

Granby Living

A Building for Our Future

How Holcomb Farm is Growing Granby's
Local Food Community



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THE BEST PLACE TO LAND:

HOW HOLCOMB FARM IS GROWING GRANBY'S LOCAL FOOD COMMUNITY

For generations, Holcomb Farm has been part of Granby's landscape — and its heartbeat. Since 1756, the fertile fields along Simsbury Road have fed neighbors and connected the town to its agricultural roots. In more recent decades, the volunteer-led Friends of Holcomb Farm (FOHF) have carried that legacy forward, building a thriving nonprofit farm that nourishes the community while protecting open farmland for future generations.

Today, Holcomb Farm's impact reaches far beyond the fields. A bustling Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program serves hundreds of families each season. A public farm store offers fresh produce and locally made goods. Public walking trails and an arboretum — the Holcomb Tree Trail — provide exceptional opportunities for outdoor recreation. And the Fresh Access program delivers thousands of pounds of farm-grown food each year to neighbors facing food insecurity. But, as demand for local food grows — especially year-round — the farm's current infrastructure has reached its limits. The existing farm store operates out of a small, unheated, former tobacco barn, restricting public access to just five months each year. Post-harvest processing is done outdoors, making winter operations difficult. Meanwhile, interest in CSA memberships, local produce, and food-access programs continues to rise. Now a once-in-a-generation opportunity is taking root right next door.

In 2021, the West Granby United Methodist Church closed its doors. Thanks to thoughtful stewardship and collaboration between the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, the Town of Granby, the Granby Land Trust, and the Friends of Holcomb Farm, the church property has now returned to its original agricultural home. The town has entrusted FOHF with stewardship of the building — opening the door for an exciting new chapter in Holcomb Farm's story. The vision: transform the former church into a year-round farm hub — a modern, welcoming space that supports local food access, strengthens farm operations, and brings the community together.

Plans for the building include a four-season farm store featuring Holcomb Farm produce and products from neighboring farms and



makers; an indoor post-harvest processing center for washing and packing vegetables; dedicated staff and volunteer spaces; and the possibility of one day having a commercial kitchen. It's a practical, forward-thinking solution that solves current challenges while expanding what's possible for the future.

Importantly, this transformation will be made possible entirely through dollars raised by the Friends of Holcomb Farm. No public tax funds will be used. As a community-supported nonprofit, the Friends of Holcomb Farm does not receive funding from the Town of Granby and relies on private donations, memberships, grants, and the generosity of volunteers and supporters to carry out its work. (It's also important to note that the North Barn Pavillion — the event space located on the farm property — is owned and managed by the Town of Granby. The Friends of Holcomb Farm does not run the North Barn and does not receive or profit from any rental fees associated with that space.)

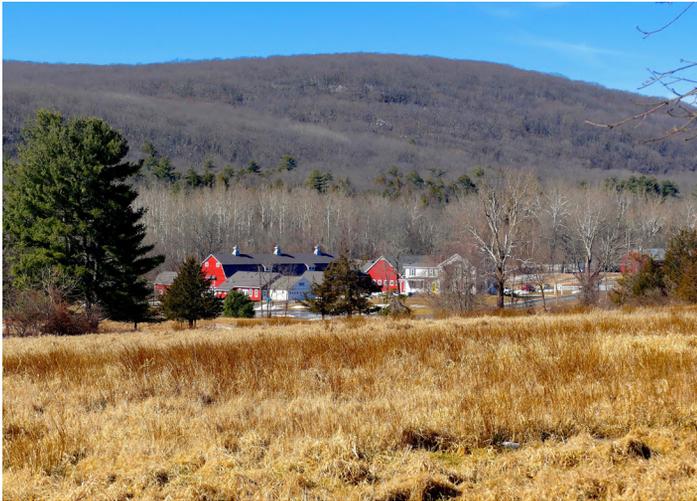
One of the most immediate impacts of this project will be on winter farming. By converting the church's sanctuary into a post-harvest center, Holcomb Farm can double its winter CSA shares — unlocking new off-season revenue and making year-round local vegetables more accessible to residents. No more washing produce outdoors in freezing temperatures; instead, a clean, efficient indoor workspace designed for New England winters. The new building will also create a true year-round marketplace for Granby's agricultural community. Shoppers will be able to purchase fresh vegetables, meats, dairy, baked goods, and handmade items even in the colder months.



Current Farm Store



Bringing Veggies to Those in Need



Farm Scene By Don Shaw, Jr.



Poppies at Holcomb Farm By Don Shaw, Jr.

CSA members will pick up their weekly shares there, bringing hundreds of visitors to the farm each week. Having indoor space will open the door for cooking classes, tastings, and community gatherings centered around local food. Behind the scenes, the project also addresses something equally important: caring for the people who make the farm run. The new space will provide break rooms, lockers, office areas, and meeting rooms for farm crew, staff, and volunteers — improvements that simply aren't possible in the current barn setup.

At its core, the project is about strengthening community ties. As FOHF's capacity grows, so does its ability to expand the Fresh Access program, which remains the single largest recipient of the farm's produce. More infrastructure means more food grown, more food shared, and more neighbors supported across Granby and the greater Hartford region. Equally meaningful is the building's symbolism.

Rather than seeing a beloved community church repurposed or sold away from its roots, it will once again serve as a gathering place — this time centered around stewardship, sustainability, and shared nourishment. Holcomb Farm has always been about more



Current Post-Harvest Processing

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than growing food. It's about growing community. With this new building, that mission is ready to flourish in every season.

The Friends of Holcomb Farm is the nonprofit, member-based organization that oversees all the ways in which the farm serves people in Granby and beyond. FOHF hopes more neighbors will

join them in connecting with this special place — this “jewel of Granby” — Holcomb Farm.

To learn more or support the FOHF, visit holcombfarm.org.

All area residents are warmly invited to be part of this effort — whether by giving, volunteering, or simply spreading the word. This is a project built by the community, for the community.

Do you know a neighbor who has a story to share?

Nominate your neighbor to be featured in one of our upcoming issues! Send your nominations to jterrell@bestversionmedia.com.

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