



WHAT'S GROWING ON?

News from the Friends of Holcomb Farm

December 2025

A BUILDING FOR OUR FUTURE: AN UPDATE



Exciting news! The Friends of Holcomb Farm (FOHF) is delighted to announce that Prescott Construction Management of Simsbury will be leading the renovation of the old West Granby United Methodist Church building—creating our new **Holcomb Farm CSA & Farm Store**, a refreshed space that will support our farmers and serve our neighbors.

We're especially excited to have Prescott Construction owners Kevin Lazich and Kevin West guiding the project, in collaboration with architect Dana Warren of DKW Architecture. Dana, a Granby native, brings both expertise and a deep appreciation for the community this project will support.

Last Saturday, the FOHF Board of Directors and their families came together to remove the remaining furnishings (all items not taken for use by other churches and nonprofit organizations), preparing the building for its next steps. It was hard work, and we are

deeply grateful to our board members for their willingness to roll up their sleeves and do whatever it takes to make this project happen.

We plan to break ground in January and open the store for the 2026 Summer Season!

[Learn More](#)

NEW LEADERSHIP AT HOLCOMB FARM *HONORING A LEGACY, BUILDING A FUTURE*

The Friends of Holcomb Farm is experiencing a period of profound transition—one marked by both deep loss and renewed purpose. Following the devastating passing of Board President and Executive Director Jenny Emery, the organization found itself at a pivotal moment just as it was embarking on one of its most exciting projects: repurposing of the old West Granby United Methodist Church building into a farm store and post-harvest facility.

In the immediate aftermath, Vice Presidents Eric Lukingbeal and Amy Eisler stepped forward to guide the organization while the board considered next steps. Recognizing that no single person could fill the extraordinary space Jenny occupied, board members prepared for a transition that would require unity and teamwork.

Almost immediately, Jenny's husband, Dave, expressed his desire to join the board of directors so that he could help. Dave is a dedicated public servant who loves Granby, is passionate about open space, and has served on other town nonprofit boards—including those of the Granby Land Trust and the Granby Education Foundation. He is intimately familiar with the history, needs, and aspirations of the farm; and he is a charismatic leader, a natural collaborator, and an unwaveringly pragmatic problem-solver with a focus on getting the job done. Dave has made it clear that completing this project—one Jenny championed with such passion—is a personal priority and a promise he intends to keep. Within two months of joining the board of directors, Dave was elected board president.

One of the first orders of business under Dave's leadership was the appointment of a full-time executive director. Cat Kadrle, who started volunteering at Holcomb Farm when she moved to town in 2020 and was hired as the farm's part-time administrator in 2023, was exceptionally well-positioned for the role. "In a time of tremendous loss and change, Cat has been a source of strength and continuity," says Dave. "Her commitment to this farm and its community is exactly what we need to carry Jenny's legacy forward."

The bottom line is this: the Friends of Holcomb Farm is now poised for an exciting and eventful 2026 and beyond. Under Dave's steady leadership, the board's transition has been remarkably smooth. And Cat—who had already given so much to the organization in her time as administrator—stepped into the role of executive director with confidence and ease. Together, Dave, Cat, and the entire board are committed to honoring Jenny's legacy by strengthening the farm's programs, deepening community connections, and ensuring that the organization continues to thrive for years to come.

A HARVEST DINNER TO REMEMBER

Each fall, the Friends of Holcomb Farm (FOHF) invites the community to come together to celebrate the season's bounty at a special Harvest Dinner showcasing Holcomb Farm vegetables. This year's dinner, held at the Holcomb Farm North Barn on October 23, was a wonderful success—attended by more than **120 people**, the event raised more than **\$14,000** for the Friends of Holcomb Farm. We are so grateful to our event chairs, Christiane Pimentel-Olatokunbo and Cat Kadrle, and the rest of the organizing committee, for all they did to make this such an amazing night.



The **FOHF Bud Murtha Volunteer Service Award**—the FOHF's highest distinction—was presented to FOHF Board Member **Susan Canavan**, in gratitude for her service to the farm over the last seven years. A talented graphic designer with a deep passion for Holcomb Farm, Sue not only works with the farm's marketing team and shapes the farm's visual identity, she also spends time planting trees and caring for the Holcomb Tree Trail. In presenting the award, FOHF Vice President Amy Eisler said, "Her talent, generosity and dedication have truly elevated Holcomb Farm."



One of the most moving moments of the evening came when **Dave Emery** took the microphone. Dave took the floor to speak about projects left unfinished in the wake of the sudden passing of his wife, Jenny, and he encouraged all in attendance to help realize Jenny's vision of a new home for the Holcomb Farm CSA & Farm Store. His heartfelt and inspirational words were met with a standing ovation, tears, and a renewed sense of purpose.



Radio Personality **John Dankosky** interviewed CT Department of

The FOHF Community Service Award, was presented by FOHF Board VP Eric Lukingbeal to **Kirk Severance**, Granby's Director of Public Works, in recognition of his enthusiastic support of Holcomb Farm and his dedication to caring for the Town-owned property upon which the farm sits.



Guests Walter Ford, Barry Avery, Bill Kennedy, and Mark Kennedy.

Agriculture Commissioner **Bryan P. Hurlburt** in a spirited fireside chat about the importance of supporting farmers and agriculture in Connecticut. Commissioner Hurlburt expressed how delighted he was to witness the enthusiasm and energy in the room and thanked everyone for supporting the critical work being done by the Friends of Holcomb Farm.



Thank you Holcomb Farm Harvest Dinner Auction Donors:

Laura J. Eden Artist
 Kristal Fiorentino
 Emma Hoyt
 Lost Acres Fire Department
 Eric Lukingbeal
 Missing Link Wine Company
 Metro Bis
 My Flower Pots
 O'Brien Nursery
 Cooking at the Taylor Treehouse

HOLIDAY SALES

Holiday Gift Bag Sale

@ CSA Barn
 December 19, 20, and 22
 10AM - 4PM

Don't show up empty-handed to your holiday parties! Give the gift of local, chemical-free Holcomb Farm produce and products to your loved ones. We have a new tote and new Holcomb Farm products, including pickles, hot sauce, sauerkraut, and a large mug to hold all your warm drinks this winter. Each gift bag also will include sweet potatoes and



crushed tomatoes. Holiday gift bag pickup will be on **Friday, December 19, Saturday, December 20, and Monday December 22 10 am to 4 pm**. To purchase a holiday gift bag or to learn more, email hanna@holcombfarm.org or stop by the farm December 19, 20, or the 22. Follow us on Facebook and Instagram, or sign up on our website (www.holcombfarm.org) to receive emails from the farm so we can let you know more details about this popular gift idea!



Holiday Farmer's Market @ Lost Acres Vineyard December 20 10AM - 2PM

Get everything you need for a festive celebration at the **Holiday Farmers Market, held indoors at Lost Acres Vineyard**. We'll be there with an assortment of veggies and Holcomb Farm products for your holiday table. You'll also find meats, cheeses, baked goods, and specialty products from other local farms. We hope to see you there!

HFPG GRANT AND DONOR SUPPORT FUEL FRESH ACCESS EXPANSION

The Friends of Holcomb Farm (FOHF) organization continues to feel the ripple effects of our late president, Jenny Emery's hard work, dedication and compassion.

In August of 2025, Jenny partnered with Gilma Galdamez from the Hispanic Health Council—one of our valued Fresh Access Partners—to apply for a Hartford Foundation for Public Giving (HFPG) grant. Their hope was to help cover the cost of the Council's 2026 Fresh Access share and to explore the possibility of offering a 2025 winter share.



In early November, we received wonderful news: **HFPG awarded FOHF a \$10,000 grant**. This funding enabled us to allocate \$8,000 toward the Hispanic Health Council's 2026 Fresh Access share, leaving \$2,000 available to support a winter share.

Meanwhile, Jenny had been working tirelessly to launch FOHF's new **Fresh Access Heroes** program, designed to give donors a meaningful way to ensure the long-term sustainability of the Fresh Access program and, in turn, expand access to healthy, local food for our partners. Thanks to the generosity of those individuals who have stepped up as Fresh Access Heroes, we were able to match the remaining grant funds—resulting in a meaningful, \$4,000 first-time winter share for the Hispanic Health Council.

As a result, more than 50 households served by the Hispanic Health Council are now receiving Holcomb Farm winter produce – including carrots, potatoes, sweet potatoes, onions, beets, and more—twice a month throughout November and December 2025.

We are deeply grateful to the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving for their support of this program, and to the Hispanic Health Council for helping us get our crops to people in need. Of course, none of this would have been possible without the generosity of our Fresh Access Heroes and the leadership of Jenny Emery, whose insight and dedication continue to shape the future of the Friends of Holcomb Farm and its Fresh Access program.

THANK YOU, STEWARDSHIP VOLUNTEERS

Our stewardship team is wrapping up another busy and productive year of work at Holcomb Farm. (Of course, the work doesn't end when the days grow shorter and the snow falls. Winter is time for selecting new trees, targeting new rehabilitation areas, planning events, installing bog bridges, and even tackling invasive species removal if it's not too cold!)

The Friends of Holcomb Farm thank our many Stewardship volunteers for all their work in 2025. These volunteers have:

- planted 14 trees including magnolias, Dunstan chestnuts, willow oaks, sycamores, and native shrubs;
- watered dozens of new trees on the Holcomb Tree Trail;
- mowed more than two miles of meadow paths;
- cut back invasive plant growth in select field areas and along field edges by hand and with our new Billy Goat brush cutter;
- maintained over ten miles of woodland trails;
- mounted accession tags with scientific information on over 100 new trees;
- hosted several events including outdoor yoga and educational walks; and
- continued to manage the long-term plans for the Holcomb Tree Trail and increase engagement with new visitors and volunteers.



We also thank the Town of Granby Department of Public Works for their partnership—and in particular for repairing the farm road drainage, which aims to reduce the ice buildup that has made the road difficult to use in winter.

NEWS FROM THE FIELDS

Looking back on the summer season, this was the first year in a long time that we didn't have extended periods of extreme heat or rain. The normal summer weather, combined with resting more land and spending more per acre on fertility and amendments, resulted in an abundant summer of nutritious and chemical-free produce. Now, the fields are full of cover crops, the greenhouses are full of winter greens, and

the storage crops are in—winter is here!



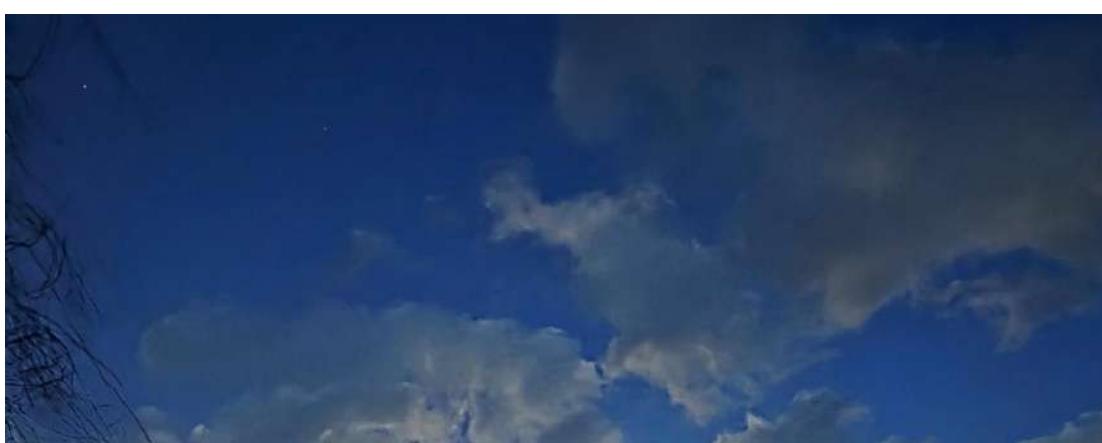
We are so grateful for the hard work and dedication of our Farm Crew. They work hard to put beautiful, nourishing food on our tables and keep the farm thriving.

JENNY EMERY VISION FUND

We continue to receive gifts to the **Jenny Emery Vision Fund**, a testament to how many lives Jenny touched and the profound impact she had everywhere she went.

It's not too late to show your support. All gifts made in Jenny's honor will be used to support the repurposing of the old West Granby Methodist Church buliding. We will notify the Emery Family of all gifts received. If you would like to honor Jenny's memory with a contribution, please use the button below. Thank you.

[Support the Jenny Emery Vision Fund](#)





Another spectacular Full Moon Hike, brought to you by the Friends of Holcomb Farm, is in the books! Couldn't make it to this one? You'll want to join our next one! Sign up for our emails and follow us on Facebook and Instagram to stay informed about FOHF events. Photo credit: Ginny Apple

The Friends of Holcomb Farm is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to preserve, promote and utilize the historic Holcomb Farm for the benefit of the community.

Support the Friends of Holcomb Farm



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