

Local Farm Cooperative grows community

BY CINDY FISHER
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The Mill Village Local Farm Cooperative has provided an outlet for many residents of East Selma, from the ability to farm their own healthy foods to establishing a community gathering spot.

On Saturday and Sunday, the farm located at 300 Wheeler Avenue will be selling collards that are ready for harvest at \$5 for one big bunch and one small, and \$9 for two big bunches and one small. Proceeds go back into the farm.

This is the second harvest for the two-year-old farm. They had a good crop last spring, said Brendan O'Connor, senior organizer and grant writer for the Selma Center for Nonviolence, Truth and Reconciliation that oversees the farm that includes



The Mill Village Local Farm Cooperative will be selling collard greens this weekend to raise funds to go back into the farm.

a hoop house that was damaged in Hurricane Zeta.

Besides the farm, Local Farm Cooperative board member Alfonza Greer and his wife,

Callie, are making a gathering spot there with wailing benches for those who need to come and reflect on the loss of loved ones, this difficult 2020 and the strain



Callie and Alfonza Greer hold hands on the first completed "wailing bench" they made to honor two adult children they lost.

of COVID.

The Greers tragically lost two adult children over the years, one to gun violence and another to breast cancer, and

Callie said she wants a place to "wail." Her husband started working on them last weekend using wood from trees that fell during Hurricane Zeta.

The Selma Center funds the incubation of the farm and a planned Local Restaurant Cooperative, which Callie will cook for. Callie Greer used to cook for the Selma Center and hopes to be on the board of the Local Restaurant Cooperative. The group is currently looking for restaurant space in Selma to operate.

The idea is the community will work the garden and the restaurant, which will help work against wealth gap by building income and ownership, O'Connor said.

"It's about having an economy that includes options like cooperatives, among other community businesses, that give workers and others the opportunity to take responsibility for their lives through ownership and governance of the places they work," O'Connor said.