

AmpleHarvest.org^(SM)

"Sharing your garden bounty with Neighbors in Need"

The AmpleHarvest.org Year End Report for 2011

Dear Friends:

As you know, AmpleHarvest.org is a one of a kind national program that simultaneously fights hunger and malnutrition while improving the environment by enabling neighbors to help neighbors.

We continue to see mail from people struggling to feed their families as well as mail from those wanting to donate their excess harvest.

"My husband and I both work, however once we pay the bills and put gas in the car, we do not have enough money left to buy food or personal items. We have sold everything we have of value."

"We have a good size garden and always have excess veggies. We'd love to help!"

"When can I pick up food? I am a disabled veteran. I am on veteran's disability pension and most of my pension goes to rent."

The AmpleHarvest.org Campaign strives to bridge the gap between people within a community needing help and those who can provide the help their neighbors need. Garden by garden and town by town across America, it's working.

Your [ongoing generosity and support](#) since its inception May 2009 has helped us reach the point where more than 4,600 food pantries (1 out of every 7 in America) across all 50 states have now registered. Gardeners nationwide responded by delivering more than **21 million pounds** (we're still counting!) of garden fresh produce to many of these food pantries. Almost as important is that AmpleHarvest.org has spawned a nationwide discussion and awareness that home grown produce can and should be donated to those in our community who need it most.



As 2011 winds down, I want to share some of the other exciting things that have taken place this year...

February

- AmpleHarvest.org transitioned to a web hosting service entirely powered by wind energy, thereby helping both people and the planet

March

- AmpleHarvest.org was endorsed by the [National Council of Churches](#) and promoted to their 38 faith communities which is important as 70% of all pantries are in houses of worship.



April

- AmpleHarvest.org released its [Android app](#) (similar to the previously released iPhone app)
- AmpleHarvest.org was presented at a USDA webinar which had over 100,000 invitees
- As founder of AmpleHarvest.org, I received the Russ Berrie Award for Making A Difference.



May

- AmpleHarvest.org celebrated its second anniversary as a program - more than 3,500 food pantries registered
- An episode of Senator Bill Bradley's "American Voices" (Sirius Radio) focusing on AmpleHarvest.org was recorded in studio

July

- The founder of DinnerGarden.org, which partners with AmpleHarvest.org, was named CNN Hero – the first time [two CNN Heroes have partnered](#) together

August

- An article about AmpleHarvest.org appeared on [Michelle Obama's Let's Move! Blog](#)
- AmpleHarvest.org appears on [Jamie Oliver's Food Revolution website](#)
- AmpleHarvest.org named finalist for "Stay CLASSY" Philanthropic Awards
- AmpleHarvest.org partnered with Green Education Foundation to promote ["Plant With a Purpose"](#)
- AmpleHarvest.org highlighted on the [White House website](#)
- AmpleHarvest.org was presented at Hazon food conference at UC Davis



September

- I have been invited to speak about the AmpleHarvest.org solution to hunger at [TEDxManhattan](#) on Jan 21, 2012. An amazing opportunity for AmpleHarvest.org.
- Google quadrupled its advertising grant to AmpleHarvest.org to \$480,000 of free advertising annually. Thank you, Google.



October

- AmpleHarvest.org was named winner of Glynwood Harvest "Wave of the Future" Award
- Huffington Post named me ["Game Changer for 2011"](#) for AmpleHarvest.org's impact on the American food pantry/food bank network



November

- AmpleHarvest.org highlighted on PBS's ["Growing A Greener World"](#)
- AmpleHarvest.org rolled out its ["Centerpieces for Pantries"](#) initiative encouraging people to replace floral table arrangements with whole fruit platters which can then be donated to a local food pantry.



December

- AmpleHarvest.org started its survey of food received by registered food pantries
- AmpleHarvest.org was invited to participate in a Let's Move! meeting with White House senior staff
- The President and First Lady extended an invitation to attend the White House in recognition of our partnership with Let's Move!
- AmpleHarvest.org won a \$60,000 grant from the Ittleson Foundation. Thank you, Ittleson Foundation.
- AmpleHarvest.org announced three new members of its board of directors:
 - ♦ Shana Starobin - PhD candidate from Duke University
 - ♦ Joe Lamp'I - Producer and host of PBS's "Growing A Greener World"
 - ♦ Jennifer Gilmore - Executive Director of Feeding America San Diego



*The President and Mrs. Obama
request the pleasure of your company
at a Holiday Reception to be held at
The White House
on Friday, December 9, 2011
at two o'clock*

As a grass-roots effort, enthusiastic public support for AmpleHarvest.org has been critical to its success. AmpleHarvest.org has nearly 2,450 people “liking” it on [Facebook](#) and 2,330 following it on [Twitter](#). It now is averaging 35,000 unique hits per day on the website.



Feedback both from gardeners as well as from pantries and food banks spoke of their enthusiasm for AmpleHarvest.org too. Preliminary results from the survey sent to the pantries points to more than 21 million pounds of fresh produce received this year – up from the estimated 6 million pounds last year. Of the responding pantries, about 20% reported receiving food that is hard to quantify (“lots of boxes”, etc.) so we know the computed poundage is actually a significant under reporting.

Most importantly, we got the word out - to the press, bloggers and other websites. Although the number varies from day to day, Google shows approximately 80,000 references to the term “AmpleHarvest.org.” Media coverage of AmpleHarvest.org including Mother Earth News, Burpee Home Gardens, Huffington’s Post, CNN, PBS, “Meet the Experts”, Boston Globe, Patch and many more points to the success of our ongoing efforts to educate and to encourage growers to donate their excess produce.



Not bad for a program little more than two years old. And we’re not done.

AmpleHarvest.org is working on a number of initiatives, including GleaningHarvest and ProducePedia, all designed to work in tandem with AmpleHarvest.org to help educate, encourage and enable millions of gardeners to share their garden bounty with a local food pantry.

The AmpleHarvest.org Campaign as a program has been wildly successful and has taken the nation by storm. Our “No Food Left Behind” mantra resonates with people because it’s focused on the idea that food should never be wasted - especially when the hungry person in your neighborhood may well be your neighbor.



The AmpleHarvest.org model has so impressed people around the world that we continue to get requests for expanding it globally. We won’t... at least not until we’ve eliminated hunger and malnutrition in America first, but we are sharing our model and experience with other countries so they can make an AmpleHarvest.org program best suited to their own circumstances.

As a non-profit organization, AmpleHarvest.org Inc. has been working hard to expand capacity to ensure that the AmpleHarvest.org Campaign will be fully supported and sustainable for years to come. Critical to making that happen is augmenting the volunteers with hired professional staff - people committed to AmpleHarvest.org’s mission. While AmpleHarvest.org has already hired its first staffer, several more are needed to fully support the organization and the campaign.

The good news is that AmpleHarvest.org as a national program is very efficient and cost effective to operate (when compared to other national non-profits) for several reasons:

1. It operates as a virtual organization... no brick and mortar building to pay for. No commuting costs, dry cleaning or fancy in-house kitchens.
2. It's focused on sustainable operations and practices (we do as little printing as possible, for example) which is good for our budget and the environment.
3. We don't need to build anything new. AmpleHarvest.org is taking advantage of already existing resources. Think back to the 1970's and the cost of the new facilities that were needed to recycle trash - none of that here. Recovered food does not need a processing facility - only a donor and nearby food pantry.
4. Most importantly, we're moving information ... not food. We don't need trucks or cars, drivers or gas. All we need is to connect the dots between the already available locally grown food and the food pantry in the community... and do that on a national scale. People keep asking "how come no one else ever thought of this before?" We keep asking that very same question.
5. Lastly, we're nice to everyone. That keeps our legal expenses very low.

Despite all of these amazing successes, our biggest financial challenge has been that foundations that normally fund hunger programs expect you to drive up with a truck of food and feed people. And once you've fed them, another truckload of food (along with funding for that) is needed to keep them fed. Again and again and again. It's like bailing water from a slowly sinking boat.

AmpleHarvest.org is not feeding meals to hungry people. Instead, it's helping to eliminate hunger. We're not mopping the floor... we're fixing the roof. The AmpleHarvest.org solution takes advantage of the food, especially healthy food, already in the community making it freely offered to those most needing it. And because of the JIT ("Just In Time" logic ... Google it!) design of AmpleHarvest.org, we've solved major stumbling blocks that faced food pantries in the past - refrigeration and storage.

The food donor feels good, the pantry saves money, the regional food bank's operating cost is reduced, the clients get freshly harvested food that improves their health and the environment is healthier. All because we found a way to have the excess supply, already in the community, meet demand.

Across America, we're asking gardeners to reach into their backyards instead of their back pockets to help their neighbors in need.

We're asking you, our friends and supporters, to reach into your back pockets to help AmpleHarvest.org. And of course if you are a gardener, you can reach into your backyard to help your pantry while you are also helping us.

AmpleHarvest.org needs your support. A \$5.00 donation is nice and we need a lot of those donations. \$500 or \$5,000 donations are also nice and we need a lot of those donations too.

In 2012, AOL and Huffington Post will focus on hunger and nutrition problems in America, and AmpleHarvest.org will be presented as a key part of the solution.

Please help us as generously as you can. It is cold outside now, but in only two months, gardeners will be starting to plan and plant their gardens. We want to make sure that the seeds they plant will bear fruit beyond their own table.



A very small but dedicated team is working hard to make AmpleHarvest.org live up to its potential... and we really need your help.

- **First and foremost, please make an [end of year donation to AmpleHarvest.org by clicking here](#)** or better yet, let us set up with you, a recurring donation to AmpleHarvest.org so you can help us help your community month after month. AmpleHarvest.org, Inc. is a 501(c)3 organization and your donation is tax deductible.
- **Help a new food pantry register with AmpleHarvest.org.** Find a local food pantry in your community, possibly in a nearby house of worship, a YMCA or other civic location. Give them [this flier](#) and urge them to register ASAP. Remind them that AmpleHarvest.org is totally FREE and they don't need refrigeration or storage – we solved that!
- **Help others learn about AmpleHarvest.org.** Put [this article](#) in your blog or newsletter, post it to your Facebook page and share with your friends, or Tweet about it.
- **Help local gardeners learn that they can share their ample harvest.** Print this [two sided flier](#) and post it a local garden shops, nurseries, supermarket bulletin boards, etc. to help gardeners learn about the opportunity to help the hungry.
- **Help publicize the AmpleHarvest.org Campaign.** Ask your local media to visit [this page](#) and do a story about people in the community wanting fresh produce for their families from the local food pantry.



AmpleHarvest.org envisions an America where millions of gardeners eliminate malnutrition and hunger in their own community.

Please make this your vision too and support our work.

Together, we can eliminate hunger and malnutrition while also improving the environment. Simply put, AmpleHarvest.org makes your donation last forever.

On behalf of everyone at AmpleHarvest.org Inc., thank you so much for your support. We wish you a safe and wonderful Holiday Season and all the best in the New Year.

Sincerely,

Gary Oppenheimer

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary Oppenheimer".

AmpleHarvest.org Founder/CNN Hero

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ps. If you are hosting a Holiday party, consider creating a centerpiece with whole fruits and vegetables, then donating this fresh wholesome food to a local food pantry. You know where you can find one. Visit www.AmpleHarvest.org/holiday to learn more.