



FAIRFAX  
**Food Council**  
*healthy • accessible • affordable*

## COMMUNITY FOOD NEWS

*The latest news and updates from the Fairfax Food Council*

### IMPORTANT DATES

#### **URBAN AG MEETINGS**

March 15 | 10:00 – 11:30 am  
April 19 | 10:00 – 11:30 am  
May 17 | 10:00 – 11:30 am  
June 21 | 10:00 – 11:30 am

#### **FOOD ACCESS & LITERACY MEETINGS**

March 31 | 10:30 – 11:30 am  
April 28 | 10:30 – 11:30 am  
May 26 | 10:30 – 11:30 am  
June 30 | 10:30 – 11:30 am

#### **FFC STEERING COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

April 22 | 10:00 am – 12:00 pm

**Want to attend?** Both the Urban Agriculture and Food Access & Literacy Work Group meetings are open to the public and anyone interested in getting more engaged is welcome to attend.

Please email [FairfaxFoodCouncil@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:FairfaxFoodCouncil@fairfaxcounty.gov) for information about the location and/or how to 'attend' a meeting.

### Spring News

*by Diane Charles, Project Manager, Fairfax Food Council*

Spring is often a long-awaited and welcome time of year. Really, 2021 is no different. As the COVID-19 vaccine rolls out and into arms, we continue to navigate safely in our communities and the Fairfax Food Council continues to engage with partners in many ways. As you will see in this newsletter, the Urban Ag Work Group of the Food Council has joined partners to provide workshops on various aspects of gardening at home and throughout the community. Numerous members of the Food Access & Literacy Work Group are actively seeking ways to ensure fresh food is accessible to all - and continually seeking ways to outreach to the entire community, especially any underserved communities in Fairfax County.

The Fairfax Food Council is using the springtime to embark on developing its own strategic plan to help inform and guide its work in the coming years. The Fairfax Food Council's Steering Committee will participate in this effort to explore, discern and map out the future of the Food Council. However, equally important will be sought-out input from stakeholders and community members to assist in the process. We look forward to securing feedback from throughout the community on this critical project.

Although fully planned, 2020 did not allow for implementation of the Food Council's Food Equity Summit that was scheduled for last May.

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Efforts are currently underway to put together a virtual summit for this June. We think the summit will enable all of us to do vital reflection on what transpired in the food access arena during the pandemic, and more importantly, what weaknesses in our food system were highlighted. It will provide the opportunity for us to explore together what the road ahead looks like, including building upon innovative steps that were taken this past year. Be on the lookout for more information – and a soon-to-be-announced save the date for June.

Please feel free to join our monthly Urban Agriculture Work Group or our Food Access & Literacy Work Group meetings – noted in this Community Food News. If you are not already on their email lists, just send a note to [FairfaxFoodCouncil@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:FairfaxFoodCouncil@fairfaxcounty.gov) to be added to the list or receive the zoom link for a specific meeting.

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## FOOD COUNCIL HAPPENINGS

### Productive School Gardens

The Food Council's Urban Agriculture Work Group continued its pilot partnership with Fairfax County Public Schools to help boost the productivity of school learning gardens. The partnership is expanding this month when the newest partner, Woodson High School, joins the effort. This is one of the Food Council's projects made possible through a grant from the Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth. Woodson Science Department Chair Lauren Kinne has already tapped three students to spearhead the project, which will get an assist from a master gardener. Meanwhile, our other partners – Lynbrook, Stratford Landing and Belvedere elementary schools – are preparing their spring gardens with support from master gardeners and Urban Ag Work Group members.

### A Focus on Community Gardens

An Urban Ag subgroup has launched the *Better Together Gardens Project* to promote and launch community gardens in the Food Council's jurisdiction. In addition to a sustained marketing campaign to educate the general public about how and why to start a community garden, the subgroup also will be identifying potential sites and partners to start gardens in food-insecure parts of the county. To that end, the Urban Ag Work Group teamed with the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District, Virginia Cooperative Extension and Arcadia to submit a funding proposal for at least 8 new gardens. Fingers crossed!



## FOOD COUNCIL EVENTS

### How to Start a Veggie Garden

**March 16, 2021 | 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm | Zoom** (With extended Q & A following the presentations)

Are you thinking about growing some of your own food this year? Join two local food growing experts on zoom. Fairfax Permaculture Farmer Cory Suter will kick off this event by illustrating several techniques to create beautiful and productive garden beds and share some of his experience building living soil using local resources. Adria Bordas, Virginia Cooperative Extension Agent, will share foundational knowledge about selecting a site, starting seeds, managing pests, and caring for plants. Both Adria and Cory look forward to answering your gardening questions.

[To register in advance for this meeting, click here.](#) After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

### Cómo iniciar tu huerta de vegetales

**Marzo 17 de 2021 | 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm | Zoom**

¿Estás pensando en cultivar tu propia comida este año? Te invitamos a un curso virtual via ZOOM para aprender conocimientos fundamentales cómo: seleccionar un sitio para plantar, sembrar semillas, manejo plagas y cuidado de las plantas. Juan Pablo Echeverría, de Arcadia Centro de Agricultura Sostenible mostrará varias técnicas para crear jardines hermosos y productivos y compartirá algo de su experiencia en la construcción de suelos vivos y el cultivo de alimentos utilizando recursos locales. Este evento será completamente en español.

Regístrese con anticipación para esta reunión:

[https://virginiatech.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUuceGoqzIuHN3s\\_ESfSo2LZClnGEo2Kygf](https://virginiatech.zoom.us/join/https://virginiatech.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUuceGoqzIuHN3s_ESfSo2LZClnGEo2Kygf)

Después de registrarse, recibirá un correo electrónico de confirmación con información sobre cómo unirse a la reunión. Para más información: [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/food-council/fairfaxfoodcouncil@fairfaxcounty.gov](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/food-council/fairfaxfoodcouncil@fairfaxcounty.gov). El Fairfax Food Council es una coalición de ciudadanos, organizaciones sin fines de lucro, socios religiosos, agencias del condado y empresas que abogan y promueven cambios en el sistema alimentario y las políticas que benefician a las comunidades de Fairfax, especialmente a las comunidades desatendidas.

### Raised-Bed Garden Building Volunteer Work Party: Gum Springs Community Center

**March 20, 2021 | Two Shifts: 9:30 am - 11:00 am & 11:00 am - 12:30 pm**

Please RSVP to [fairfaxfoodcouncil@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:fairfaxfoodcouncil@fairfaxcounty.gov) to be added to the participation list. We will send you a confirmation with safety details and what to bring.

Join us for a limited opportunity to learn how to build raised garden beds. You will be volunteering at Gum Springs Community Center's new community garden. Join experienced gardeners, Cory Suter and Juan Pablo as they work with members of Gum Springs Community Center to build a brand-new community garden. You will get a great workout and learn some new skills. Dress in your garden clothes and get ready to learn the down and dirty of raised bed building, push a wheelbarrow or carry heavy lumber. Bring your own gloves and a face mask, social distancing measures will be in place.

**Edible Landscaping: Beautiful and Healthy****April 20, 2021 | 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm | Zoom**

Mark your calendars! Details will be forthcoming in March.

Do you want to have a beautiful yard that also produces healthy food? Have the challenges of deer, disease, drenching humidity and shade left you wondering if there are appropriate edible plants for your yard? Permaculture Farmer, Cory Suter is returning for the fourth straight year with new plant recommendations and experience creating an edible front yard garden that meets Fairfax County's new zoning regulations. His five acre farm in Fairfax has experimented with growing well over 200 different cultivars of edible perennial plants to discover what can thrive in our climate and compost-amended red clay soil. He will share what plants have fruited in shade and what evergreens work here among other practical advice.

**Planting Day at Gum Springs****April 24, 2021 | 9:30 am**

Save the date! Be on the lookout for more information on this exciting springtime planting opportunity! Questions or more information, contact: [fairfaxfoodcouncil@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:fairfaxfoodcouncil@fairfaxcounty.gov).

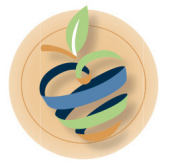
**Container Gardening Workshop Tour****May 23, 2021**

Mark your calendar! Observe and learn how container gardening can bring healthy, fresh produce to you and your family. More information will be forthcoming. Look for opportunities to sign-up for half hour tours starting at 1:00 pm, 2:00 pm, 3:00 pm or 4:00 pm.

Questions or more information, contact: [fairfaxfoodcouncil@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:fairfaxfoodcouncil@fairfaxcounty.gov).



**Updated information for all of the Fairfax Food Council events  
can be found on our website:  
<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/food-council/>**



## EVENTS

**Garden Talk: Designing an EcoSavvy Garden****March 12, 2021 | 1:30 - 2:30 pm | Green Spring Gardens**

(Adults) Learn to work with nature's resources to develop a beautiful, low-maintenance urban garden.

With a little bit of knowledge, careful planning, and some effort, see how native trees/shrubs provide structure and year-round interest, along with colorful annuals and perennials that add seasonal color splashes. Extension Master Gardeners show you how to create a healthy, sustainable, and eco-savvy garden. The cost is \$12 per person.

For more information, call 703-642-5173. [Register Online here.](#)



## Spring Tasks for a Great Garden

**March 27, 2021 | 10:30 am - 12:00 pm | Green Spring Gardens**

(Adult) Horticulturalist Brenda Skarphol shows you things you can do to prepare your garden for a beautiful spring. Learn what plants you can and should divide now, the most effective pruning techniques, and more to set your garden up for fresh spring growth. The cost is \$18 per person.

For more information, call 703-642-5173. [Register Online here.](#)

## Let's Talk Gardening - Ask a Fairfax County Master Gardener

Fairfax County Master Gardeners offer our neighbors science-based information on a vast range of plant, lawn and other gardening topics. You can visit and engage with us on-line and in person.

Come visit with us. During our free on-line plant clinics, Master Gardeners from Fairfax County and Green Springs offer gardening advice on seasonal gardening topics and answer your gardening questions using a web platform.

- All About Veggies on Mondays during the lunch hour (12:30-1:30pm)
- Virtual Plant Clinics on Tuesday evenings (7:00-8:00pm) and during the Thursday lunch hour (12:30-1:30pm)

The registration for each clinic and a monthly calendar of our virtual clinics is found on our website <https://Fairfaxgardening.org>. Can't join during our live session? You will find many presentations from these clinics on our VCE Fairfax County-YouTube Channel. Contact Adria Bordas, County Extension Agent at [abordas@vt.edu](mailto:abordas@vt.edu).

### Coming up in our All About Veggies Plant Clinic Series:

March 1, 12:30 pm | Preparing the Garden

March 2, 7:00 pm | Planting Cool Season Vegetables

March 8, 12:30 pm | Planting Cool Season Root Crops (Carrots, Beets)

March 9, 7:00 pm | Planting Cool Season Root Crops (Radish, Potatoes)

March 15, 12:30 pm | Planting Cool Season Leaf Crops

March 22, 12:30 pm | Planting Biennial Veggies

Mar 30, 7:00 pm | Companion Veggie Gardening

Apr 5, 12:30 pm | Tomato 101

April 8, 12:30 pm | Herb Gardening

April 12, 12:30 pm | Peppers

April 13, 7:00 pm | Squash

April 19, 12:30 pm | Veggies for April Planting

April 26, 12:30 pm | How Does Your Garden Grow? Assessing the Health of Your Veggies

April 27, 7:00 pm | Bugs in the Garden—What to Watch for

May 3, 12:30 pm | Get Ready to Harvest Cool Season Veggies





## Savor Every Bite

Join Virginia Cooperative Extension’s nutrition expert for healthy eating tips and easy recipe ideas! To find out more information at the NCS Virtual Center for Active Adults: <https://bit.ly/NCSvcaa>.

Mar 11 | 10:30 am

**Fight COVID in your Kitchen!**

Learn the latest science on nutrition and COVID, as well as delicious recipes to boost antioxidants.

April 8 | 10:30 am

**Spring into Spring with Healthy Protein.**

Stay energized with delicious, protein-packed meals and snacks.

May 6 | 10:30 am

**Go Mediterranean!**

Customize the Mediterranean diet YOUR way, to prevent disease and celebrate food.

June 10 | 10:30 am

**Savor (Fruity!) Summer Sweets. Satisfy your sweet tooth AND boost your health!**

### Social Space

Meeting ID: 901 875 2818

Passcode: 8727

Direct Link: [www.bit.ly/VCAAsocialspace](http://www.bit.ly/VCAAsocialspace)

Call in number: 1-301-751-8592; 901-875-2818#; 0#; 8727#

For more information, please reachout to Katie Strong, M.S. R.D. | [kstrong@vt.edu](mailto:kstrong@vt.edu)

Extension Agent, Food Nutrition and Health | Fairfax County Office



*Katie Strong, M.S. R.D.  
Extension Agent, Food Nutrition and  
Health | Fairfax County Office*



## Family Nutrition Program SNAP-Ed



### 2021 Programming Options

VCE FCS SNAP-Ed Agents are continuing to offer these exciting virtual programming options in 2021. Please see our marketing flyers below for more information:

- [Literacy, Eating, Activity for Preschoolers](#)
- [Pick a Better Snack](#)
- [Choose Health](#)
- [Teen Cuisine](#)
- [Physical Activity Challenge](#)

### Shop Smart, Eat Smart

The Family Nutrition Program (FNP) offers an array of Policy, System, and Environmental (PSE) Change initiatives, one including the Shop Smart, Eat Smart Program. This program allows FNP to partner with SNAP-authorized retailers in the community, assisting them with:

- Free In-store marketing
- Free Technical Assistance for Store Layout
- Connections with professionals

Please feel free to promote this program in the communities you serve. Should you have additional questions, or know a store partner who may be interested, please feel free to reach out to Kirsten Kelley at [kirstenk19@vt.edu](mailto:kirstenk19@vt.edu).

### March 2021 is National Nutrition Month!

National Nutrition Month is an annual campaign created and hosted by the [Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics](#). During the month of March, all are invited and encouraged to learn more about healthy eating and physical activity.

Please join VCE in promoting National Nutrition Month throughout our communities. Feel free to access the [Campaign Toolkit](#) for additional resources the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics has to offer, such as tip sheets, games/activities, and planning materials.

### March 2021 is Living Well Month!

Extension initiatives in nutrition, healthy lifestyles, food safety, financial management, parenting, and environmental health enable citizens to gain knowledge and skills to lead full and productive lives.

Please feel free to access the [March 2021 Living Well Calendar!](#)



For more information, please reach out to:

Kirsten Kelley, M.S., CLC  
FCS SNAP-Ed Extension Agent

[kirstenk19@vt.edu](mailto:kirstenk19@vt.edu)

703-746-5542

For electronic resources, please visit our website at:

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



## RESOURCES

### FCPS Meal Distribution

Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) Office of Food and Nutrition Services is continuing to offer healthy meals at locations throughout Fairfax County. The same meals will be available at no separate charge to all participants at each site. Information on where families can find no cost meals can be found on the [FCPS website](#).

### Food Resources

[A map of Food Resources](#) is also available on the Fairfax Food Council website. This map was designed to help Fairfax County individuals and families find the nearest food resources to their location. The food resources map was developed by Neighborhood and Community Services.

For more information about programs and services, including food resources in Fairfax County, go to [Fairfax County's Neighborhood and Community Services site](#)

### In Need of Gardening Tools?

Check out the Fairfax Food Council Tool Lending Library: [fairfaxcounty.gov/food-council/urban-agriculture](https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/food-council/urban-agriculture)



### FRESHFARM SNAP Program

Did you know that all FRESHFARM farmers markets accept and match SNAP/EBT? The FRESH Match program provides a dollar-for-dollar match on benefits spent at market, helping shoppers take home more fresh and nutritious produce and local foods. If you're a SNAP/EBT shopper, visit the information tent at a FRESHFARM market to swipe your EBT card and choose the amount you'd like to spend. Shop for fresh food with your SNAP coupons, and you'll also receive an UNLIMITED dollar-for-dollar match, doubling your spending power! FRESHFARM markets open in Fairfax County this winter include Oakton, Mosaic, and Reston. See the full market schedule at <https://www.freshfarm.org/markets>.

## COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE

### Whitehall Farms | 2021 CSA Share Program

A CSA (community supported agriculture) share, is a way for the local community to invest in our farm, and the local food system, by pre-ordering a share of the local harvest. Becoming a member allows you to support your local food economy, increase your access to fresh food, and support sustainable and responsible growing methods. This model also helps the farmers because the early season income allows for inputs when need is greatest. Whitehall Farms LLC is now offering their 2021 CSA Share Program. Check out their website for additional information and how to sign up <https://whitehall.farm/csa>.





## COMMUNITY STORIES

### Winter Warrior Loyalty Program at FRESHFARM Markets

Do you shop at farmers markets during the winter? Then you're a Winter Warrior! Shop at a FRESHFARM farmers market this winter and win great prizes for showing your dedication to our local farmers and producers! Sign up for your digital Winter Warrior loyalty card online. Earn stamps at the market information tent by displaying the digital Winter Warrior card on your phone. The more markets you attend, the more prizes you can earn, including FRESHFARM gift certificates and market swag! FRESHFARM markets open in Fairfax County this winter include Oakton, Mosaic, and Reston. See the full market schedule at <https://www.freshfarm.org/markets>.

### George Mason University School of Art's 'Arcadia' Installation Cultivates Green Consciousness



Photo by Evan Cantwell/Creative Services/George Mason University

George Mason University's collaboration of their Office of Sustainability and the College of Visual Arts have come together to create *Arcadia*. The collaboration includes GMU Mural Brigade Director, Yassim Salem (pictured setting up the Elements installation), University Curator, Don Russell and Patriot Green Fund Sustainability Program Manager, Sarah D'Alexander. *Arcadia* is a one-year installation at the Fairfax Campus hydroponic greenhouse that uses sensors and computer software to translate the natural bio-rhythms of medicinal and edible plants into a stream of ever-changing music and light.

George Mason University's College of Visual and Performing Arts (CVPA) announced the public sound and light installation *Arcadia* (<https://www.masonexhibitions.org/murals-at-mason-arcadia>), created by artist Sam Nester and offered in partnership with the School of Art's Murals at Mason (<https://www.masonexhibitions.org/murals-at-mason>) and Mason Exhibitions (<https://www.masonexhibitions.org/>) initiatives. The groundbreaking exhibit, which features plants as musical composers and visual performers, opened in November 2020 and will be accessible through December 2021 via its dedicated Twitch livestream at [twitch.tv/masonarcadia](https://www.twitch.tv/masonarcadia), as well as in person from outside the [Presidents Park Hydroponic Greenhouse on Mason's Fairfax campus](#). [Press release here](#).

# VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

## Grow a Row FC seeking gardeners, gurus & couriers

Grow a Row FC, a community-wide effort to grow fresh produce for local food banks and pantries, provides free seeds and mentorship to new and experienced gardeners who will donate a portion of their yield. Donations don't have to be regular or big; you can literally grow a row or container of produce for donation. Started in May 2020, Grow a Row FC last year delivered more than 2000 pounds of produce to local food banks.

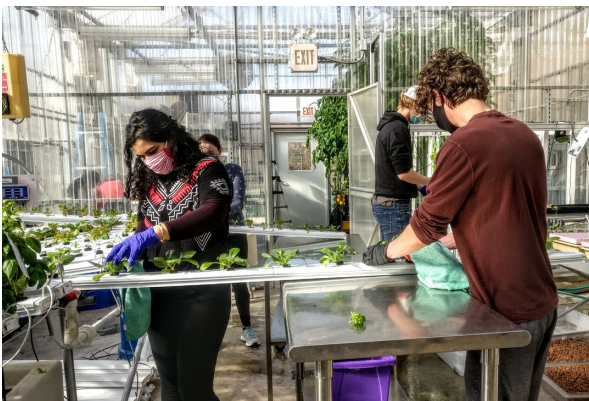
In addition to growers, the organization is seeking

- \* Donations of transplants and seeds of edible and pollinator plants
- \* Mentors for gardeners
- \* Gardeners willing to grow out seeds for transplants (we'll provide the seeds)
- \* Couriers willing to host drop-off sites or to pick up produce from gardeners and deliver it to a food bank near them.

Volunteers can start and stop at any time. For more information, visit [www.growarowfc.com](http://www.growarowfc.com) or email [growarowfc@gmail.com](mailto:growarowfc@gmail.com).

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## 'Green' Volunteering with George Mason University's Office of Sustainability



Learn how to grow produce without soil (hydroponics), how to design landscapes with permaculture techniques, and how to compost your waste! Volunteer with the Office of Sustainability's Greenhouse & Gardens program at George Mason University today! Create a free account on our Sustainable Volunteer Sign Ups portal and select any available shift from our live calendar: [go.gmu.edu/greenvolunteering](http://go.gmu.edu/greenvolunteering). No experience is necessary. Masks and social-distancing are required to protect the health, safety, and well-being of all volunteers and staff members.

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## Farmers Market Manager

Are you a local food enthusiast? Love the outdoors and don't like being tied to a desk? Would you like to help bring fresh, healthy, local produce to your community? Are you interested in supporting local farmers/producers? Then this volunteer opportunity is for you!

It's time to beef up your resume and put your career skills to work. Join our team of volunteer Market Managers at the Fairfax County Farmers Markets. Volunteers are especially needed at our Annandale, Lorton, and Kingstowne markets! [Find out more here.](#)

## JOB OPENINGS

### Market Manager Position

Do you love farmers markets? Do you enjoy being outside and connecting your community and local food system? Good news! FRESHFARM is hiring Market Managers for the 2021 season!

Market Managers are the face of FRESHFARM at markets, play a key role in the success and growth of markets and work as part of a team in a fast-paced and dynamic environment. Managers are invested in and inspired by their markets' success and are responsible for executing market operations, interfacing with farmers, partners, and customers, creating a vibrant and friendly market, and ensuring accurate reporting and use of food assistance benefits programs. Apply today! Hiring for this role will happen on a rolling basis throughout the season as markets open. [Click here for more information.](#)

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## FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

### AHA Nutrition Security Funding Opportunity

The American Heart Association of the Greater Washington Region is currently seeking opportunities to build relationships and looking to offer resources for organizations with food pantries to provide healthier options aligning with American Heart Association's Food and Beverage Guidelines. Total Funding available: \$2,500 - up to 5 organizations will be funded \$500 grants. Questions? Contact Katelyn Shull at [t-katelyn.shull@heart.org](mailto:t-katelyn.shull@heart.org) or (540) 272-8502. The deadline is March 31, 2021.

### VFAIF Inaugural Grant Application Process is Open!

Virginia Food Access Investment Fund focuses on equity and justice in local food systems by investing in new or expanding food retailers to address food access issues in underserved areas in the Commonwealth. VFAIF was created using Equitable Food-Oriented Development (EFOD), which aligns food and economic development models and seeks to build community power and wealth. Awards range from \$5,000-\$50,000 and funding can be used for infrastructure, equipment, and site development. The application window closes on April 30th. For more information, [check out the website](#) and contact [Sara Santa Cruz](#) with any questions.



This information is provided by the Fairfax Food Council.

[fairfaxcounty.gov/food-council](http://fairfaxcounty.gov/food-council)

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[@FairfaxFoodCouncil](#)

If you have something for the next newsletter, please submit to [ffnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:ffnewsletter@gmail.com) by May 15th.

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We encourage you to share this newsletter widely with all who may be interested! If you have any issues accessing the information in this newsletter, please let us know by emailing

[FairfaxFoodCouncil@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:FairfaxFoodCouncil@fairfaxcounty.gov).