



# 2020 Year in Review

Inspiring, Nurturing, Promoting  
Farm-Based Education

Blawesome Farm

CHAPEL HILL, NC



*"FBEN is a Network that's percolating on who we are together, and that allows us to think differently about what we can do, what's possible. That's a wonderful feeling to have. I feel really hopeful about how we can collectively choose a way forward."*

- Tafadzwa Gwitira,  
FBEN Advisory Board Member





The COVID-19 pandemic catalyzed new connections and relationships within FBEN. The following pages offer a glimpse into our 2020 activities.

 Programs

 People

 Looking Ahead

HOLLY HILL  
FARM  
COHASSET,  
MA







# Programming

## 2020 BROUGHT UNEXPECTED OPPORTUNITIES

Through 35 virtual events, we welcomed 900 participants. We established a team of four resource advisors who offered content to 10 newsletters and resource bulletins.

*"Thanks for all of the work you are doing organizing webinars and calls, as well as spreading the word about amazing resources you are hearing about. The Farm-Education newsletter has become a lifeline for me in my work organizing farm and garden education during COVID!"*

- Nichole Barrows,  
Project GROWS,  
Staunton, VA



# Shared Learning Moves Online

March - September: Biweekly Summer Camp Calls

April: Community Check-In - Caring for Coworkers

April: Building Resilience with Teens in Uncertain Times

May: Tools for Non-Virtual Summer Camp

June: What is White Fragility?

July: A Conversation on White Privilege

August: Farm to School Coordination through an Equity Lens

August: What's Inside an Egg?

September: Virtual Field Trip to Tollgate Farm

October: Present Day Structural Racism in the Food System

November: A Conversation on Land Rematriation

December: Virtual Field Trip to Pony Power Therapies and

Community Check in with Bliss Meadows and RootDown LA

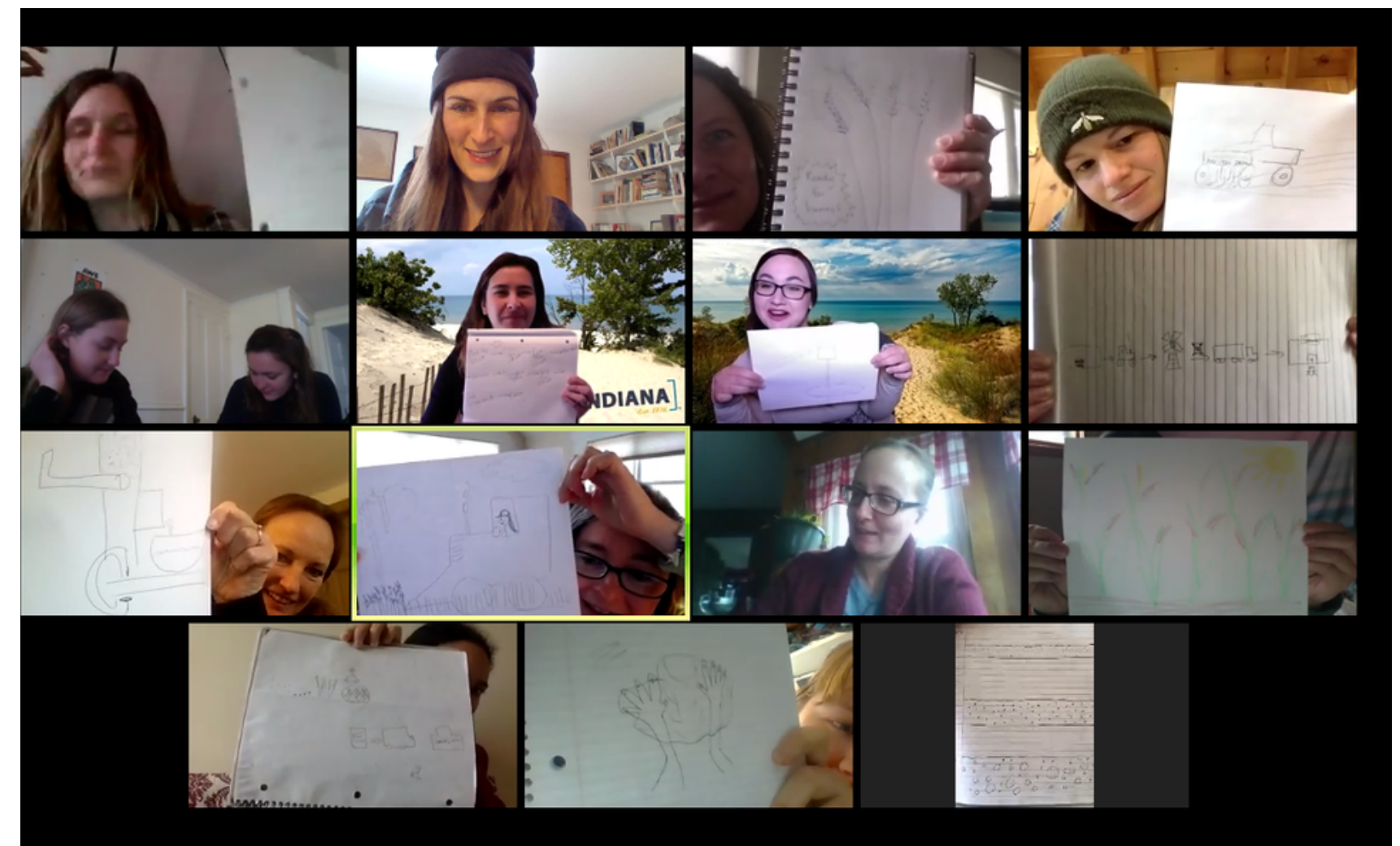
...and more [\(view calendar\)](#)





# Participation in Virtual Learning

Between March and December, 900 participants joined 35 events. Forty-two presenters from around the U.S. shared their wisdom and expertise.





# A Window into Virtual Programming

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension

Our first challenge this morning is to peel away the hard, outer shell to reveal the membrane.




- Carefully tap egg's hard shell against the table
- Use your fingers to slowly, carefully remove the shell piece by piece
- Get as far as you can before the membrane tears.
- Allow the egg contents to go into the bowl, trying your best to not let the yolk break.





Soilful

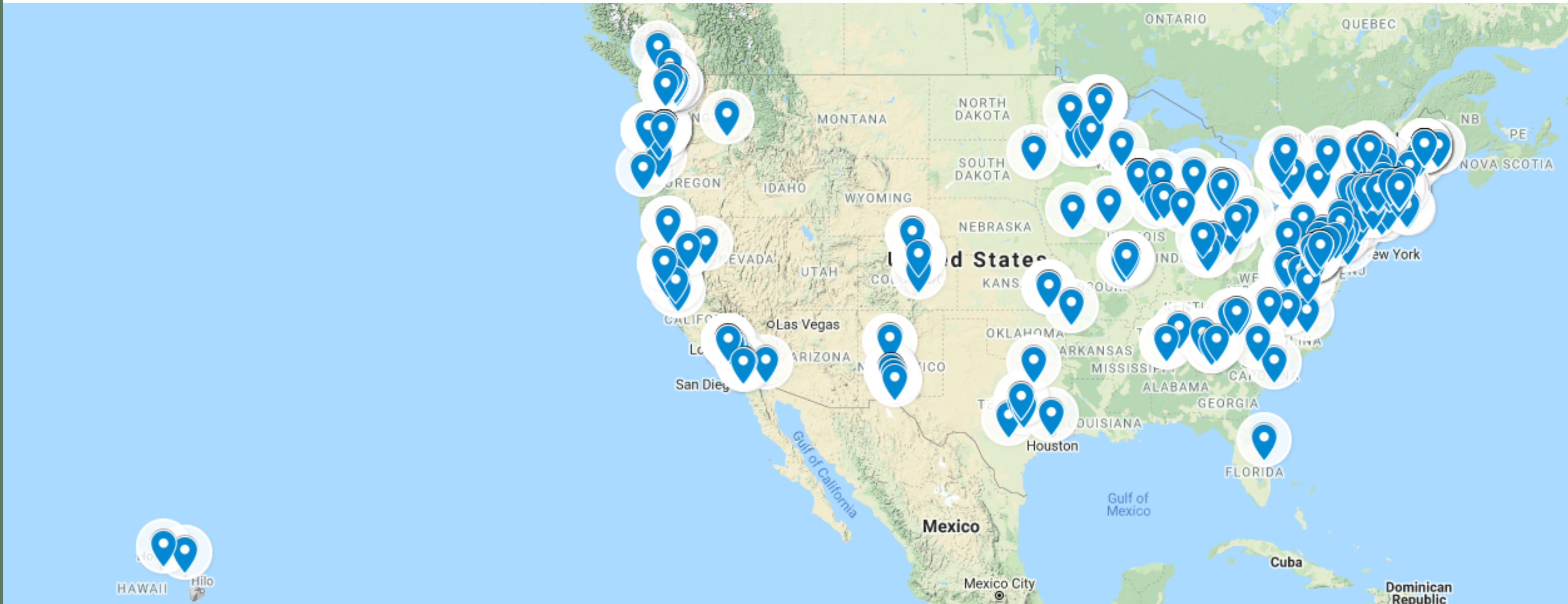
- Soilful is a term that captures a way of living, thinking, and being, the spirit of which is embodied by people all over the world who are living in harmonious relationship with the land. Soilful, as an organization, was created out of a need for justice and self-healing and with the goal of transforming and reshaping the sacred relationship between people of African descent and Mother Earth







# 2020 Program Participation

by State





# Newsletters



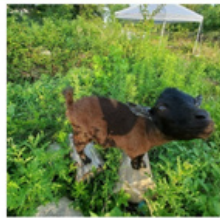

Remember meeting Atiya Wells as she shared *Bliss Meadows*, her 10-acre land reclamation project in Baltimore at the 2019 FBEN Conference?

We're so excited to welcome Atiya back into our virtual community one year later to hear her news and wisdom. During this week's 90-minute Community Check-In, we'll learn updates from *Bliss Meadows* and *RootDown LA*, before participants move into breakout rooms to connect with one another. Join us!

December 10, 2020  
3:30 - 5:00 ET/2:30 - 4:00 CT / 12:30-2:00 Pacific.

**Register!**

### Upcoming Workshops



**From Baltimore to Los Angeles:  
A Community Check-In with Bliss Meadows,  
RootDown LA, and You**

December 10, 2020 | 3:30 - 5:00 EST

You've summoned courage, creativity, and flexibility this year, and we invite you to gather in celebration of your work and in support of one another as the year comes to a close. Join panelists Atiya Wells of Bliss Meadows in Baltimore, MD and Karen Ramirez and Jocelyn Ramirez of Root Down LA in Los Angeles, who will share some reflections from 2020, before moving into breakout rooms for discussion. Through this workshop, you'll be reminded that you're not alone in connecting people with agriculture and food. Root Down Photo: @jgutterreos8. Goat: @BackyardBasecamp

**Register!**

**Healing the Roots of Racism in Ourselves**  
March 5, 12, 19, 2021 | Virtual Workshop

This series creates space for healing from white supremacy culture and transforming anti-Blackness through land, food and ecological relationships. In this series participants will practice a creative combination of healing practices ranging from somatic awareness to spoken word inspired writing. Join this series to rediscover, relearn, and reimagine in our current crisis-driven reality. Facilitated by Julia Metzger-Traber and *Richard Faithful*. Photo: Andrew Buchanan. Registration coming soon!

**Service to Justice Virtual Leadership Training**  
January 11 - 15 | 2-5 pm ET

Thanks for your overwhelming interest in this workshop! It is currently full, so we're hoping to offer another one for FBEN members in 2021!

**Job Alert: Associate Director, Sierra Harvest, Nevada City, CA**


Join the Sierra Harvest team! The Associate Director (AD) plays a key role within the leadership team of Sierra Harvest, and is considered bench strength for the Executive Director (ED). The AD reports to the ED and is responsible for the organization's consistent achievement of its mission as well as select program and financial objectives. The AD contributes to the organization's long-range strategy, ensuring that SH makes consistent and timely progress towards achieving its mission. The AD oversees communications for the organization, speaks on behalf of the organization, and builds relationships that create sustainable funding and infrastructure for long-term operations. The AD leads programs staff and volunteers to manage the daily operational activities of the organization.

**View Full Description!**

**Bayer Fund Grants Nominating Window!**

Nominate rural schools for this excellent award from the Bayer Fund! Window for nominations begins January 1 and ends April 1. The Grow Rural Education program allows eligible farmers to nominate their local public school district for grants to help enhance STEM education. Once nominated, school districts submit applications to compete for \$10,000 or \$25,000 grants to help fund projects that enhance their STEM curriculum. These grants are helping to improve test scores, but better yet, they're getting kids to think bigger about their tomorrow.

Share this announcement with your schools! More information here: [America's Farmers Grow Rural Education](#) and Official Rules here: [AEGRE Official Rules](#)





OUR OPEN RATE WAS 28%,  
UP FROM 26% IN 2019.

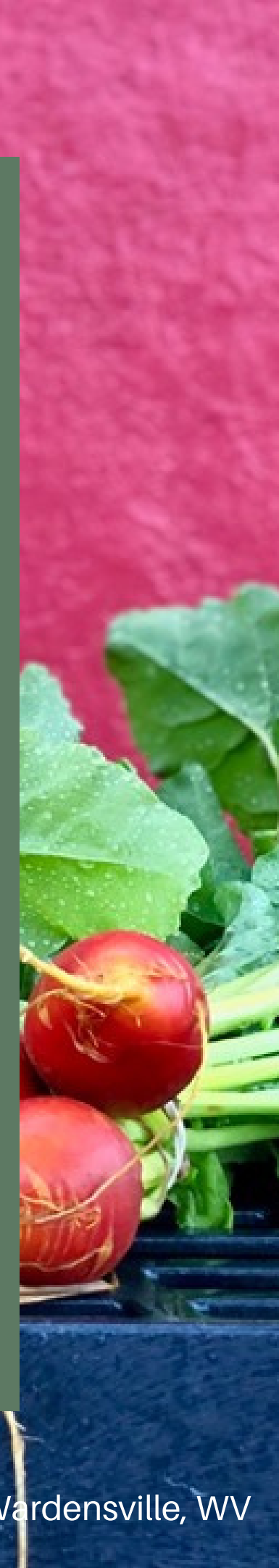
Our digital communications cumulatively saw  
over 21,000 opens of 45 emails.

RESOURCE ADVISORY TEAM  
OFFERS TOOLS FROM-THE-  
FIELD

We assembled a resource advisory team, who  
vets resources and offers thematic resources.  
Thank you to these individuals who piloted this  
tool this year!

Meredith Rivlin, Cedar Circle Farm, East Thetford, VT  
Ashley Davenport, Retreat Farm, Brattleboro, VT  
Hallie Sykes, Oxbow Farm and Conservation Center, Carnation, WA  
L Menyuk, Great Kids Farm, Baltimore, MD

Photo: Wardensville Market Garden, Wardensville, WV







ABOUT PROGRAMS FORUM RESOURCES MEMBERS JOBS JOIN NEWS COVID

Donate

Join



# Website

## Relaunched in 2020

With support from Ted Heck Productions and a focus group of FBEN members

- Streamlined events calendar
- Added Mentorship page
- Highlighted "join" and "donate" buttons
- Updated photography
- **Average 980 unique visitors per month**

## Websited Work for 2021

- Update the resource library
- Integrate current member list
- Launch "Friends" directory
- Reactivate discussion forums





## CONSULTANTS

Kali Ransom joined FBEN in 2020 to advance our communications efforts (Photo: Kali Ransom)



## PRESENTERS

Over 40 presenters shared their wisdom in virtual workshops (Photo: Onika Abraham, Farm School NYC)



## ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

An advisory board was formed to offer guidance and expertise (Photo: Scott Morrison, Elon University)



## MENTORS

Mentors joined our website's referral page (Photo Rebecca Sorensen, Blawesome, LLC)



## MEMBERS

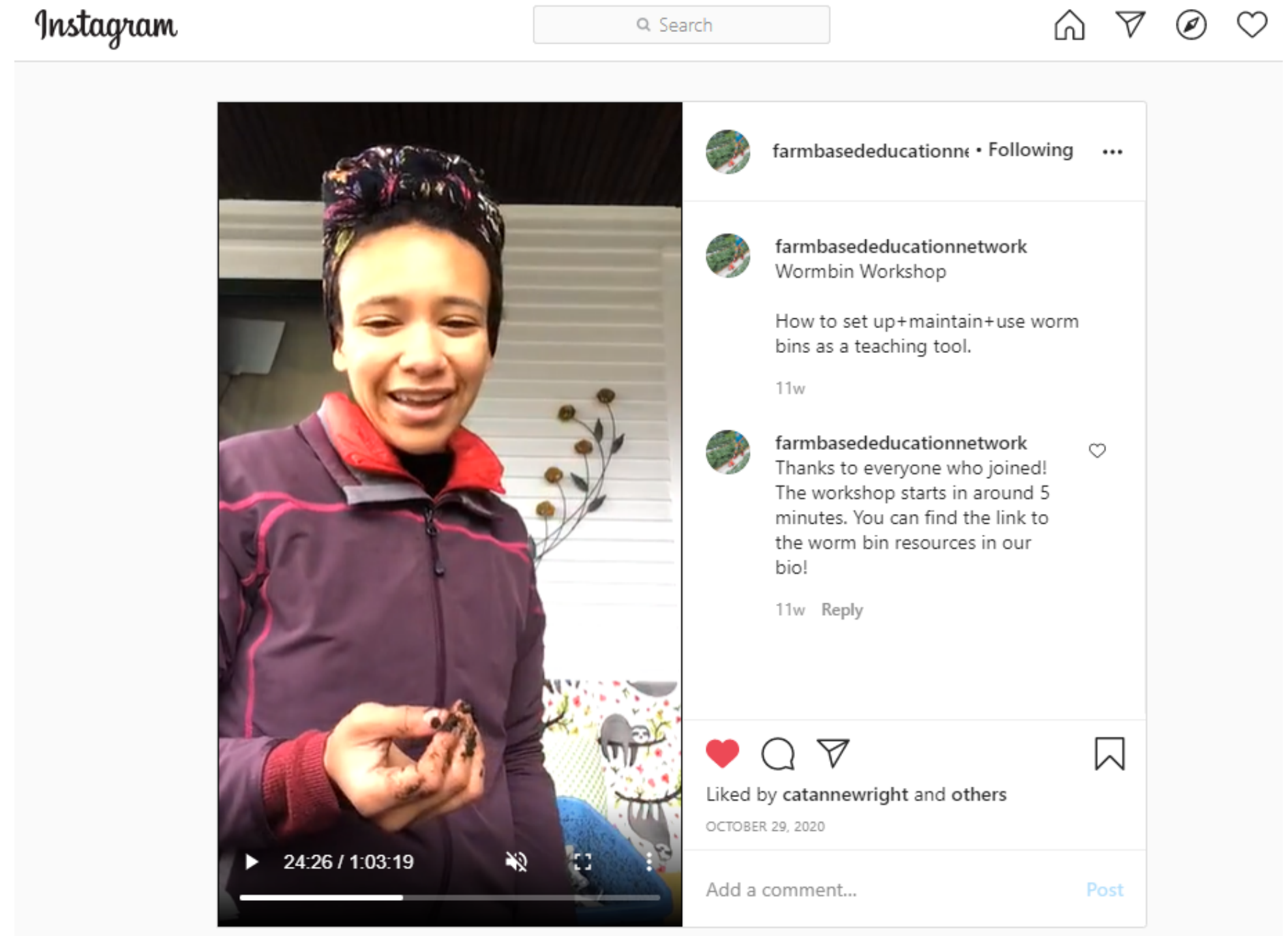
We welcomed 736 new members in 2020 (Photo by Matty Ice)

# PEOPLE



# PEOPLE: Consultants

Kali Ransom joined the FBEN in July as a consulting Communications Specialist. She's a social media wiz, with a background in gardening education, and brings a natural desire to connect and uplift the work of farm-based education through digital communication. Kali learned about FBEN when she was serving as a FoodCorps AmeriCorps volunteer and attended an ABCs workshop in 2019. She is now the FoodCorps Massachusetts Program Coordinator.



In October, Kali lead FBEN's first Instagram live: "Vermicomposting in an Educational Setting". Under Kali's guidance, FBEN is harnessing the potential of social media for storytelling, promotion, and celebration.



# PEOPLE: Presenters

With virtual meetings as our platform, the possibilities for collaboration were bountiful. FBEN worked with 42 presenters, from Maine's coast to Silicon Valley, Los Angeles to Metro Detroit ([view full list](#)). Through the generosity of funders who provided resources in 2020, we were able to compensate many speakers who would not ordinarily have been able to offer their time. A total of \$8,484 was paid to presenters' organizations as speaker stipends.



Jocelyn Ramirez of RootDown LA joined FBEN on December 10 to speak about RootDown's urban farming and education work in South Los Angeles. Above, Jocelyn leads a group of youth.



PEOPLE:

# Advisory Board Members

FBEN relaunched the Advisory Board, inviting past program participants, conference collaborators, and leaders to offer guidance on programming and Network decisions.

*"I have seen in the context of advisory boards, the collective wisdom of the group far outperforming any individual perspective. And I think that's the beauty and the magic of advisory boards."*

- John Hamilton, Vice President for Economic Opportunity, NH Community Loan Fund



JORDAN BASS

Youth Development Teacher, Hidden Villa, Los Altos, CA



TIFFANY BREWER

Program Director, Earthdance Organic Farm, Ferguson, MO



DAVI COHEN

Farm-Based Educator, New York, NY



# PEOPLE:

# Advisory Board Members (cont'd.)

The Advisory Board met three times in 2020, and launched a project in December aimed at identifying and showcasing the values that guide the teaching and farming practices of Network members.



PEGGY EPPIG

Director of Middle School & Natural Resource Education, MAEF, Havre De Grace, MD



TAFADZWA GWITIRA

Farmer, Policy Advisor, Chicago, IL



SCOTT MORRISON

Associate Professor of Education, Elon University, NC



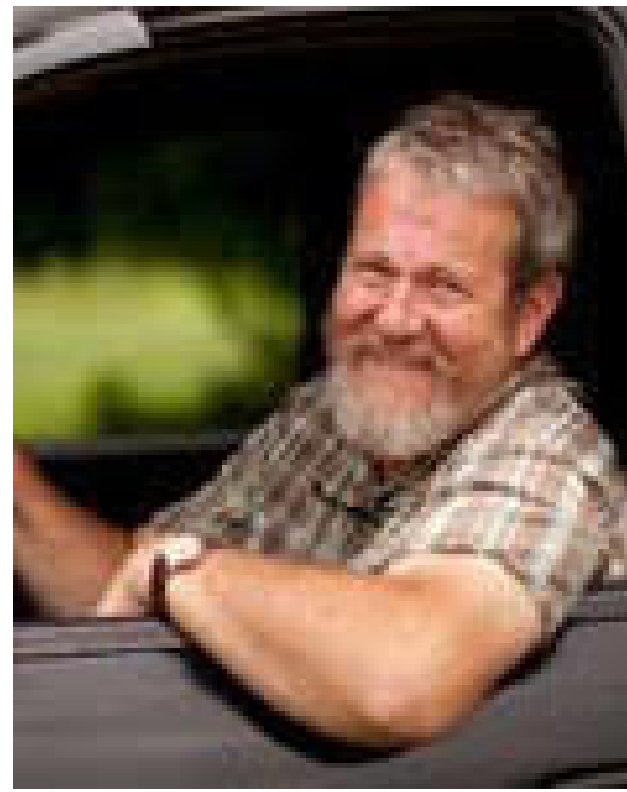
MELISA OLIVA

Farmer & Coach, Ananda Gardens, Montpelier, VT



# PEOPLE: Mentors & Consultants

With networking as one of our core functions, the need for a referral platform came into relief early in 2020. Our "Mentorship and Consultant" page lists leaders in the field and beyond who have volunteered to support Network members through in-kind mentorship or paid consulting. At right, we're featuring 3 of the 16 mentors/consultants listed.



BEN HOLMES

Founder, Farm School, Athol, MA



EMILY VIRZI

Livestock Farmer, Von Trap Farmstead,  
Waitsfield, VT



GISELLE CUEVAS

Nature-based Mindfulness Practitioner  
Asheville, NC

In 2021, we will expand the mentor and consulting listings to include a third tier of support: "Friends". This will list FBEN members who are able to offer a piece of advice or a listening ear. This idea is inspired by the many members who have shared their gratitude for receiving support through our Network, and their desire to pass it forward.



# PEOPLE: Members

"Networks are formed to share information and learning on an issue for which each organization has some level of investment. The connections vary from very strong to weak, with partners from many different types of organizations on many different levels of partnership"

- National Farm to School State Network Toolkit



2016

2,748 members



2018

3,721 members



2020

4,632 members

.....

We are excited to witness a growing interest in the field of farm-based education and in our Network, and we know that numbers provide just one lens. In 2020, we welcomed over 700 new members. Listening to their feedback and ideas energizes us.



# New Members

In 2020, 736 new members came from 42 states and Washington, D.C., and 10 countries: Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Ecuador, England, India, Nigeria, Singapore, Nigeria, Zimbabwe.





# SHELBURNE FARMS: **Supporting Organization**

Shelburne Farms is an education nonprofit on a mission to inspire and cultivate a sustainable future. We offer transformative learning experiences to help educators and students create a better world. Our home campus is a 1,400-acre working farm located on the traditional, unceded homelands (Ndakinna) of the Winooskik band of the Abenaki.

Megan Camp oversees budget, human resources, program, guidance & accountability.

Robin Turnau, Holly Brough, and Sarah Webb make up the Shelburne Farms Communications Team.

Sue Dixon, Erin Boyd and Heidi Webb manage development, record keeping, and major gifts.

Andy Whitaker is the Programs Administration Coordinator supports with event registration.

Vera Simon-Nobes leads the FBEN and coordinates network activities.

Brooke Redmond is a Shelburne Farms special gifts officer, and founding Executive Director of FBEN.



Photo: Vera Chang



# Upcoming in 2021



Photo: Farm Education Collaborative

## A SAMPLE OF FBEN's 2021 PLANS

- Update and showcase core values through member storytelling in social media;
- Expand mentorship support through the launch of a "friends directory," i.e. members willing to share and support one another;
- Offer a facilitated leadership series;
- Collaborate with farm-based educators to model hands-on, virtual activities on Instagram live and Zoom;
- Create affinity groups with decentralized leadership, including a BIPOC farm-based educators group;
- Publish results from first ever Compensation and Benefits Survey for Farm-Based Education;
- Survey Network members on their needs and hopes;
- Continue professional learning around programming about racial justice in the food system;
- Pursue ambitious fundraising to support the efforts above.



# RADICAL GRATITUDE SPELL

## BY ADRIENNE MAREE BROWN

you are a miracle walking  
i greet you with wonder  
in a world which seeks to own  
your joy and your imagination  
you have chosen to be free,  
every day, as a practice.  
i can never know  
the struggles you went through to get here,  
but i know you have swum upstream  
and at times it has been lonely

i want you to know  
i honor the choices you made in solitude  
and i honor the work you have done to belong  
i honor your commitment to that which is larger than yourself  
and your journey  
to love the particular container of life  
that is you

you are enough  
your work is enough  
you are needed  
your work is sacred  
you are here  
and i am grateful



2019 Farm-Based Educators Retreat at Glynwood Center  
for Regional Food and Farming, Cold Spring, NY





**FBEN c/o Shelburne Farms**

1611 Harbor Rd.

Shelburne, VT 05482

[www.farmbasededucation.org](http://www.farmbasededucation.org)

ON BEHALF OF THE ENTIRE  
NETWORK, WE'D LIKE TO EXTEND  
HEARTFELT GRATITUDE TO OUR  
GENEROUS 2020 DONORS

Anonymous  
Cooper Meadow Fund  
Katherine & Walter Baumann  
Lookout Foundation  
Samuel M. Feldman

# Thank You!