



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Shelley B. Mayer

## Senator Shelley Mayer Awards Westchester Land Trust (WLT) for Fighting Food Insecurity in Westchester During the Coronavirus Pandemic

SHELLEY B. MAYER October 16, 2020

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On Friday, October 16th, Senator Shelley B. Mayer recognized Westchester Land Trust (WLT) with the 1st Place Community Garden Award for its work fighting food insecurity in Westchester during the Coronavirus Pandemic.

Senator Shelley Mayer's Garden Contest asked residents to nominate home and community gardens that add beauty to our communities during this difficult time. The office received numerous submissions and touching stories of residents turning to gardening as an outlet during the pandemic. WLT's Sugar Hill Farm was chosen for the 1st Place Community Garden Award for its work fighting food insecurity in our communities.

Before the Coronavirus crisis began, one in five Westchester residents was living with food insecurity. Due to the financial impact of the pandemic on families' budgets, that need has more than doubled, according to Feeding Westchester, Westchester's food resource distribution center.

**Senator Shelley B. Mayer** said, "I am pleased to recognize WLT's work delivering thousands of servings of fresh produce each year to individuals in need with the 1st Place Community Garden Award. This is a time of great need for many individuals and families in our community. The contributions made by WLT's Sugar Hill Farm are critical in the fight against food insecurity. In times of crisis, we look to the helpers. WLT's leadership, staff and numerous volunteers exemplify a spirit of giving and service that offers a source of hope and encouragement during these difficult times."

**Lori Ensinger, President of Westchester Land Trust**, said, "Westchester Land Trust is thankful for Senator Shelley Mayer's support of the many benefits that open space preservation provides for all members of our community, including sustainable agriculture. Deepening food insecurity is one of the greatest challenges our community is facing as a result of the COVID pandemic, and we are honored to be recognized by the Senator for the work WLT is

doing to alleviate this for families in need.”

Volunteers of all ages help plant, water, weed, and harvest crops in WLT’s Sugar Hill Farm from April through October. The produce harvested is donated to local food pantries fighting food insecurity. This year, due to the threat of COVID-19, it has strict volunteer protocols in place, but its work in the garden is more important than ever before since more and more families have had to turn to food pantries due to loss of job or income.



Allison Turcan, Farmer at Sugar Hill Farm, giving Senator Mayer a tour.



Sugar Hill Farm is located in Bedford Hills, NY and operated by the Westchester Land Trust.