



Local Matters is a nonprofit organization located in Columbus, Ohio. We play a key leadership role in ensuring that the entire community of central Ohio has easy access to local, healthy food.

We believe that local, healthy and sustainably grown food has the power to transform, sustain and build community in Central Ohio, the city of Columbus and the neighborhoods within our city limits. We also believe that we can harness the power of healthy food as an important key to community change. Just as healthy food nourishes the individual's body and soul to create health and well being, so it is capable of nourishing and transforming the neighborhoods we inhabit into healthy communities by affecting systemic social, economic and environmental change our region.

Local Matters operates three programs to demonstrate the positive influence that healthy, local food and a healthy local food system can have in our community:

- **Farm to Fork:** A program that encourages the farm community to grow more food crops by working to create market opportunities for small and medium size sustainably operated family farms and provides educational opportunities for the public regarding the social, economic and environmental advantages of purchasing locally grown foods. **The Greener Grocer**, a for profit business owned by **Local Matters**, is the primary hub of this program.

Our latest project within our **Farm to Fork** program is our “**Mobile Farm Market**”. This project, which began this fall, distributes locally grown, fresh and nutritious foods in underserved communities via our “Veggie Van”. The van typically makes two hour, pre-determined stops in various neighborhoods on a weekly basis. We are set up to accept EBT cards (Food Stamps) in addition to credit cards and cash payments.

- **Urban Agriculture:** A program that works to get fresh, nutritious local foods into underserved, vulnerable neighborhoods by helping the community grow their own food through the development of urban farms. We also help coordinate the distribution of the food throughout the community and are developing an adult “Cooking Skills” curriculum to teach members of these same communities how to prepare fresh, nutritious foods.
- **Local Food to School:** A program that seeks to re-connect children to the roots of healthy, nutritious food, positively influence their eating habits at an early age and provide a "sensory based" educational experience with healthy, nutritious food and the natural world. Our *‘Three Sisters Project’* incorporates an on-site, edible food garden with a health, wellness and nutrition classroom curriculum developed by Dr. Antonia Demas titled, *‘Food is Elementary’*. Students grow their own food, participate in both the harvest and preparation of this fresh, local food in their classroom and also learn about the role of fresh, local foods as part of a healthy diet.

A second component of this project, currently under development, combines an outdoor learning environment with a **Food Ecology Curriculum** and is designed as a compliment to the curriculum model *‘Food is Elementary’*. This curriculum will engage children on subjects such as soil science, composting, indigenous plant & wildlife communities, wild edible plants, organic food production practices, water harvesting, etc...and offer visits to local farms to see how food is grown on a larger scale and to get a “bigger picture view” of food ecology.

The broader issues of food insecurity, poverty and the health related issues that they effect and that still exist in our society today, suggest that a new paradigm combining the power of food with education, partnership and a willingness to commit greater resources in a more thoughtful way will be necessary to break this cycle.