



ABOUT THE LEXINGTON AVE COMMUNITY FARM:

Foodlink is a regional food hub and the Feeding America food bank serving 10 counties in the Finger Lakes and Genesee Valley regions of New York. We facilitate the distribution of healthy food to hundreds of human service agencies that serve food-insecure populations throughout our service area. Throughout our 40-year history, however, we have been widely recognized for what we have done to expand beyond the traditional model of food banking through the creation and implementation of innovative programs that target the root causes of food insecurity and poverty.

Established 2012 in partnership with Mary's Place and Rochester Refugee Resettlement Services, and situated on 1.33 acres of City of Rochester-owned land (617-619 Lexington Ave & 27 Bantel Place). Foodlink has managed LACF under the Community Garden Permit Program and, for the last four years, through a paid lease. It is among the largest and most productive urban agriculture operations in Rochester.

LACF consists of a community garden and commercial growing operation. The community garden currently serves 70 primarily refugee families from Nepal, Bhutan, Burma and Somalia (over 250 individuals) who grow an estimated 6,000 pounds of food each year for household use. Most of the families live within walking distance of LACF. The commercial growing operation (CGO) grows produce that supports Foodlink's programming, including the Curbside Market, Foodlink Community Kitchen and Nutrition Education programs. In 2018, the CGO grew an additional 2,200 pounds of food. LACF also supports community gardens throughout Rochester by hosting workshops/demonstrations and staging plants and materials that are distributed to other gardens. In 2018, Foodlink completed the first phase of a parklet and play space that will better connect LACF with the neighborhood, encourage active play, and increase space for programming and agriculture. In order to support the increasing demand for growing space and programming, Foodlink has invested nearly \$100,000 in on-site infrastructure over the last six years.

LACF sits in between the Lyell-Otis and Edgerton neighborhoods. Poverty rates for these neighborhoods are 33% and 30%, respectively, with child poverty rates of 41% and 32%. There is a large public housing development just a couple hundred feet from the Community Farm, and over 2,000 kids live near the farm. However, there are no public playgrounds within walking distance of the farm. The Lyell-Otis and Edgerton neighborhoods are often referred to as "play deserts" for this reason. Children from low-income households are more prone to diet-related illnesses, making their need for adequate play spaces all the more vital to their overall health and well-being. Data from the Monroe County Data Youth Survey (2014-2015) show 78% of youth in the City of Rochester reportedly did not engage in an hour or more physical activity in the last 7 days, which is the recommended amount set forth by the Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. Providing more opportunity for physical activity can directly impact the health outcomes among children and help reduce obesity, which affects 1 in 3 Rochester children, according to a UR Department of Pediatrics study.



