



Photo courtesy Food Literacy Project

## Growing a New Generation of Leaders

It was an exquisite August day on Oxmoor Farm. Picnic tables covered with crisp white cloths and wildflower bouquets were clustered under a shade tree near the outdoor kitchen. Six hardworking teens, Crew Members from the Food Literacy Project's Youth Community Agriculture Program (YCAP), were busy preparing a community meal from vegetables they had grown and recipes they had developed.

Their menu included cucumber and herb cream cheese sandwiches, summer squash quiche (affectionately known as "squiche"), marinated green beans and beet-and-chocolate-chip cookies. They welcomed 50 family members, friends and supporters, and stood before their guests to share their experiences of personal and social change through YCAP.

The teens talked about what it meant to grow, harvest and distribute vegetable crops at the neighborhood level, explore the food system and address issues of hunger and food insecurity in the community.

"I've learned that farming is good for the mind, body and spirit," said YCAP Crew Member DeAndrae Hughes. "I think the experience would be even better if more people could participate."

The YCAP Crew was employed through a partnership with the Mayor's Summer Works Program. The teens learned entrepreneurial skills while growing and distributing fresh vegetables in Louisville's "food deserts" through neighborhood farmers' markets, Fresh Stops and Dare-to-Care Food Bank. In addition to new and meaningful connections with healthy food, farming and the land, the teens developed the skills needed to contribute purposefully to their community.

For most, it was their first opportunity to experience a farm and to grow as leaders through work experience and community engagement.

The **Food Literacy Project** invites you to help local teens become food justice leaders in the community through YCAP. Please visit [FoodLiteracy-Project.org](http://FoodLiteracy-Project.org) for tickets to their Field-to-Fork Dinner on September 29, or for more information about their work with youth.