



ANGELIC ORGANICS

Learning Center

Annual Report

FY 2023

April 1, 2022-March 31, 2023

Learn. Grow. Connect.



*“Change happens when
a person connects their
passion and talents with
the needs of the community.”*

- from our Guiding Principles

From Jackie

Angelic Organics Learning Center is a uniquely valuable organization with a bold mission to build sustainable local food and farm systems. Reflecting upon my third full year as Executive Director, I'm inspired by the dedication of our staff & board, and our innovative approach to this work.



The Learning Center stands out as an educational resource that establishes deep connections with participants, from the Stateline Farm Beginnings® student to the residents of Blackhawk Courts. Our work is differentiated by the relationships that extend beyond any one class, CSA share, or initial interaction. We don't just provide educational services to our community, we mentor, we work alongside, we partner. Our time, services and support are offered in community with you. This distinction makes the Learning Center unique and indispensable.

For 23 years and through many adaptations, the Learning Center is proud to have trained hundreds of new sustainable farmers, educated thousands of consumers, and built strong connections with underserved people

in the Rockford area. Twenty-three years! Our work is joyous and important, our dedication to our community and mission is steadfast, and our impact is quantifiable by the pound, by the acre, by the number of happy campers who return year after year.

This past fiscal year presented many challenges. We struggled with increased staffing costs, resuming participant and donor interaction post-Covid, the burden of high inflation, facilities costs, and extreme weather events. Numerous trees on and around our Caledonia campus came down in multiple storms, crushing fences and taking out an electric pole at the Lodge, an event that fried the control panel of our (very expensive) sprinkler system. In September 2022, a 3-year sustaining USDA grant which supported Farmer Training ended. Pivoting to an additional supporting grant, our team now must cover all costs up-front for 3 months before being reimbursed another 30 days later. If this financial report looks worse for the wear, that's because it is.

Faced with some difficulties, we firmly hold our mission front and center, acknowledge our vulnerability and are working hard to strengthen our weaknesses. Holding onto our relationships and core purpose is what makes the Learning Center unique and wonderful. We must evolve creatively to meet these challenges. Stakes are high: climate change is wreaking havoc on natural and agricultural systems, high inflation and income consolidation is exacerbating land and food access issues, and the urban-rural divide is worsening. To continue the crucial work of building sustainable food systems in partnership with the farmers and consumers, strategic changes to how we work together within our organization as well as within our community are necessary.

This year the Learning Center will see some big changes! I am eager to share this evolution, this revolution, with you, our community, soon. Together we are cultivating a world in which healthy food and environment is a human right. Thank you for your continued support and partnership.

With immense gratitude,



Jackie de Batista
Executive Director

From our Board President



Welcome! My name is Brad Kemp, board president and passionate supporter of Angelic Organics Learning Center.

As you may recall, my first visit to the farm was in the Spring of 2021 to attend a class about caring for chickens. From that moment, when I turned off my car and stepped outside to hear (and smell)

chickens, goats and the surrounding nature, I was hooked. Over the next two years my wife and I would escape Chicago and venture out to Caledonia to visit the farm. We would visit Roots & Wings, our urban farm in Rockford, to see all of the important work Tedd and Yatte are doing. We attended events from fundraisers with delicious food and drinks, to volunteer work days spent removing invasive species from the oak savanna.

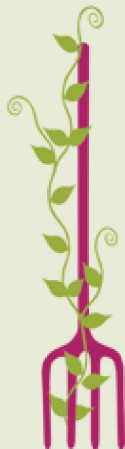
I attended our Stateline Farm Beginnings® “Farm Dreams Intensive” classes, spending three days a week completing homework, hearing from knowledgeable speakers (many of whom are now farmers as a result of participating in this class) and dreaming about my own future farm. However watching my fellow cohorts and colleagues blossom as individuals and their farm dreams grow from a small seed of an idea to a well thought out achievable future was my biggest takeaway.

Over the past year as President of the Board, I have felt more involved with the organization than ever before. It has been a true honor and privilege to participate from a leadership role and continue to learn more about all of the incredibly important work we are doing everyday to change the future of food in the Midwest. I can confidently say that our future is bright and I am thrilled to be a part of it! I hope you'll join us for a class or day on the farm.

With gratitude and joy,

Brad Kemp
Board President

Scan to learn about joining our Board



Our Team in FY23

Full Time Staff

- Jackie de Batista**
Executive Director
- Kate Larson**
Farmer Training Program Director
- Leah Lawson**
Director of Resource Development
- Tedd Snowden**
Roots & Wings Program Director
- Julie Tackett** (outgoing)
On Farm Program Director
- Trisha Wilks**
Director of Administration
On Farm Program Director (incoming)
- AJ Boucek**
Administrative Manager
- Bertha Jurado**
Livestock Manager
- Kenyatte Moore**
Roots & Wings Urban Farm Manager
- Laura Sjoquist** (outgoing)
- Mia Spaid** (incoming)
On Farm Program Manager
- Goli Ziolek** (outgoing)
- Rashad X** (incoming)
Farmer Training Program Manager
- Julie Uram** (outgoing)
- Jenny Addison** (incoming)
Communications & Events Manager
- Ritchie Wai**
Farmer Training Program Coordinator

Part Time Staff

- Amanda Fair**
On Farm Program Assistant
- Amanda Greco**
On Farm Educator
- Tiffany Howell**
Livestock Assistant
- Adrian Landeros**
Groundskeeper
- Kenneth McDonald**
Farm Assistant/Outreach Coordinator
- Jessie Crow Mermel**
On Farm Educator
- Randy Mermel**
Lead On Farm Educator
- Rowan Mermel**
On Farm Educator
- Allyson Rosemore**
On Farm Educator
- Andy Skupien**
Camp Chef, Kitchen Assistant

Board Members

- Brad Kemp**
Board President
- Jamie Zimmerman**
Vice President
- Andy Larson**
Treasurer
- Tina Williams**
Secretary (outgoing)
- Gina Polito Jahn**
Secretary (incoming)
- Rebecca Adewumi**
- Joseph Arden**
- Kathleen Bolin**
- Charles Johannsen**
- Cliff McConville**
- William Zieske**

Seasonal Staff

- Armando Batista**
- Beatrice Fischer**
- Andre McKennie**
- Isaiah Mitchell**
- Helen Molina-Tobon**
- Sophia Moran**
- Madeleine Tevonian**



Our Mission

Angelic Organics Learning Center builds sustainable local food and farm systems through experiential education and training programs in partnership with rural and urban people.



The Learning Center is committed to honoring our core purpose as a farmer-focused organization, intentionally aligning our work with our mission and values in order to reach more new and emerging alternative farmers in the Illinois/Wisconsin state line region and beyond.

Vision

We envision a dynamic and enduring partnership between farmers and consumers who strive for economies, ecologies, and cultures that respect the land and honor the people who work it, know healthy food as a human right, celebrate the beauty and mysteries of life and the living earth, encourage authenticity, self-reliance and cooperation, and are sustainable over many generations.

We believe

- Community supported agriculture and organic and biodynamic farming bring people into positive relationships with the land, food, farmers, and the community.
- Healthy living soils lead to healthy plants, animals, and people.
- Biological and cultural diversity are essential to the health of our world.
- A measure of a healthy society is how we care for the least fortunate among us.
- Change happens when a person connects their passion and talents with the needs of the community.
- We make a powerful impact when we live the change we want to see in the world.

Strategic Directions

- Dismantling Oppressive Systems and Practices
- Investing in Our Staff, Board and Spaces
- Re-Conceptualizing Our Resource Development
- Revitalizing and Renewing Our Core Partnerships and Brand



Scan for more about our mission and vision



Our Story

The work we do at Angelic Organics Learning Center has a profound impact on our supporters and community. Program participants remain deeply connected to our work and spaces, many returning season after season to create and share experiences.



Francesca Dote

Buona Fortuna Farm, Lake Zurich, IL

Stateline Farm Beginnings® Graduate



Scan the QR codes to hear stories directly from participants whose lives have been changed by Learning Center programming.

“All the training I received was exactly what I needed to get my business started, to teach me I could have a business”

“We are grateful for our partnership with AOLC at Blackhawk Courts Farm and Garden. We’re continuing to... provide opportunities to people to have healthy options in the Rockford community”



Isaiah Mitchell

Former Camper

Summer Camp Counselor



Rev. Michael Thomas

Zion Lutheran Church, Rockford, IL

Roots & Wings Community Partner



“Something about camp always brought me back. I learned and grew as a person, and made lifelong friends... I knew I’d be back as a counselor”

Our Impact

Each season the Learning Center brings thousands of people closer in connection to their food, the land, and each other through our programs.



127

participants attended
11 Skill Shares



11+

acres of oak savanna
restored with help from **27**
volunteers



3000

pounds of produce grown
at Roots & Wings



155

day and overnight
campers visited the farm



379

volunteer hours donated
by **123** volunteers



65

Roots & Wings CSA
boxes given to Rockford
residents in need



1361

hours of
farmer training



9

Stataline Farm
Beginnings® graduates



21

goats born
on the farm



460

students attended field trips
to the Learning Center



101

farm members in
our CRAFT network



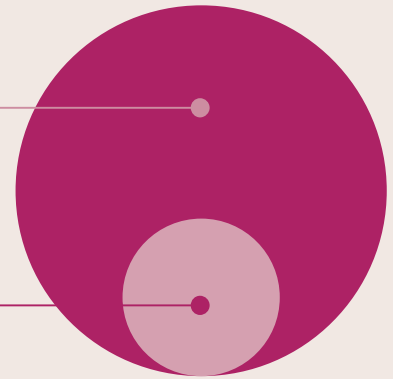
16

schools and universities
visited the farm

Financial Assistance and Scholarships

139
FY23

59
FY22



In FY23, nearly 3x the number of individuals and organizations received financial assistance to attend camps, enroll in Stataline Farm Beginnings®, join UM CRAFT or attend programs



5000+

urban and rural people impacted through
partnerships and collaborations in FY23

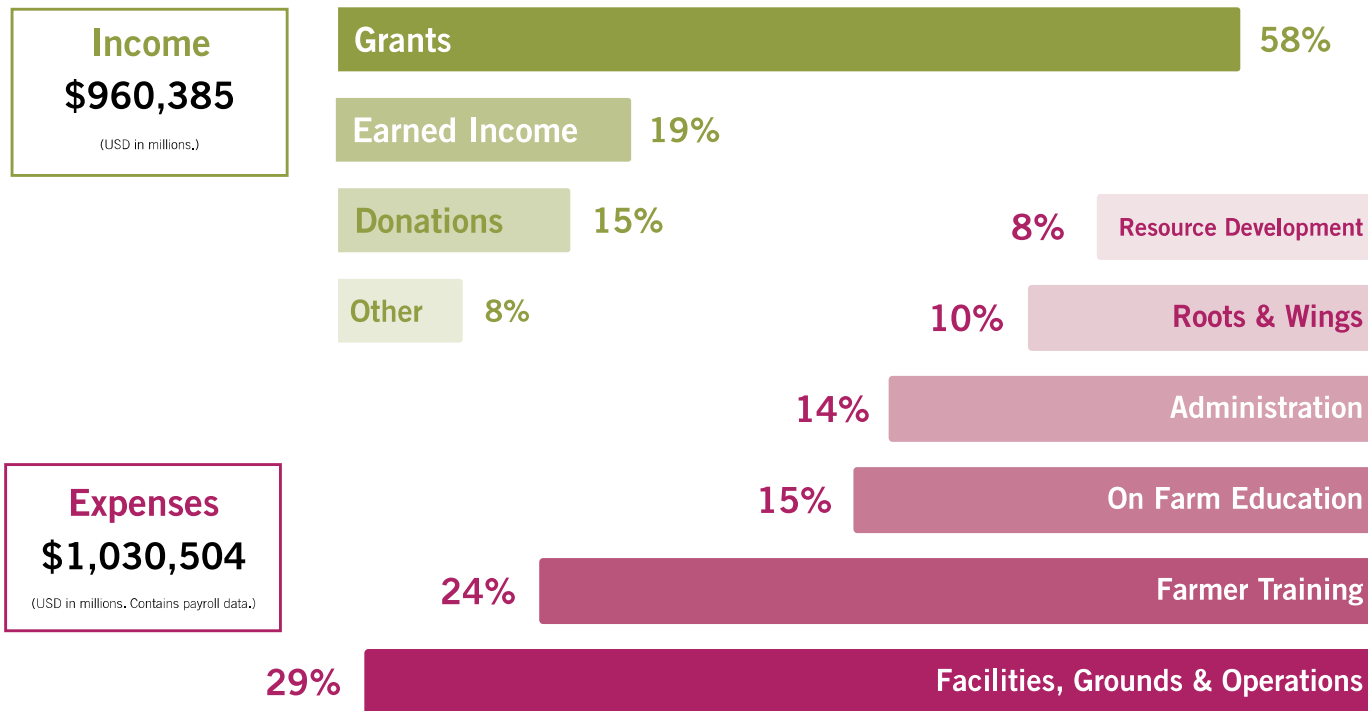
2185

program participants in FY23



Our Financial Report

Income & Expenses



Assets & Liabilities

Current Assets	\$73,633.66	\$65,272.76	Current Liabilities
Other Assets	\$146,608.26	\$685,309.37	Long Term Liabilities
Fixed Assets	\$1,492,903.80	\$962,563.59	Equity
\$1,713,145.72		\$1,713,145.72	



Our Work

The Learning Center fosters vibrant local food economies through robust programs focusing on On Farm Education, Farmer Training, and Urban Agriculture.



On Farm Education

Bringing people in connection to land, food and each other is the goal on our beautiful acreage in Caledonia, IL. Visitors experience the rhythms of farm life as goats and chickens graze the grounds. The natural surroundings invite exploration, wonder, creativity, and revitalization. Situated on a limestone bluff surrounded by oak savanna is the beautifully appointed **Angelic Organics Lodge**. With a commercial kitchen, bunks for up to 30 guests, picturesque meeting spaces, fireplaces, fire pits, a garden, and 1.2 miles of hiking trails, the Lodge is the perfect setting for our community events, group farm tours, youth summer camps, classes and campouts. The Lodge is available to groups of all kinds to rent for private events and programmed retreats.

Farmer Training

Farmer Training programs connect farmers to specialized resources, building regional farm leadership while working with farmers in all stages of farm development.



The Upper Midwest Collaborative Regional Alliance for Farmer Training is a farmer-led alliance where shared wisdom and knowledge strengthen the community of regional growers at all levels of skill and experience.

Stateline Farm Beginnings® is a yearlong program designed to help aspiring and beginning farmers plan and launch a sustainable farm business. Participants develop holistic farm and financial planning skills, explore emerging opportunities, and network with experienced regional farmers.

Urban Agriculture



Roots & Wings creates access to fresh local food through our CSA program, community partnerships and hands on educational experiences for Rockford youth. Our urban farm partners with organizations committed to community development through sustainable, organic, urban agriculture. Roots & Wings Farm is located in the Blackhawk Courts housing development in Rockford, IL.



Scan to learn more about our initiatives

Supporters

Donors

Anonymous Donor	Eric Fitzgerald	Michael Krause	Ben & Leah Nunez Lawson	Jennifer Walsh
Ravi Batista	David Flynn	Camilla Krueger	Ellen O'Donnell	Ann Wasser
Ana Batista	Marcia Flynn	David Kuester	Sunny P	Ellingsworth Webb
Jeffrey Beckman	Christina & Douglas Foster	Jude & Pat Lai	Sheila Parinas	Don Wedd
Jane Bilger	Brian Furey	Andrew Larson	Jennifer Paulson	Joanne Wiedemann-Wolf
Annalee Boles	Natalie Gray	David Larson	Food Works	Cam Williams
Annalee Boles	Jill Hampton	Rebecca Lavigne	Eva Pavia	Michael Winchester
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Peter Delgado	Lauren Kemp	Stevie Momaly	Lori Stern	The Unitarian Universalist Church
Carolyn Denning	Steve Kemp	Schellely Moran	Jill Stuck	of Rockford IL
Callie Dixon	Zak Kemp	Payton Moros	Josh Ticho	Thomas P. & Patricia A. O'Donnell
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Nancy Eckburg	Mary Khoury	Home to Roost LLC	Paul VonDriska	United Way of Massachusetts Bay &
Miky Eum	Induk Kim	Michael Neal	Cindy W.	Merrimack Valley
Beatrice Fischer	Jolie Krasinski	Robert J. Neustadt	Seth & Adrienne Waibel	

Volunteers

Aida Rosemore	Brian Saame	Gina Jahn	Kelly Riney Feary	Mike Klein	Samantha Dotson
AJ Holmertz	CCS Volunteers	Griffen Arthurs	Laura Sjoquist	Nina Schuster	Sarah Oliveira
Aleks Saame	Charles Johannsen	Jackie de Batista	Leslie Gaeta	Park Players	Stevie Momaly
Allyson Rosemore	Chris Dotson	Jamie Zimmeman	Madeline Mahan	Pat Stratlelak	Stevie Wombly
Andrea Swinney	Daisy Carrillo	Jessie Crow Mermel	Marcelo Batista	Randy Mermel	Sydney DeSerio
Andrew Stewart	Daniel Pohl	John Kaufmann	Margie Hurley	Ritchie Wai	Trisha Wilks
Beatrice Fischer	Frank Langholz	John Skupien	Marrah Vandar Vennet	Rowan Mermel	Victoria Mermel
Brad Kemp	Gerry Stratelak	Juliana Mace	Michael Feary	Rowan Riney	

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Food:Land:Opportunity
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IL Department of Agriculture Specialty Crop Grant
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Kjellstrom Foundation
New Visions Foundation
United States Department of Agriculture
Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program
Wild Ones - RR Valley Chapter
William Miller Charitable Trust

Sponsors

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Hidden Marsh Farm
FuFluns Foods
Letheree Distillery
Midland States Bank
New Holland Brewing
Rockford Art Deli
Rockford Housing Authority
Wolf and Wren Press



Scan to support
our mission



ANGELIC ORGANICS

Learning Center

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Let's Connect!

www.learn-grow-connect.org

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