



2024 / 2025

Local Roots Market & Cafe
ANNUAL REPORT

Locally rooted, regionally connected, globally inspired

BOARD MEMBERS

Current Board Members

Seth Feikert
Matthew Mullet
Mark Pirogowicz
Rachel Relle
Zac Rheinberger
Robb Stutzman
Bob Toot
Seth Walker

Thank You to Our Outgoing Board Member

Daniel Baker - A special thank you to Daniel for his years of service to Local Roots! Daniel will be continuing his role as Treasurer, but in a non-voting role.



BY THE NUMBERS



Gross Sales Receipts **\$2,267,020**

Returned To Producers **\$1,195,507**

Net Income **\$70,057**

Cooperative Members **3316**

Active Producers **217**

Employees **22**

New Members **157**

Member Renewals **855**

LOCAL ROOTS & FOODSPHERE CAPITAL CAMPAIGN & NEW BUILDING UPDATE

Local Roots & FoodSphere Patrons and Supporters,

Thanks to the continued generosity and steadfast support of our community, our Capital Campaign to renovate the Ride On building at 146 W. South Street remains alive, and progress is still actively underway!

Throughout the last year, economic uncertainty around proposed tariffs and federal grant funding required us to take pause and to adjust our planned approach to the project. We have now transitioned from a single, large-scale build to a phased construction plan. This change in strategy allows sections of the project to be completed as funds become available, ensuring steady progress without taking on unnecessary or risky debt.





Following initial expenditures to design the new site, we have **\$1,095,169** remaining in donations and grants that are secured toward the project, with an additional **\$500,000** in pending applications and targeted philanthropic contributions.

While this secured funding is not enough to complete the entirety of the renovations that will ultimately be needed, we have reached a stage where the next phase of work can begin, and we are excited to announce that we aim to restart construction with roofing renovations this January. After the roof is completed, we will be able to move toward interior renovations, and the physical manifestation of our dream space will begin to take shape!

We remain inspired by the belief you all have shown in the Local Roots mission and deeply grateful to the donors and community members whose support makes this work possible. Throughout this past year of notable challenges and hurdles, it has been our community's enduring commitment to locally grown food, locally made goods, and a resilient small-business economy that has enabled us to adapt and move forward. We look forward to the year ahead and are excited to share updates with all of you as progress takes place!



[donation link](#)

Donations to our Capital Campaign can be made through the Wayne County Community Foundation

COMMERCIAL KITCHEN

Kitchen and Storage Rent Collected: **\$30,270**

Catering Sales: **\$64,604**

**\$8,104
LAST
YEAR**

**+ \$56,500 FROM
LAST YEAR**

LR Branded Cafe Kitchen Cooler Sales: **\$89,016**

**\$64,342
LAST
YEAR**

**+ \$24,674 FROM
LAST YEAR**

When local farms are producing seasonal abundance, we make sure as much as possible is put to good use. To help customers enjoy local foods during the winter months and reduce waste, our kitchen team transforms surplus produce into broths and soups, freezes items for resale, and shares food scraps with local farmers for compost or animal feed. Listed here are just a few examples of the produce we were able to extend the life of this year.

Preserved Fruit/Veg for Off Season Sales & Local Farmers

- Tomatoes
- Corn (non-organic/organic)
- Blackberries
- Black Raspberries
- Blueberries
- Rhubarb
- Peaches
- Strawberries
- Pumpkin
- Cauliflower
- Broccoli
- Beets
- Beans
- Applesauce
- Various Soups

COMMERCIAL KITCHEN

Outlook

Our commercial kitchen has seen a lot of growth this past year. One of our biggest kitchen goals for 2025 was to grow our catering sales, and we are proud to note we achieved this goal, increasing on last year's sales by nearly 7-fold. One thing we look forward to in 2026 is finding more space for our renters.

New This Year

We currently host **18** renters in our kitchen space which range from weekly users to seasonal renters. This includes several new chefs and a new café lunch service returning on Sundays with producer, Global Traditional Flavors.

This past fall the kitchen hired Mande Glasgo, our Kitchen Lead/Assistant Kitchen Manager to work alongside Christine Zerby as we navigate the exciting new commercial kitchen growth.

Success Stories

Last fall, we started a collaboration with the Boys & Girls Club via Project Chop to serve **80** meals a day, **4** days a week to the their after school students. The project has been greatly successful in providing thoughtful, nutritious food to students, and has continued through the summer and into a second school year.

We are excited to share that past and current commercial kitchen renters, Woo-Town Bagels and Boo Bears Brew, recently opened a breakfast and coffee drive-thru and walk-up café out of Woo-Town's new location on 806 E Bowman St.

Commercial Kitchen renter, Gina Bertelli recently opened another food service business, Hey Chicky Food Truck, that serves fresh fried chicken sandwiches, tenders, and other goods in Wooster and beyond.



EVENTS & HAPPENINGS



Holiday Bazaar

On December 21st 2024, Local Roots hosted our largest Holiday Bazaar to date. We expanded the footprint to our new Ride On building for the first time. Our producers experienced not only the busiest sales day of the year, but the highest in Local Roots history. With the extra space, we saw a **50% increase** from the year before with **23** producers setting up displays for the event. Producers shared a little more with attendees about what they do, showcased their goods, and sold specialty items for the holidays. We hosted live music in both our Ride On and 140 South Walnut space, Santa Claus was in attendance for the children, and our annual producer basket was raffled off in support of our Capital Campaign. Our cooperative community showed their support of area artisans, farmers, bakers and makers and it was a joy to see everyone gather together for the holidays.



Wayne Winter Hiking Challenge

This past winter we saw a colder, snowier season than recently, but our annual hiking challenge persisted with nearly **100** participants. In collaboration with Emily Speelman of Through the Woods blog, we shared weekly hikes and a photo contest for the first time. We appreciated the continued opportunity to offer inspiration for wellness and movement through the colder months to our community.



EVENTS & HAPPENINGS



Electric Car Show

On April 26th we hosted our 7th annual Electric Car Show, our largest yet in collaboration with the national organization Drive Electric Earth Month. Event organizers Ryan Leeper, Kevin Wall and Brodie DeHass along with generous volunteers helped us host **65** vehicles with their drivers - including cars, trucks and SUVs alongside e-bikes, a motorcycle, and electric lawn equipment.

June Member Appreciation Month

Every summer during the month of June, we take extra time to celebrate our co-op members. This year we offered discounts on memberships, bonus loyalty dollars and 'Meet the Makers' series on Saturdays where visitors met with our producers and learned a little more about the creators behind the goods they enjoy in our market.



Flower Subscription

In addition to our ongoing Staples food subscription and annual Seasonal Eats CSF, we offered a Flower Subscription for the first time this year. Subscribers enjoyed beautiful, locally grown bouquets from multiple talented flower growers in our area. This subscription gave us an opportunity to support a broader network of small business flower entrepreneurs.



EVENTS & HAPPENINGS



Battle of the Chefs: Chili Smackdown

This fall, we hosted our first-ever Chili Cook-Off on October 12th in collaboration with JAFB Wooster Brewery, featuring chefs from Local Roots and across the Wooster area. Held at the brewery, the event celebrated local talent and supported both the Boys & Girls Club of Wooster and our participating chefs.

Nearly **100** guests joined us for an afternoon of great food and community, made possible by the efforts of our incredible volunteers, chili creators, and the welcoming team at JAFB. Attendees mingled over locally brewed drafts, met their favorite chefs, and sampled an impressive lineup of flavorful chili, all in support of a great cause.

After votes were cast by our attendees, Alex Murza of Murza Ukrainian Kitchen took home first place, Gina Bertelli of Andio Sisters earned second, and Bala Fodor placed third. Thanks to everyone's enthusiasm and generosity, we were proud to donate **\$1,678** to the Boys & Girls Club of Wooster through this event.



EVENTS & HAPPENINGS



The Staples Food Subscription

Launched in 2024, our ongoing food subscription, The Staples, has continued and thrived with a loyal group of subscribers. Each week, participants receive a curated selection of essential grocery items from rotating producers and companies, all in alignment with the Local Roots mission including a fresh loaf of bread, local greens and eggs, and a surprise seasonal or specialty item

Seasonal Eats CSF

Our 2025 Seasonal Eats CSF (Community Supported Foods) provided subscribers with local, seasonal foods, recipes, and first access to seasonal favorites. The contents of each share varied biweekly depending on what was seasonally available within our local network. We offered an Omnivore and Vegetarian option, and nearly all subscribers from the previous year re-enrolled, reflecting the quality of each share's curation. The CSF ran from May 16 - August 22.



Holiday Gift Boxes & Charcuterie Kits

Due to the popularity of these offerings last year, our curated Holiday Gift Boxes and charcuterie kits will continue for the 2025 holiday season. Each box and kit features a blend of some of our favorite local goods and value-added market specialty items.





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