West Broad
May 14th from 11 a.m.-1 p.m.
\$8/ticket or \$15/two tickets
Contact or come by the ALT office for tickets.

St. Mary's Produce Stand
Wednesdays through December
11 a.m.-2 p.m. in St. Mary's Atrium
Featuring produce and value-added items
from our network of growers and producers.
Open to the public!

MLK Day of Service and Celebration 2016

Thank you to the more than 100 community members who helped to make this year's Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service a success at West Broad! Despite the chilly weather, volunteers arrived at 9 a.m. eager to beautify and prep the garden for spring, and to paint a colorful mural to draw attention to the site. Thanks to these celebration participants: Blacknerdninja, CCHS JROTC, Kenya Bailey, Repunza Brown, William Imes, Akeem Martin, Jay Morris, ALT's Young Urban Farmers, and WiseXpressions Dance Studio. Thanks also to the wonderful food vendors: Abraham's Parlor, Ms. Ethel Collins, and Mrs. Willa Fambrough of icook_uforyou.



ALT Multi-Farm CSA

Session 1: May 6th - July 29th
Session 2: Sept. 2nd - Nov. 23rd
Small shares will have 5-6 items/week and cost \$245/session. Large shares will have 8-10 items/week and cost \$400/session.
See page 5 to learn more.

Deadline to sign up is May 1st!

2016 Greenfest Award Winners

Congratulations to this year's ALT
award recipients:
Donor of the Year - Darren Ash
Easement Donor of the Year -
Albert & Dorothy Maraziti
Community Garden of the Year -
Reverend Bascoe Jackson Community
Garden at Hill Chapel Baptist Church
Volunteers of the Year - The Bray Family

*Athens Land Trust is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization whose
mission is to conserve, empower and sustain communities through
responsible and visionary land use.*



Athens Land Trust

Longtime ALT Members Establish YUF Scholarship

By now, most of us have heard of, and possibly have, a “bucket list” - a list of things we haven’t done but aspire to do before dying. Generally, these revolve around exotic travel destinations or thrilling experiences, however, one of Dan Everett and Kate Blane’s bucket list items is strictly about giving back: They want to help bring a local family out of poverty. Beginning this year, Dan and Kate will begin a 4-year commitment of \$2,500/year to help with college expenses for members of ALT’s Young Urban Farmers (YUF) Program. As educators themselves, Dan and Kate know the value of higher learning and the impact education has on career options. While many of the YUF students qualify for college scholarships and financial aid, there are so many other costs associated with attending school, from books and technology needs to transportation. “We want to help a student who’s been admitted to college to be able to remain in college without struggling financially,” says Blane, “We see this as ‘seed money,’” adds Everett. The primary goals of the Young Urban Farmers Program are leadership development, instilling confidence, and forming positive relationships. Program Coordinator, Seth Nivens, says, “It is our larger hope that the program will link students to positive role models and mentors in the community who will support and strengthen the students’ chances for success. The establishment of this scholarship fund is a huge step in the direction of realizing that hope.”



*Dan Everett and
Kate Blane*

Success Story: Johnny’s Mushrooms

Deijhon Yearby was born and raised in Athens and has always loved to work outdoors, from cutting grass to digging holes - anything that allowed him to work in nature. In high school, Deijhon spent many of his afternoons working in the greenhouse during his agriscience class, where he later learned about the Young Urban Farmers (YUF) Program. He applied and loved the program so much that he wanted to continue to be a part of it after graduation, so became an apprentice at ALT’s Williams Farm and is now a mentor for the YUF program. He’s also a student at the University of North Georgia, working on a degree in agriculture and business.

John Anderson was born in Central Florida where he worked in his home garden alongside his seven siblings. He recalls his time in the garden as being the best part of his days. John, now a junior at Clarke Central High School, moved to Athens four years ago and has been a member of the YUF for over a year. He says, “When I started the YUF program, I saw agriculture almost as an obscure thing, even though I had worked so closely with it in the past, I saw it as something almost independent of me. After working for over a year as a YUF, I have come to realize how much agriculture has an effect on me and how I can affect people and communities around the world through agriculture. I now see the importance of knowing how my decisions at the supermarket can impact the environment, other people, and farmers around the world. The YUF program has made me passionate about agriculture and every individual’s part in it, so much so that I have spoken publicly on multiple occasions about it and how it has impacted my decisions and the conversations I have with friends and family.”



Entrepreneurs John Anderson and Deijhon Yearby



Mushroom logs on display

Johnny’s Mushroom Logs was formed in 2014 by Deijhon and John as part of the YUF Program’s business development project. Deijhon says, “When we learned how long it takes mushrooms to grow, we decided to sell the entire log instead of just the mushrooms so people could see how cool it is to grow their own. The process is amazing – that these little spores are able to grow mushrooms and will keep growing for years. They were a big hit at the West Broad Farmer’s Market, so we decided we’d turn it into a real business. The logs we use come from trees that were falling on power lines and the road and were just in the way. But now we give them a purpose. We plan to branch out this year and sell mushrooms, t-shirts, and Johnny’s Mushrooms necklaces in addition to our mushroom logs.”

Check out Johnny’s Mushrooms at the West Broad Farmers Market or find them on Facebook at Johnny’s Mushroom Logs, Inc.

Athens Land Trust

Georgia Initiative for Community Housing Conference



ACC Housing and Community Development Director, Rob Trevena (l) with Heather Benham and ACC District 1 Commissioner, Sharyn Dickerson (r)

In February, Heather Benham and David Ogunsanya represented ALT in Dublin, Georgia at the Georgia Institute for Community Housing (GIHCC) Retreat. Members of Athens-Clarke County's housing team, including ACC Commissioners, ALT's partners Habitat for Humanity and Athens Housing Authority, School Board Members, and many others spent two days focusing on the housing needs of our community. The initiative is a three-year commitment that will provide a framework for our community to address housing shortages in Athens.

Cottages at Cannontown Phase 3

Construction on Phase 3 of the Cottages at Cannontown began with the new year and will consist of three new EarthCraft homes at 130, 140, and 150 Cannon Drive. Once Phase 3 is complete, there will be a total of nine homes in Athens Land Trust's North Avenue subdivision. When fully developed, there will be 15 new, permanently affordable homes. All of the new homes have



130 Cannon Drive

three bedrooms and two bathrooms with double vanity sinks, as well as vaulted ceilings which let in lots of natural light. The first six Cannontown homes are all occupied by first-time homeowners or lease-purchasers and ALT is currently in the process of working with families interested in the three homes under construction.

We would like to thank **Josh Koons of Koons Environmental Design, Inc.**, for his generous work on this project.



150 Cannon Drive

Funding made available for these affordable housing projects by Athens-Clarke County Department of Housing and Community Development HOME and CDBG Programs of the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County, an Equal Opportunity Employer.



ALT Presented 2016 Paul Cassilly Green Building Award

ALT received recognition for outstanding commitment to green building at the 2016 GreenFest Awards Ceremony Friday, April 15th. The award was presented by the Athens branch of the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) and bears the name of former UGA Campus Architect and ALT supporter, Paul Cassilly, who passed away in 2014. ALT is honored to have been selected for this distinguished award!

Thank You, Mary!

ALT extends many thanks to long-time Housing Counselor, Mary O'Toole, who has recently retired. Mary joined the Athens Land Trust team in 2010, and was a great asset from the beginning. In her almost 6-year tenure, Mary has provided group homebuyer education, individual pre-purchase counseling, foreclosure prevention counseling and many other services to hundreds of families throughout Northeast Georgia. Mary has a long history of helping families, serving as a social worker for individuals with HIV/AIDS and serving on the Homeless and Poverty Coalition before coming to ALT.

We wish Mary the best in her retirement and thank her for all that she has done for ALT!



Mary O'Toole enjoying her retirement celebration

housing  Wells Fargo
foundation

Athens Land Trust

AmeriCorps VISTA Service Members Effect Positive Change for ALT, Our Community

Since 2014, ALT has benefitted from the AmeriCorps VISTA Program - a national service program designed to fight poverty. VISTA members are passionate and committed to their mission to bring communities out of poverty and make year-long, full-time commitments to serve at a nonprofit organization or public agency to build organizational, administrative, and financial capacity. To date, ALT's VISTAs have generated more than \$196,000 in cash and in-kind resources for our organization. Former VISTA Volunteer Coordinator, **Sara Fleetwood**, established a sustainable volunteer program, recording over 2,800 hours of service and recruiting 580 volunteers. Another former VISTA, **Paris Harper**, improved our website and expanded our outreach efforts. **Jessica Brooks**, who began her service in November, is working to raise awareness of our



VISTA Service Member, Jessica Brooks, being sworn in by State Program Officer, Robert O'Harra

farmers market and the SNAP program. Last month, we welcomed **Dave Chamberlin** as our VISTA Volunteer & Community Engagement Coordinator. ALT was especially fortunate to re-enroll VISTA Development Assistant, **Erin O'Brien**, for an additional 4 1/2 months of service before leaving to have a baby this April. In her time with us, Erin secured \$135,526 in grant funding and facilitated numerous fundraising campaigns and events. We are so grateful for all of our VISTAs and for the AmeriCorps program!

ALT Provides New Markets for Local Farmers

Building on momentum from 2015, our network of local farmers worked hard this winter to plan for another, longer season of the St. Mary's produce stand, as well as a multi-farm community-supported agriculture (CSA) program. Working with ALT's Williams Farm Manager, Ryan Vaughan, this group of four other Certified Naturally Grown farms developed a detailed production schedule for the 2016 growing season which will ensure abundance and variety for CSA members and produce stand shoppers. By working as a collective, these farms can expand and grow in ways that otherwise wouldn't be possible. Lydia Engelsen of Sungate Farm says, "This farmer network is a great resource for new farmers like us. It has offered guidance and support so that we can access new markets for our products. We now have a place where other farmers like us can effectively work together to promote local agriculture." The St. Mary's produce stand will commence again on Wednesday, April 27th from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. and will operate weekly through December. The multi-farm CSA begins on May 6th (see page 2 for details).

Conservation Program Preserves a "Little Piece of Heaven"

When Albert Maraziti III first moved to his Forsyth County farm 25 years ago, there were barely even stoplights between him and Atlanta. Since then, development has been steadily spreading northward from the city, and what was once a rural homestead is now part of a shrinking island of open space in a sea of highways, strip malls, and subdivisions. Throughout that interval, Albert's farm has been a respite from his work as a researcher, a place where he raised goats and worked the fields on his tractor, often inviting his colleagues' kids out to visit and enjoy the animals. Deteriorating health has prevented Albert from being active on the farm in recent years, and the goat herd has dwindled to one lone member, Baba, and a protective llama, Mulan. His love for the land, however, has not diminished. Albert had been planning to protect his property, which, in addition to the pastures includes a natural forest area full of towering tulip poplars, oaks, ferns and streams, for 10 years when he called Athens Land Trust this past fall. With stories of his adventures on the farm and across the country, Albert's passion for life and his "little piece of heaven" shone through. He told us, "I would love to have this be my legacy": A permanently protected farm that can never be developed. It turned out that the spirit of preservation runs in the family as Albert's mother, Dorothy Maraziti, decided that she also wanted to protect a parcel of forestland she owned on the shores of Lake Lanier. With youth and vigor that would be the envy of someone 20 years her junior, Dorothy is equally dedicated to the farm, walking daily to the pasture to check on Baba and Mulan. On December 21st, Albert and Dorothy signed the Deeds of Conservation Easement that would permanently protect both their properties. Athens Land Trust is so grateful for the opportunity to get to know the amazing Maraziti family, and to partner with them in preserving their land. Congratulations, Albert and Dorothy!



Stand of oaks and tulip poplars on Maraziti Farm

Athens Land Trust

5th Annual Upcountry Oyster Roast

On Sunday, March 20th, ALT hosted the 5th Annual Upcountry Oyster Roast in Good Hope to recognize the generous landowners who have made the decision to protect their properties for future generations, and to celebrate the 13,778 acres now protected by ALT. Guests enjoyed a crisp afternoon at the Portico, situated on Lee Moody's land along the Apalachee River. Charlie Phillips of Sapelo Sea Farms provided the oysters and clams and the Dixieland Five provided lively music. A few guests took kayaks out on the water and several enjoyed walking the path from the Portico to the river. Thanks to all attendees and to our generous sponsors (listed at right), this was our best Oyster Roast yet!



Buddy & Lucy Allen
Charles Apostolik
Darren & Kathryn Ash
Greg Bayard & Maggie Kiley
Dennis Creech & Callie Pendergrast
Liese & Dan DerVartanian
Epting Events
Willa Fambrough
Dick & Susan Field
Jack Frierson Law
Elizabeth Little
Lori Bork Newcomer & Quint Newcomer
Parker Property & Appraisals
Robby & Laura Roberts
Dan Lorentz & Lori Ringhand
Walter & Dorothy O'Niell
William Parker
Gordhan & Jinx Patel
Alex & Janet Patterson
Madeline & Phil VanDyck

ALT Interns and Volunteers

We are grateful to have a wonderful group of interns and volunteers contributing to our work, including a number of UGA MSW and law students:

The Bray Family, Williams Farm Volunteers
Emily Clutter, Housing Intern
Avery Coleman, West Broad Farmers Market
Keeley Duffey, Local Food Promotion Intern
Collette Fahey, Conservation Intern
Maddie Goossens, Housing Intern
Ann Hunter, Farmer Outreach Intern
Elizabeth Keith, Williams Farm Apprentice
Elliot Kim, Legal Intern
Cheyenne Lee, West Broad Garden Intern
JoLynn McAfee, Community Agriculture Intern
Matt McClintock, Conservation Intern
Chelsea McMahan, West Broad Garden Intern
Jasmine Parks, YUF Program Intern
Alex Perez, Legal Intern
Jen Reid, West Broad Farmers Market Intern
Halle Salisbury, West Broad Garden Intern
Emily Shaw, Williams Farm Apprentice
Brittney Smith, Housing Intern
Tara Watkins, Williams Farm Apprentice
Deana Zeigler, West Broad Garden Intern

Harvest Moon 2015

The 8th Annual Harvest Moon Dinner to benefit the Athens Land Trust was held on October 24th on picturesque property owned by ALT Board member, Charley Hill and his wife, Julie. Mimi Maumus of home.made catering prepared an incredible

meal featuring produce grown on ALT's two farms. Guests also enjoyed herb-infused cocktails created by Cherokee Moon Mixology. A big thank you to Tony Eubanks and Lara Mathes for their help in organizing this event, as well as to these event sponsors: **Athens Regional Medical Center, Always Always Flowers, Aurum Studios, Bel-Jean Copy/Print, Supporters of Boulevard Woods, Carson Advisory, Epting Events, Lightmark Media, Supporters of Public Education Matters - Georgia, Terrapin Beer Co., and WUGA.** Thanks to the generosity of the event sponsors and attendees, we were able to raise \$11,000 for ALT! We hope to see everyone again at the 2016 Harvest Moon Dinner, set for September 17th.



Athens Land Trust

Thank you to our partners, members and donors since October 2015!

Supporting Foundations & Partners

Athens-Clarke County
Athens Area Community Foundation
Athens First Bank and Trust
Athens Housing Authority
Athens Luncheon Optimist Club
Bank of America
Clarke County School District
Clarke County Cooperative Extension
CSX Beyond Our Rails
East Georgia Cancer Coalition
Edna Sussman Bailey Foundation
Enterprise Community Partners
First American Bank and Trust
Fortson, Bentley and Griffin
Georgia Department of Community Affairs
Harrison Foundation
Keep Athens-Clarke County Beautiful
Kitchen Gardeners International
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Oconee State Bank
Plum Creek
Riverview Foundation
Seeds of Change
Southface Energy Institute
St. Mary's Hospital
Sutherland
Terrell Family Foundation
Turner Family Foundation
University of Georgia
US Department of Agriculture
Wells Fargo Housing Foundation
Wholesome Wave Georgia



Heather Benham pictured with Jim Rundorff of Plum Creek, holding a check for \$1,500 which will go toward fencing at Williams Farm

Steward

Anonymous
Elena Brown & Jared Harper
Jared Bybee & Mehrsa Baradaran
Charley & Julie Hill
Dan Lorentz & Lori Ringhand

Forest

Anonymous
Dr. & Mrs. J. Derrell Clark
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Ed & Barbara Taylor
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GFWC Four Corners Woman's Club
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Gloria Bizzle
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Jerry & Kat Daniel
Robert & Anne Moser
Melinda Muhammad
Helen Plymale
Brant & Melissa Rackley
Andrew Saunders
Usha Rodrigues
Jesse Stokely
Donna Thurman

In Honor of Nancy Stangle

Elena Brown & Jared Harper
Rose & Dahlia Garden Club

In Memory of Dev Weeks

Ann & Delmer Dunn

West Broad Farmers Market Sponsors

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ACC Employees and Retirees who gave through the 2015 Charity Drive
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The Fresh Market
Georgia Cycle Sport
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Chris McDowell and the UGA
Material Reuse Program
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UGA and Federal employees through Georgia Shares

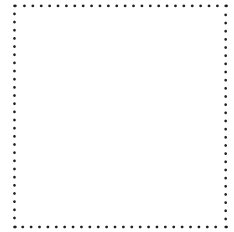
We are privileged to be a member of Georgia Shares, Inc., as well as a host site for AmeriCorps VISTA and FoodCorps Service Members.





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Please Join the Athens Land Trust

**Protected Land + Affordable Housing + Community Gardens =
Improved, Sustained Quality of Life**

Check One of the Following Levels:

- Steward, \$2,500+ Name _____ New Renewal
- Forest, \$1000 + Address _____
- Grove, \$500 + Phone #(s) _____
- Oak, \$250 + E-mail _____
- Seedling, \$100 + Would you like to join our listserv? Yes No
- Family, \$50 + Would you like to volunteer? Skills or Interests _____
- Individual, \$10 + _____

Please make checks payable to Athens Land Trust. ALT is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit corporation.
All donations are tax-deductible, as provided by law.

Other Ways to Join or Donate:

Visit www.athenslandtrust.org and click either the Join Us or Donate link.
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