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## For Immediate Release

March 27, 2023

### **Care Farming Network will build the community and capacity of Care Farms to benefit people with intellectual or developmental differences in the Northeast US.**

GERMANTOWN, MD — The Care Farming Network, a project of [Red Wiggler Community Farm](#), received \$257,000 from the Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) to fund a research and education grant focused on Care Farming. Care Farming is the therapeutic use of farming practices for marginalized or vulnerable groups of people, and this grant will provide meaningful employment to adults with intellectual and developmental differences in the Northeast US by:

- Increasing awareness about the unique field of Care Farming and its therapeutic benefits
- Creating community among Care Farms in the region by hosting farm tours, farmer-to-farmer exchanges, and performing site visits
- Building capacity for meaningful employment opportunities for adults with I/DD

“Individuals with I/DD have been historically underserved and undervalued- approximately 85% of this population don’t have a paid job in their community,” says Woody Woodroof, the Executive Director of Red Wiggler Community Farm. “We know there are more people with I/DD seeking employment at Care Farms than there are existing Care Farms capable of supporting the demand for employment. Our goal is to help established Care Farms hire more people and grow new Care Farms in the Northeast.”

By connecting Care Farmers to one another, farmers will learn from each other, develop and share best practices, and increase their sense of connection. Utilizing a mentorship program, the Care Farming Network will explore the characteristics of successful Care Farms throughout the US, and the impact Care Farming has on I/DD workers. From these connections and learning opportunities, Care Farmers will improve their effectiveness, thus increasing their capacity for providing meaningful employment opportunities for adults with intellectual and developmental differences.

#### **About The Care Farming Network and Red Wiggler Community Farm**

Founded in 1996, Red Wiggler is a sustainable care farm where people with and without disabilities come together to work, learn, and grow healthy food in Germantown, Maryland. Over the past 25 years, Red Wiggler has developed innovative ways to engage youth and adults in the growing and distributing food through employment and education. Recognizing the need for a national network, Red Wiggler launched The Care Farming Network in 2018 with the goals of advancing the therapeutic use of farming practices by connecting new and established agricultural-based programs to build capacity, increase quality, and provide technical support to Care Farms throughout the U.S.

This material is based upon work supported by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, through the [Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program](#).