



FARMING
WITH FRIENDS

2025 Impact Report

Empowering All Abilities to Grow Together



A Year of Growth, Belonging, and Purpose



Founded in 2023, Farming with Friends exists to provide accessible, community-centered vocational, employment, and volunteer experiences for individuals with disabilities—while offering typically-abled participants the opportunity to learn, serve, and build authentic relationships.

Over the past two years, Farming with Friends has cultivated an inclusive farm environment where volunteers, community members, and individuals with disabilities work side by side - laying the groundwork for expanded disability-centered programming in the years ahead.

2025 was a defining year.

We deepened partnerships, expanded participation, strengthened vocational pathways, and witnessed measurable growth in the lives of the people we serve.

This report highlights:

- What we prioritized in 2025
- Who we served
- What changed for participants
- How our community showed up
- Where we're headed next



Who We Serve



We primarily serve **young adults with disabilities transitioning from school to community life**—a period that is notoriously challenging due to the documented drop-off in services and supports after graduation.



Participants come from Cuyahoga, Medina, and Summit County

Many receive support through agencies and organizations such as County Boards of Developmental Disabilities, Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD), or Jobs for Ohio's Graduates (JOG) to ensure access.

2025 Participation Snapshot

4

Vocational Cohort
with Disabilities

421

total unduplicated
participants

~60

Volunteers with
Disability

118

Typically abled
Volunteers

239

Participated in
Farm Tours

Participants ranged from elementary-aged students to adults and retirees, reflecting a beautifully diverse and intergenerational community.



Individuals and families seeking:

- Purposeful work
- Meaningful relationships
- Inclusive community spaces
- Opportunities to contribute

Our Programs In Action



Old Trail
SCHOOL

Programs were delivered year-round at our farm site hosted by Old Trail School in Bath.

Vocational Training

Paid crop production technical skills training using regenerative agriculture practices.

Participants:

- Grew vegetables and flowers for local sales
- Learned tool use and equipment handling
- Developed consistency, stamina, and workplace readiness
- Practiced communication and teamwork

In 2026, we will introduce a second-year leadership training track focused on communication, problem-solving, and supervisory skills.

Volunteer Opportunities

We intentionally create opportunities where:

- Day programs and those with disabilities participate regularly in hands-on farm work
- Typically-abled individuals volunteer alongside peers with disabilities
- School groups, churches, and corporate teams work shoulder-to-shoulder with our farm crew

This integration breaks down stigma and builds authentic relationships.

Farm Tours

Tours invite the community onto the farm to:

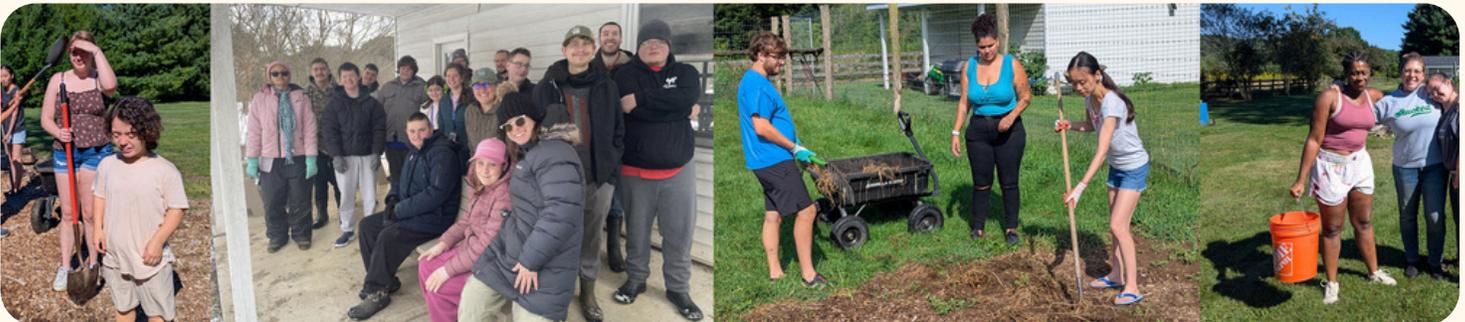
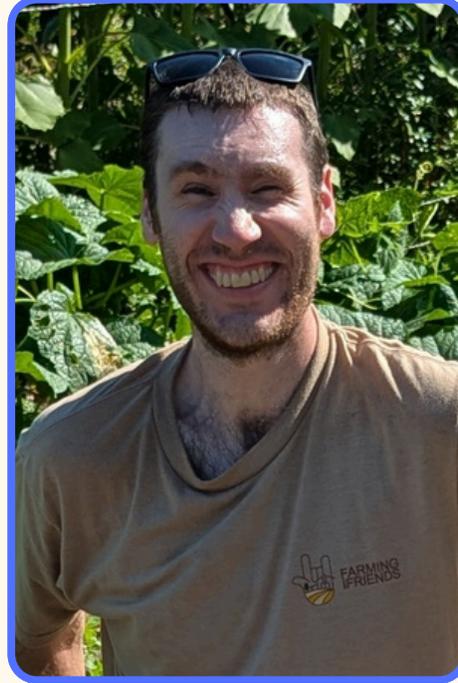
- See inclusive agriculture in action
- Increase comfort interacting across ability levels
- Become invested in our mission



Farm in Action



These moments capture what statistics cannot:
confidence, joy, resilience, teamwork, and pride.



What Changed in 2025



Skill Development & Growth

Participants demonstrated measurable growth in:

- Technical agricultural skills
- Fine motor coordination
- Problem-solving and flexibility
- Communication and social confidence
- Workplace stamina and responsibility
- Peer leadership and collaboration

Voices from Our Community

From Our Executive Director

"As Sam adjusted to life after becoming disabled, we found something at Farming with Friends that medicine alone couldn't provide – fresh air, purposeful movement, and a reason to get up each day. Being part of a team and working alongside all kinds of people has supported not just his health, but his confidence, connection, and sense of belonging. Every family who cares for someone living with a disability deserves access to opportunities like this."

– **Ginnette Simko**



From Families

"Since working with Farming with Friends, there has been so many positive changes with Joe. He has made friends there and will actually text them himself. His self-esteem has improved... It has just been overall, a very positive impact on him."

– **Darlene Toth**

"Working at Farming with Friends has allowed Alex to grow, practice flexibility, and gain SO many new skills. Incredible friendships have been developed... The opportunity has been life changing for Alex."

– **Lisa Claus**

From Educators

"The 3rd graders have really enjoyed their time at the farm and had a chance to taste some of the produce they helped harvest"

– **Lynn Gregor, Old Trail School**

"Congratulations to you and all the staff! What a meaningful end to the season [donating our final produce harvest to community members in need]."

– **Erin McNamara, Old Trail School**

From Volunteers & Donors

"You have managed to assemble a really nice team. I enjoy following the progress of all the participants."

– **Community Volunteer**

"Thank you for how you are serving through the farm in a very special way."

– **Anonymous Donor**

Community Engagement



In October, we partnered with **Crown Point Ecology Center** to host:

Fun on the Farm an ability-inclusive fall festival



1,200+
attendees



Games, activities,
food trucks,
entertainment



Designed
intentionally for
accessibility and
comfort

Families reported feeling seen, welcomed, and free to participate fully.
This event strengthened our role as a regional community hub.

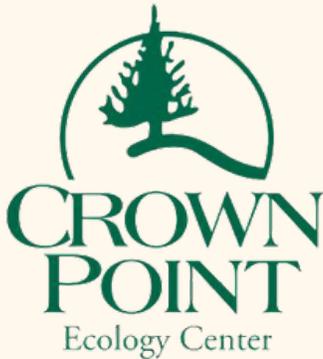
Partnerships That Make It Possible



We are deeply grateful for strong collaborations in 2025:



Old Trail School – Hosting our 10,000 sq ft garden and four high tunnels on their 62-acre campus in Cuyahoga Valley National Park



Crown Point Ecology Center – Co-host of Fun on the Farm and steward of a 115-acre ecological preserve.

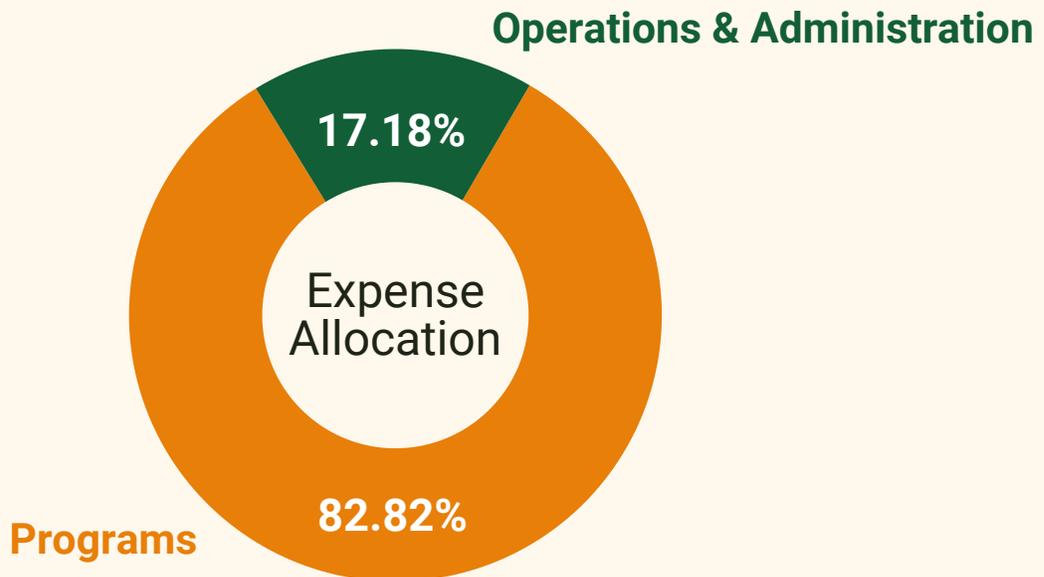
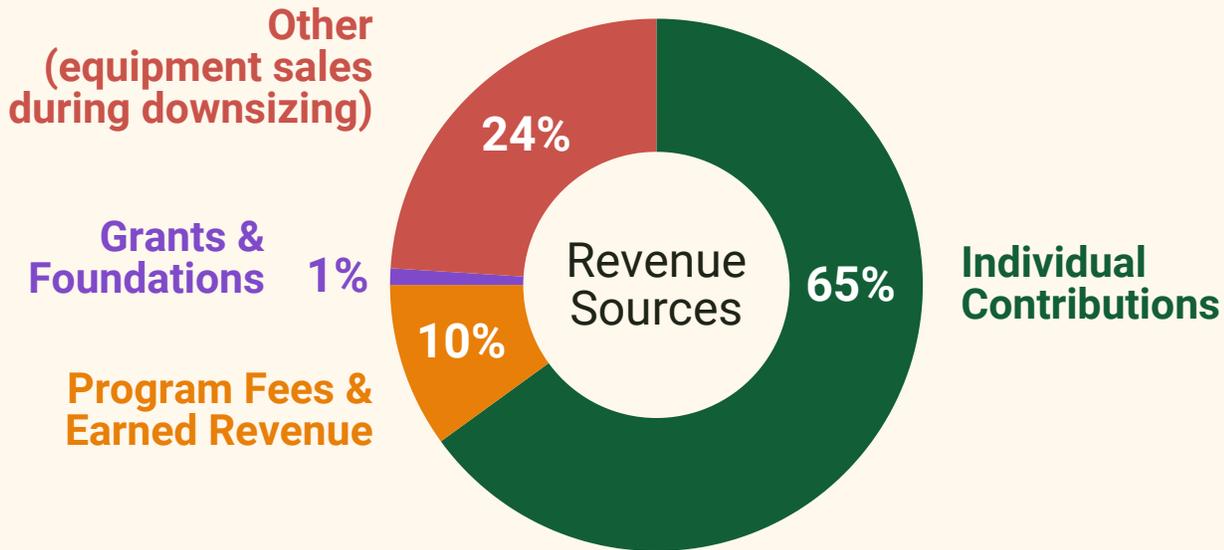


Heads Up Flower Farm – Joining us in 2026 to expand flower production and employment pathways.

Programs and Provider Agencies: Insightful Minds, Teammates Center, LLC, CRU, Medina County Career Center - Career & Community Experience

These partnerships extend opportunity, deepen learning, and create real-world transition pathways to competitive employment.

Stewardship & Transparency



As a young and growing organization, 2025 included significant operational investment to ensure infrastructure, compliance, staffing systems, and sustainability. These foundational efforts position us for stronger program expansion in 2026 and beyond.



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Looking Ahead to 2026

Our Focus:

- Strengthening program quality
- Launching Year 2 Leadership Training
- Expanding access to underserved participants
- Deepen school and community Partnerships
- Building long-term organizational stability

We believe inclusive agriculture is
more than growing food.

It is also about growing...

Confidence • Community • Independence • Belonging



Help us grow by pledging a monthly or one-time donation by scanning the QR code or visiting farmingwithfriends.org/donate