

FRIENDS OF HOLCOMB FARM

2020 ANNUAL REPORT

Friends of Holcomb Farm
113 Simsbury Road
West Granby, CT 06060
www.holcombfarm.org

President's Message

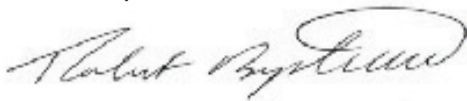
Dear Friends,

In a year of unprecedented challenges, I am so proud of the work done by Friends of Holcomb Farm volunteers, crew members and you—our generous members—to serve our community.

- I'm proud of our Friends of Holcomb Farm Board of Directors for pivoting quickly, early in the pandemic, and securing \$65,000 in grant dollars that enabled us to meet the increased needs of food-insecure families in Granby and throughout the region through our Fresh Access program.
- I'm proud of Joe O'Grady and his farm crew for somehow growing enough product to meet the pandemic-fueled, dramatically increased demands of our CSA & Farm Store customers as well as the dramatically increased needs of the families we serve through Fresh Access.
- I'm proud of our Friends of Holcomb Farm members, who selflessly donated to Fresh Access in order to help us help others at such a difficult time.
- I'm proud of our trail volunteers, who continued to maintain our 10+ miles of trails so that people were able to get outside, recreate safely and enjoy this beautiful place.
- I'm proud of our Holcomb Tree Trail volunteers, who worked tirelessly throughout the pandemic to plant, water, and label trees; and mow trails, remove invasives, and install informative signage to create a magnificent, educational arboretum on our campus.

It has been a rough year, but so much good has happened here at Holcomb Farm. We are happy to be of service to our town and the region and we look forward to serving the community for years to come.

Sincerely,



Bob Bystrowski
President



PHOTO CREDITS: Joseph Abad: cover;
Sue Canavan pp. 2, 5; Georgia
MacDougall pp. 3, 4, 6, 7.

FARMING

Drought, crop-killing spring frosts, and pandemic-fueled CSA and Fresh Access commitments made 2020 a stressful time for the Friends of Holcomb Farm farming programs; in the end it was also an unqualified success, and the state of our farm is very strong.

Bolstered by two H-2A workers, our masked farm crew worked tirelessly to grow and distribute all of the fresh, chemical-free produce promised to a sold-out summer CSA, and made special pick-ups available as the volumes and pandemic-safety protocols allowed. As winter approached, ongoing efforts to “grow the growing season” allowed a record-setting 150 winter shares to be sold and delivered. And throughout, we provided Fresh Access with an estimated 24,000 pounds of food for people in need here in Granby and in the greater Hartford area.

Here are some additional noteworthy farming-related enhancements:

- We purchased a used cultivating tractor in early 2020 with operating funds;
- In November 2020, we used Pomeroy-Brace grant funds to purchase a propagation house, mulch retriever, barrel washer, and greenhouse exhaust system to increase production efficiency and expand our season;
- We used our USDA Covid grant to purchase a delivery van for Fresh Access and bolstered the Farming Capital reserve, which as of year-end 2020 stands at \$30,000; and
- By March 2021, the Summer CSA was sold out, the ultimate testament to the success of the prior year.

In the fall, we were visited by the federal Department of Labor, with an audit of our employment practices. Our system of using field workers to staff the retail Farm Store was cited as problematic due to differentiated wage rates and amends were made. Going forward, we now have employees who only work at the Farm Store, which improves the customer experience at the store, especially for retail customers.

2021 and Beyond

By leveraging a State of Connecticut Small Farm Grant to hire an outside consultant, and through significant hands-on work by board members Donna Snyder and



Rocky Piccirillo, a Five-Year Farm Business Plan was completed in the spring of 2021. The report captures information on the expenses and revenues associated with our various farm program areas—CSA, Farm Store, wholesale, and Fresh Access—as the foundation for assessing future opportunities. Even as the board works to incorporate these findings into a comprehensive and updated FOHF Strategic Plan, new initiatives are underway:

- greenhouse repair with the goal of year-round growing;
- access to additional acreage owned by the Granby Land Trust to allow for improved field rotation and resting;
- improved retail Farm Store staffing (as mentioned above); and
- further improved brand enhancement and marketing to assure that Holcomb Farm is top of mind—and top of the web searches for fresh local produce in Granby.

FRESH ACCESS

The Friends of Holcomb Farm Fresh Access program provided approximately 12 tons of fresh produce to thousands of people in need last year. Fresh Access is the largest service program of the Friends of Holcomb Farm, which raises money through our farming programs; contributions from members and other donors; grants from the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, the First Congregational Church of Granby, the Granby Community Fund, and other sources; and fundraising events.



2020 Highlights

We provided free CSA shares to 11 Granby families identified by Granby Social Services. These families visited the farm to pick up their produce weekly, connecting them to the farm as they secured healthy food.

We worked with our community partners who distributed approximately 24,000 pounds of produce to their clients/members. Our partners included the Granby Senior Center, Waste Not Want Not Community Kitchen, and Healing Meals Community Project, which are from Granby and the Farmington Valley and receive our produce at no cost. Our larger partners are the Hispanic Health Council, which contributes 30 percent of the cost of the produce it receives, and Wheeler Clinic, which contributes approximately 50 percent. Both partners distribute produce in the Asylum Hill area of Hartford with nutritional information and cooking/preserving instructions. Wheeler Clinic also distributes to its clients in New Britain and Waterbury.

2021 Plans

In the coming year, major goals include:

- extending the delivery season with our partners to mid-November;
- providing more grab-and-go produce to the Hispanic Health Council and Wheeler Clinic to increase assistance to people who do not have reliable access to cooking facilities;
- maintaining the amount of produce we provide to the Granby Senior Center and Waste Not Want Not Community Kitchen (which we have nearly doubled in the last five years);
- providing fruit, purchased from local farms, to the Hispanic Health Council and Wheeler Clinic;
- expanding our partnership with Wheeler Clinic to distribute produce to their clients in Bristol and Plainville; and
- seeking grants to support expanding our efforts with our institutional partners.

STEWARDSHIP

Tree planting and care

Holcomb Tree Trail volunteers planted 21 trees at the arboretum in 2020, including Amur Maackia, Sourwood, Eastern Redbud, Hophornbeam, Hornbeam, Yellowwood, Sweetgum, Ginkgo, and Bald Cypress. Volunteers also planted three Zelkova trees near the Farmhouse to replace trees that had expired. Trees were purchased from Rare Earth Nursery (Cazenovia, NY) and Bosco's Nursery (Simsbury), and donated by O'Brien Nursery (Granby).

Volunteers spent many hours watering over 55 new trees during drought conditions from June to October 2020. There is no water source at the arboretum—developing a water source/well on the east fields is one of our future goals—so volunteers transported five-gallon buckets of water uphill from the Farmhouse hydrant to water each tree.

Trail stewardship

Volunteers Walter Ford and Jack Lareau mowed walking paths every one to three weeks and expanded the network of these unique paths to include the entire circumference of the Southeast Field and a serpentine path through the Southwest Field to Simsbury Road.



Volunteer Peggy Lareau recruited and organized a group of trail stewards to maintain the woodland trails. These stewards walk their assigned trails periodically, notify the Stewardship committee of hazards such as fallen trees, and help arrange for sawyers to remove the hazards.

Invasive removal and management activities continued throughout the year, especially along the north and east edges of Hilltop Field. On the east side, a 950-foot-long hedgerow has been reclaimed and on the north side, invasive plants were removed to make way for pasture grass and four more oak trees. Invasive plants also were removed from around the farmhouse.

The Department of Public Works cleared and chipped extensive areas of invasive plants on both sides of the gravel farm road in January 2021. In August, our annual field mowing helped to cut back excessive invasive growth which has taken hold in the 44 acres of meadows on the east side of the farm.

Trail use

Like most outdoor recreation spaces, the woodland trails and the Holcomb Tree Trail saw a significant increase in use as people sought out the safety of outdoor activities during the pandemic.

Signage

The Granby Lion's Club helped fund the construction and installation of a trail kiosk, which will display the Holcomb Tree Trail map, trail information, and educational content. Kiosk construction was completed in late June and signage will be installed during the summer. With funding from the 2019 Pomeroy-Brace grant, we had eight more interpretive signs made for the Tree Trail, which will be installed this summer.

TREASURER'S REPORT

The Friends of Holcomb Farm, a 501(c)3 non-profit, experienced sound financial results in 2020, despite the limitations and challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic. The cancellation of our signature Fresh Access fundraising event, the annual Harvest Dinner and Silent Auction, was among the hurdles imposed during a year like no other, creating an expected Fresh Access fundraising deficit of \$15,000. The Hartford Foundation for Public Giving's special Covid-19 relief grant filled the hole. In addition, thanks to incredible community generosity in both the Annual Fund Drive and a special Fresh Access outreach, individual contributions far exceeded expectations, netting nearly \$23,000 more than budgeted.

The FOHF establishes an annual program budget for the management of its accounts throughout the year. While these separate programs—Farming (CSA & Farm Store), Fresh Access, and Stewardship—are all part of one financial organization, utilizing program accounting assures that from a governance and operational perspective, we can clearly see and manage resources (aka revenues) and investments (aka expenses), and donor intent is always honored. This is key to our financial sustainability.

The farming programs remain our largest activity. Net income from another successful farming year, which we have enjoyed now for the past seven years, is used to build capital reserves for periodic major capital purchases—both planned and unplanned. It also goes to support all of the organization's endeavors, overall. In 2020, farming revenue grew handsomely—by nearly \$90,000—driven primarily by strong growth in CSA shares (+\$48,749) and



farmer's market sales (+\$33,162) as compared to 2019 levels. Expenses also grew from 2019, most notably in farm payroll costs (+\$43,933). Taken together in aggregate, net income from farming operations improved by just over \$14,000. General fundraising and Fresh Access-specific revenues and expenses both exceeded budget, while grant revenue also exceeded expectations.

The USDA Covid Relief grant of approximately \$31,000 further helped contribute to the bottom line. Along with other grants (mentioned above) and strong fundraising, the Friends were able to add to the board-designated reserves: the Fresh Access Stabilization Reserve (+\$17,653); and to the Farming Reserve (+\$15,000). The board also formed a Holcomb Tree Trail Reserve, to begin to support long-term growth and management of this important asset. Total assets, in aggregate, increased by \$161,381 year over year, again driven primarily by strong farming operations and grants.

CULTIVATION

In 2020, the FOHF Board of Directors changed the requirements for membership in the Friends of Holcomb Farm organization. Traditionally membership accrued to individuals or families who made an annual donation of \$25 or more. The change extended membership status to all CSA shareholders starting with the Winter 2020-2021 season. As a result, we now have 697 members as of June 2021.

Thank you to everyone who gave to our Annual Appeal. We raised \$19,277 (as of June 3, 2021).

We were not able to have any indoor events or programs due to Covid-19 gathering restrictions. We did offer several guided tree trail walks including a tour for The Hartford Garden Club in October 2020 and two evening tours in spring 2021.

GRANTS

During the fiscal year, the FOHF was very fortunate to receive over \$123,000 in grants from a wide variety of organizations, which positively impacted the different programs at Holcomb Farm. We thank all the funding organizations for their generous support.

Pandemic Relief Grants

In response to the coronavirus pandemic, federal and state entities issued Covid-19 relief grants to assist those suffering from food insecurity. Fresh Access (FA) was already focused on providing food to under-served communities. Thanks to the awareness and quick action of several FOHF board members, Holcomb Farm applied for and received several of these grants, which enabled it to improve its operation and expand its FA program.

The Hartford Foundation for Public Giving (HFPG) instituted a special program in late spring 2020 to expedite funds to nonprofits focusing on food scarcity. Anticipating that our FA fundraising event (Harvest Dinner and Silent Auction) would not be possible, the FOHF applied for and received a \$15,000 grant to make up for the fundraising deficit. The grant, which was awarded in May, allowed FA to meet all of its 2020 commitments without tapping into its reserves.

The USDA issued Covid relief grants as part of the federal Covid Relief Funds. In December 2020, the Holcomb Farm CSA was awarded a \$30,954.32 USDA Covid Relief grant. Approximately half of these funds were used to purchase a cargo van for FA deliveries. The remainder was used to bolster farming capital reserves which were significantly reduced by a tractor purchase in 2019.

Locally, FA received grants from the Granby Community Fund (\$6,000) and the First Congregational Church (\$3,000) to support the Fresh Access food provided to the Granby Senior Center and the Waste Not Want Not Community Kitchen. Additional FA-designated matching grants were received from our FA institutional partners Wheeler Clinic (\$24,000) and the Hispanic Health Council (\$2,400). These funds supported the entire FA client base and mission.

This March, FA was honored to receive \$7,500 in



Hartford Foundation Donor Advised Funds from the Fischer Family Fund. This grant supported FA's increased acquisition of food for its partner organizations.

Pomeroy-Brace Grants

The Pomeroy-Brace Fund is administered by the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving (HFPG) and provides funding to select nonprofits in Granby annually. Due to the pandemic, the HFPG suspended all funding in the spring of 2020 and resumed it in the fall. Our Fall of 2019 request for \$27,503 was granted and funded in November of 2020. The funds were requested for all program areas.

- The CSA received \$16,600+ to purchase a variety of farm equipment to increase the efficiency and effectiveness.
- Fresh Access received \$8,800 to acquire food for those in need through the FA program.
- The Holcomb Tree Trail received \$2,330 for a variety of improvements including new trees and additional educational signage.

The Farm Business Plan, funded in part by the 2018 State of CT small farm grant, was completed this April. The plan will assist the FOHF board to refine the Strategic Plan for Holcomb Farm. The remaining \$2,500 of that original \$5,000 grant was received in May.

Additional Tree Trail Funding

In March 2021, FOHF received a \$500 mini-grant from the Connecticut Ornithological Association to purchase over a dozen native shrubs to improve bird habitat on the Holcomb Tree Trail. These shrubs were planted in spring 2021 along the gravel farm road.

In May 2021, FOHF received \$1250 from the Granby Lion's Club to help fund the construction and installation of a trail kiosk at the end of the gravel farm road.

THANK YOU!

The Friends of Holcomb Farm thank the following people and organizations for their generous contributions during the 2020 fiscal year (July 1, 2020–June 30, 2021). The FOHF had 646 members—those who gave \$25 or more to the Friends of Holcomb Farm or joined our CSA during our 2020 fiscal year. Gifts received after June 30, 2021 will be reflected in next year's annual report.

\$1000+

Robert Bystrowski and Catherine Slattery
Mary and George Colby
Jenny and David Emery
Mark and Kristal Fiorentino
Jill and Walter Ford
Sarah Gamble
Paula and Lowell Johnson
Lynn Lochhead
Eric Lukingbeal and Sally King
Therese Mulvey and Brad McDougall
Shirley Murtha
John Schumann
David Schupp

\$500–999

Chris and Kim Becker
William Bentley and Ann Wilhelm
Diana Haghighat
Charles Kuchenbrod
Jack and Peggy Lareau
Mike and Lisa Larsen
Georgia B. McDougall
Laura McLelland
Debi O'Keefe and Joel Alsup
Donna and Jim Snyder
Kathleen Usher and Jeanne Galloway
Mark and Barbara Wetzel
Alfred and Helen Wilke
Walter and Linda Zultowski

\$250–499

Flo Bischoff
Daniel and Nannie Brown
John and Jen Dankosky
Donna and Kevin Edwards
Bob and Peggy Giles
Helena Grabo
Todd and Valerie Hollister
Gary Kanter and Kelly Lynch
Arthur and Aurelle Locke

Kathryn Lord
Michelle Niedermeyer and Kevin Riggott, Lost Acres Vineyard
Susan Nilsen
Diana and Trevor Reeves
Patricia and Jim Sansone
Aubrey and Kenneth Schulz
Jason Warnke
Wendy and Robert Young

\$100–249

Susan Ackerman and James Rook
James Allen
Jenica and David Allen
Tony Allen
Alejandro Arbelaez
Shawn Ball and David Katz
Peter and Morven Barwick
Stephen and Liz Beaudin
Jason and Jennifer Bell
Greg and Maura Borsecnik
Tim and Kathryn Boyd
Donna Brasley
John and Leslie Brigham
Thomas and Victoria Burns
Susan Canavan and Joel Danke
Susan and Mark Cavanagh
Peggy and Wayne Chapple
Avis and Lou Cherichetti
Catherine Chhabra
Len Comeau
Michael DiBianco
Adah Dionne
Tim Dishaw
Robert Donna
Ron and Jay Durej
Patricia and David Ellis
Pamela Emmons
Robin Finn
Mary Fleischli
Mary and Tom Fuller
Deborah and Michael Gantt
The Garden Club of Hartford
Jeffrey and Gina Glynn
Jordan and Corinna Grossman

Mike and Judy Guarco
Matthew Hamer and Gaylien Chun
Dorothy Hatch
J. Callender Heminway
Mary Ann and Paul Henzler
Kathy and Ed Hodgson
Margot Hosford
Rita Isaacson
Joan Israelson
Mary Ellen Kahn
Nancy Kannenberg
Susan Keller
Jennifer and Tom Kim
Andrea Krause
John and Stacey Kroninger
Ron and Jo-Ann Lebel
Tim and Deb Lenihan
Jonathan and Gloria Lynch
Gary Maulucci
Doug McComas
Lewis and Beth McIntyre
Karen McNey
Dwight Merriam
Melissa and Mark Migliaccio
Sarah Morgan
Christine and Eric Mortensen
Kathy Norris
Sally and Sam Paul
Trish Percival and Rick Orluk
Carol Pescik
Lisa Peterson
Richard Pfeifer and Lisa Corbett
Rocco and Katie Piccirillo
Lisa and Robert Primmer
Valerie Raggio and Dave Desiderato
Mandy Rahardjo
Daniel Roche
Kelly and Randy Rome
Duncan and Marian Rowles
Karen Rubinow
David and Martha Rusch
Katie Russo
Gary and Suzanne Scarcella

Donna and Rob Schedinger
Steven and Laurie Schock
Mary Ellen Schoonmaker and Michael Hoyt
Earl and Cindy Schulz
Jack and Donna Sennott
Peggy and Donald Shaw
Julie Shifreen
Lynette and Bill Simpson
Laverne Smith
John and Janet Spatcher
Richard and Joanne Stevens
Wendy and Russell Stone
Ellen Swayne
Ellen Thomson
David Tolli
Krista Trousdale Sullivan
Michael and Kathy Ungerleider
Palma Vaccaro
Paul and Catherine Willis
Don and Marty Wilmot
Mark and Betsy Ziemieniczuk

Up to \$99

John and Cynthia Adams
Kathy Agresta
Peter Alcide
Joshua Anderson
Elizabeth Appel
Barbara Arian
Barry and Heather Avery
Mary Ballou
Jonathan and Heather Banas
Chris and Lee Barba
Wanda Bazyk
Lisa and G. Christopher Beede
Tricia Bennett
Richard and Sheila Benson
Audrey and Lindy Bigliazzi
Lydia and Patrick Blanche
Heather Blum-Pastor
Tracy Bodine
Cassie Boisvert
Niki Bonnett
Luberta Bradley

Up to \$99 continued

Francis and Mary Brady
Richard and Lynn Broders
Derek Bronson
Stephen and Kelly Bryant
Pamela and Richard Burek
Rebecca Cai
Tamara and Chris Carey
Lou and Linda Carissimi
Wendy Cook
Kenneth Cortavarria and Emily Gentry
Kathryn and Kelly Costello
Allison Couture
Katie and Shannon Crawford
Ellen Cunha
Kirsten Cusano
Edward and Elaine Darcy
Lisa and Jeff Darmetko
Ken and Joan Davis
Rose DeAngelis
Michelle and Louie DeGagne
Jan and Bonnie Dommel
Erin Dotson-Kelly
Lani Dove and Chris Wrobel
Cynthia Dowd
Roy and Beverly Duff
Michael and Evy Egan
Christine Ehlers
Joanna Eickenhorst
Amy and Jesse Eisler
Lois Elssesser and Joseph Nunes
Grace Epstein
Julie Erasmus
Marie Fallon
Coreen and Nicholas Faraco
Rebecca Filkoff
Nan Flanagan
Kristin Flyntz
Patricia Freedman
Barbara and Alan Friedland
Michael Galikas
Brittany Gauthier
Sharda Geer
Kelley Geller
Kristin Gerhold
Lindsay Glick
Emily Goodwin and Evan Burke
Gregory and Melinda Gould
Susan and Charles Gowen
Catherine and Robert Grandahl
Sarah and Brandon Greer
Marion Griffin
Regina Grossman

Sharon Gustave
Margo Hablutzel
Ellen and Andrew Hannah
Carol Harris
Amy Hayashida
Yuling He
Kelly Hennessey
Jennifer Hosack
Dan Hurley and Suzanne Gerber
Laura Jacobson
Shannon Jacovino
Peter Jalbert
Holly and Curt Johnson
Retie Johnson
Judith Jones
Tara Kazmaier
Virginia Keleher
Emili and Christopher Kellner
Maureen and David Kenna
Laura Eden Kimble
Devorah King
Sandra Kissel
Taylor Knortz
Susanne and Thomas Kornacki
Stephanie Kozicki
Kim Kraner
Scott and Joan Kuhnly
Pamela Lamson
Joan Landrum and Ken Brasel
Christina and Ken LaPent
Bryan and Susan Larson
Corey Laskey
Carol and Dave Laun
Serena Laws
Susan Lebow
Aimee LeBrun
Michelle Leibovitz
Shirley Leong
Lauren Lett
Rachel and David Leventhal-Weiner
Amanda Lindberg
Heidi Lindberg
Tina Lindsay
James and Celia Lofink
Barbara Looney
Tom and Mary Loveless
Michele Lyons
John and Katherine Magarian
Katie Miller Mai
Ellen and Charlie Mandelberg
Ken and Rachael Manzer
Gregory Marco
Ana Marlette

Joseph and Arlene Mattavi
Rebecca McGuigan
Courtney McGuire
Stephanie and Tom McGuire
Richard and Ruth Meyer
Mark and Laura Midura
William and Rebecca Mikus
Howard and Marion Miller
Stephen and Todd Miltimore
Nicole and Eric Misko
Steve and Karen Moore
Mary Ellen Mullins
Joyce and John Mundt
Patrice Murphy
Rochelle Murphy
John and Joan Nagy
Patrice Nelson
Thomas and Marilyn Nystrom
Jonathan and Kali Olson
Erin and Gene Ott
Karen Pakula
Rebecca Pappas
Jessica Parise
April Parsons
Susan Pearson and Hank Prussing
Laura Pekala
Amber and Matthew Pendlebury
Richard Pentz
Karl Peters
Sina Pfuhl
Leesa and Ray Philippon
Jason Polayes and Jennifer Weymouth
William and Sara Pomponi
Erica Prevost
Mark Proft
William and Ann Prokop
Rosalie Puskar
Lori Racicot-Burrous
Gail Reiner
Chelsea Reinhardt
Ann Marie and Chuck Reuter
Doug and Ann Reynolds
Margaret Richardson
Christen Rinaldi
Robert and Nancy Rodney
Roxanne and James Rosano
Rosemarie Roy
Roger and Denise Royer
Peter and Rita Rozantes
Pamela Russek
Joanne and David Russell
Mary Ann Salazar
Jennifer Sanborn

Mary Sanislo
Lucia Schaefer
Toby Scheel
Theresa and James Schrijn
Robin and Tucker Schuldt
Lonni and Phil Schulz
Joanne Sciola
Elaine Shapiro
Michelle Sharkey
Lee Shaw
Suzanne Shayer
Deborah and Brennan Sheahan
Jessica Sherman
Britta Shute
Susan Singer
Kathryn Sivel
Erin Sloat
Jacqueline Smith
Chris and Julie Sochacki
Matthew Soucie
Jonathan and Kimberly Stevens
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Rachel Stratford
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Bruce Sullivan
Margaret Sullivan
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Marcia and Helio Tinone
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Bridget Turek
Faith Tyldsley
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Amy Vickers
Lidia Vilner
Adam and Amanda Vincent
Erin Vlahakis
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Cathy and Jim Watso
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Jennifer Weymouth
Evan Williams
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Linda Yurasevecz
Jane Zande
Connor and Michelle Ziegler