



UF Field and Fork Farm and Gardens Bathhouse



Kelli providing a tour



Fresh produce in the garden



Decorative Hay Bales

CULTIVATING CHANGE AT UF'S FIELD AND FORK FARM AND GARDENS BY: KELLY ALEXANDER AND KATA MUELLERLEILE

About Brew

Kelli Martin Brew leads impactful public outreach efforts for the University of Florida's (UF) Field and Fork Farm and Gardens. Brew, the full-time Program Coordinator of UF's Field and Fork Farm and Gardens, promotes sustainable food practices through education, hands-on experiences, and access to fresh, locally grown produce.

"We enjoy engaging with University students and staff as well as people from the larger community," said Brew.

Field and Fork

UF's Field and Fork Farm and Gardens surround the iconic landmark of the UF Bat Houses across from Lake Alice on campus. Field and Fork Farm and Gardens provide fresh produce to the Alan and Cathy Hitchcock Field and Fork Pantry, available at no cost to UF students. Along with their partnership with the Pantry, the Field and Fork Farm and Gardens Provides experiential learning opportunities, space for research and demonstration, and opportunities for student engagement and leadership.

"One of the things that distinguishes our farm from other growing spaces on campus is that we use sustainable practices and follow organic principles. The soil is the literally the ground of everything we do, and we have contributed to its health over years of farming here." Brew said

Brew's Mission

One of her main goals as Program Coordinator has been to connect with students who may not have a deep understanding of Florida agriculture and foodways.

"Our dean, Elaine Turner of CALS, is really interested in inviting students to participate in healthy activities outside the classroom. Volunteers and interns work hard to grow healthy food for the community. We've also held yoga classes and meditative walks at the Farm through UF Mindfulness. In addition, we are offering regular cooking classes

that help students use the delicious veggies we're growing here," said Brew.

Through connecting with broader audiences, Brew hopes to educate students and people surrounding the UF community about agriculture, the Field and Fork Farm and Gardens, and the Hitchcock Field and Fork Pantry. In addition to student outreach, Brew has been working to extend more public opportunities to Gainesville residents. Field trips from community groups, including local schools, are great for both parties. Young people are excited to learn about career opportunities in the food system,



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THE FUTURE OF FIELD AND FORK OUTREACH

and its great experience for our interns to engage with the Gainesville community.

Looking toward the future of the program, Brew believes that more internship opportunities will help expand the program's impact. Interns specializing in Dietetics, Landscape Architecture, and Chiropterology (study of bats) would all be logical next steps. But there are some new and surprising ways to grow as well. Brew is currently working with an English professor on a collaboration at the farm that would connect poetry with the environment.

"There are so many opportunities to connect the dots between the food system, the local environment, and human flourishing," Brew said

The UF Field and Fork Farm and Gardens remains a valuable resource for promoting local agriculture, food security, and hands-on experiences. Through Brew's guidance and leadership, the program extends opportunities to students and community members to immerse themselves in agriculture and

the process of providing a safe and healthy food supply. To further her efforts and encourage outreach, students and community members can get involved and participate in advocacy for the Field and Fork Farm and Garden's programs to the public. Whether a student is hoping to further their understanding of agricultural communication and production, or a community member is looking to support local food systems and initiatives, there are several opportunities to support the Field and Fork Farm and Gardens.

"Local agriculture is vital to a healthy community through its contribution to human well-being and its lighter impact on the environment. Our little farm provides 10-15,000 pounds of produce to the food pantry each year, offering students, staff, and faculty great produce at no cost while providing a learning and research space that connects the dots between healthy soil and a healthy, vibrant campus community." Brew said

Together, the community can foster a stronger, healthier, and more sustainable food system. For more information on volunteering, participating in internships, or visiting the farm and gardens, please visit the Field and Fork Farm and Gardens website at:
<https://fieldandfork.ufl.edu>.

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