

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Aretha Wimberly
Email: info@flinriverfresh.org
Telephone: 229-352-6591



January 7, 2022

Flint River Fresh and Community Food Champions 2022 MLK Day Of Service *Volunteerism In Community Gardens Supports Food Security*

Albany, GA — 1/07/2022 — Flint River Fresh, along with community food champions, continues to answer the call to action to keep healthy food growing in food deserts during the upcoming Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service. Flint River Fresh leads community gardens expansion, installation, or revitalization activities scheduled for Holley Homes Community Garden in Albany and the Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter Boys & Girls Club in Plains on **January 15th and 17th**, respectively.



Echoing the heartfelt inspiration by Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., "Everybody can be great...because anyone can serve.," the Flint River Fresh community and stakeholders appreciate the significant impact achieved even when volunteers are fewer in number. Although safety protocols essential for mitigating the spread of COVID-19 and variants limit the number of volunteers, plans to install and plant new raised garden beds at the Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter Boys & Girls Club in Plains are moving forward. Also, plans to clear and prepare the Holley Homes Community Garden in Albany for seasonal planting are underway. Additionally, two community gardens in Dougherty and Sumter county will receive extensive maintenance and care, including planting new fruit tree saplings and seasonal crops.

Expanding the scope of impact beyond the community garden sites, Flint River Fresh will facilitate the assembly of fresh produce bags for delivery to vulnerable populations - supported by the Dougherty Fresh and Healthy Sumter initiatives. Flint River Fresh will partner with community food champions, including Sherwood Baptist Church, Phoebe Putney, and Phoebe Sumter, who will join volunteers making contactless deliveries.

Honoring the legacy of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and his vision for the *beloved community*, these 2022 community service projects will help increase community resilience and improve healthy eating options for neighbors without equitable access to healthy foods. More benefits of volunteering with Flint River Fresh include learning or enhancing skillsets for transforming green spaces into community food spaces and reinforcing self-sufficiency.

In reflection, the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service 2020 projects with Phoebe Putney hospital was an impactful community event launching the 5th Avenue Community Garden in Albany. More than one hundred volunteers of diverse skill levels, ages, and backgrounds came together and installed the infrastructure for the currently flourishing community food production space servicing Dougherty County community members. The work that began with the community and stakeholders taking advantage of the opportunity to make a difference and help increase access to healthy foods for people living in food deserts and support a healthier community resulted in thousands of pounds of fresh fruit and vegetables planted, nurtured, and harvested for donations to local food banks or hunger relief organizations. The food access equity model has spread across four southwest Georgia counties. Now more than ever, communities rely on unity and charity to keep the community food spaces thriving to help people eat healthier and stay strong.

For more information about volunteering with Flint River Fresh, visit flinriverfresh.org/volunteer. Please remember that we adhere to CDC guidelines and local regulations to mitigate and prevent the spread of COVID-19 and variants. Flint River Fresh volunteer registrations are currently at maximum capacity for 2022 MLK Day of Service activities. However, a volunteer waitlist is available. Please email questions about volunteer activities and safety protocols to info@flinriverfresh.org.

Flint River Fresh is a 501(c)(3) organization aiming to make fresh, locally-grown produce accessible and affordable for people throughout the Flint River Region while empowering the community and youth through education and outreach opportunities. Give and support the mission at flinriverfresh.org/donate.