



## Center for Environmental Farming Systems' Food Youth Initiative Wins NC State University's Opal Mann Green Engagement Award

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**Raleigh, NC:** The Center for Environmental Farming Systems' Food Youth Initiative (FYI) has been awarded the 2016 Opal Mann Green Engagement award by NC State University's Office of Outreach & Engagement. The award recognizes leadership and dedication to the values of using democracy in the classroom, in the community, and at home; creating inclusionary teams; and community-based learning and mutually-beneficial action around local issues valued by community members. CEFS was also awarded the Opal Mann Green Engagement award in 2012.

Food Youth Initiative is a statewide collaborative network that supports and connects grassroots youth organizations doing food justice work in their local communities. Housed at CEFS, the network includes [Conetoe Family Life Center](#) (Conetoe, NC), [Growing Change](#) (Scotland/Robeson/Hoke Counties), [Poder Juvenil Campesino](#) (Lenior/Greene/Wayne Counties), and [Transplanting Traditions](#) (Orange County). FYI youth envision and support the advancement of a just food system, working to transform their communities through programs and policy work.

"We are so honored to receive this recognition for our FYI program and gratefully accept it on behalf of all the youth in the FYI network who inspire us daily with their steadfast dedication to their own communities and their boundless creativity. Their work breaks down the inequities they continually face and creates possibilities and opportunities for them as individuals as well as for change in the way food systems function. We hope many more will listen to their stories and pass forward the optimism and power their work embodies," said Tes Thraves, CEFS' Youth and Community-Based Food Systems Coordinator.

Noran Sanford, Growing Change Board Chair, said "FYI has provided a model to support, engage, collaborate with, and provide resources for the most besieged areas of our state. FYI not only brings underserved youth to the NC State campus, it brings NC State resources to our besieged counties. FYI personifies why the mission of our land grant universities is as essential today as it was in 1862/1890."

For more information about Food Youth Initiative please visit <https://cefs.ncsu.edu/youth/food-youth-initiative>

*The Opal Mann Green Engagement Award rewards authentic teamwork across the organizational structures within the university and community, reflecting programs that have been valued by the community and mutually beneficial to partners. For more information please visit <https://oe.ncsu.edu/about-us/opal-mann-green-engagement-award/>*

*The Center for Environmental Farming Systems is a partnership of NC State University, NC Agricultural and Technical State University and the NC Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. CEFS develops and promotes just and equitable food and farming systems that conserve natural resources, strengthen communities, improve health outcomes, and provide economic opportunities in North Carolina and beyond. For more information, please visit [www.cefs.ncsu.edu](http://www.cefs.ncsu.edu).*