



The Scalable Nationwide Solution to Reduce Food Waste and Fight Hunger

Goal: End the waste of billions of pounds of excess garden produce.

Vision: Excess garden produce should be donated to nearby food pantries

Mission: Inform gardeners about donating excess food *and* enable them to do it.

Reach: Nationwide.

One out of every six Americans are hungry and malnourished. A quarter of all kids under six are hungry and malnourished. They are subject to food-related diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, and obesity. At the same time, 11 billion pounds of excess harvest from backyard gardens and community gardens are wasted annually.

AmpleHarvest.org was founded to change the waste of garden food into opportunity. To tell gardeners across America their food would be welcomed by pantries. To make it easier for the gardeners to find local pantries. And for pantries to tell gardeners where they are and how to donate their much needed produce.

"As the number of families needing emergency food assistance continues to rise, food pantries are desperately working to keep their shelves stocked. When food does come in, it's generally canned or frozen. AmpleHarvest.org has done a masterful job at improving that reality by encouraging gardeners to share their extra produce with local food pantries."

Center for Food Action. Mahwah, NJ

AmpleHarvest.org has big goals. We want to make sure 42 million gardeners don't turn their excess harvest into food waste. We want each gardener to be part of eliminating hunger and malnutrition in their community. We want to make sure over 5 billion pounds of fresh food is available for the food insecure people who need it.

The Challenge

Over 50 million people in the United States live with food insecurity: either they don't have enough or are at real risk for not having enough food for their family. This, despite the fact that Americans waste 126 *billion pounds of food annually – enough to fill the Rose Bowl every day of the year!*

People facing food insecurity often rely on one of the estimated 33,500 local food pantries. Food pantries, for their part, rely on food distributed periodically by large regional warehouse operations called food banks. The deliveries consist of canned and boxed goods since most food pantries lack refrigeration and proper storage facilities.

At the same time, more than 42 million Americans grow vegetables, fruits, and herbs in their backyard, rooftop, patio and windowsill gardens. A typical gardener often produces a far larger harvest than they can use or give to friends. Most gardeners simply dispose of the excess produce, compost it, or leave it to rot in their garden. *Instead, AmpleHarvest.org gives gardeners the opportunity to easily find a local food pantry that is eager for their fresh produce.*

The AmpleHarvest.org Solution – Simple, Powerful, Proven

AmpleHarvest.org, formed in 2009, is a nationwide non-profit that harnesses the power of technology along with the grower's frustration seeing their fresh food go unused to address the issues of food waste and hunger. The waste of an estimated 5 billion pounds of recoverable locally grown fresh food from America's 42 million home/community gardeners exists, ironically, side-by-side with a large population that is food insecure. Both problems can be solved, in part, by eliminating the disconnect between the local food pantries needing the food and the nearby gardeners who have excess.

AmpleHarvest.org is uniquely positioned to address this work -- it invented the solution -- and it has already demonstrated its capacity to implement and expand the model. It reaches out to food pantries across the nation, encouraging them to welcome the generosity of the local gardeners and appear on the AmpleHarvest.org registry.

At the same time, AmpleHarvest.org encourages millions of gardeners across America to find a local food pantry on AmpleHarvest.org and to be generous when they harvest their gardens. The outreach and awareness campaign for the gardeners is conducted by Master Gardeners nationwide, the media, social networking, and most importantly, gardeners telling other gardeners.

Currently, AmpleHarvest.org works with nearly 8,000 emergency food pantries across all 50 states, almost 1 out of every 5 in America, so that they are now able to receive millions of pounds of fresh, nutritious, locally-sourced produce that is immediately distributed in their respective service areas to low-income, hungry families and seniors.



Although many Americans are themselves suffering from economic difficulties, AmpleHarvest.org enables gardeners to help diminish hunger in their community by reaching into their backyard, not just their back pocket.

AmpleHarvest.org – The Unique Solution

AmpleHarvest.org has managed to effectively address three critical problems simultaneously: eliminating food waste by America's 42 million gardeners; increasing the availability of fresh nutritious food for the needy; and, reversing the adverse environmental impact of rotting food in landfills.

No agency, non-profit or advocacy group has so thoroughly studied the problem or implemented a practical, resilient solution as AmpleHarvest.org. Foundations and non-profits have recognized AmpleHarvest.org's cumulative successes and are giving increasing support.

Its unique online platform (www.AmpleHarvest.org) brings gardeners and pantries together virtually. By using and bridging resources that already exist – fresh produce, gardeners willing to donate and deliver it, and established pantries - important problems are being solved without investing in costly infrastructure and overhead.

AmpleHarvest.org's demonstrable results have increased its stature as an innovative food waste problem solver. Its methodical approach and intense focus devoted to expanding its online influence and outreach has created the most influential site devoted to citizen food waste on the internet.

The Impact

- Since its launch in 2009, growers across all 50 states have donated millions upon millions of pounds of fresh produce that would have been lost to waste.
- Millions of pantry clients can feed their families fresh food, thereby reducing the likelihood of diet-related illness such as diabetes, high blood pressure and obesity.
- Gardeners across America enjoy the satisfaction of knowing that they are directly helping their neighbors in need.
- Nearly 8,000 food pantries across all 50 states are registered to receive a sustainable and recurring supply of freshly harvested, locally grown food from area growers – for free!
- Families are introduced to new varieties of healthy food to which they may have had no prior access.



Garden Food Distributed At Food Pantry

- Pantries are able to reduce their carbon footprint as they source more food locally by decreasing the amount of disposable packages being trucked across the country.
- The community waste stream is reduced as excess food is donated instead of being thrown away, and methane emissions at trash dumps are being reduced.
- AmpleHarvest.org name recognition enables an ever-growing number of gardeners to learn about the program. Currently, more than 22,000 blogs, articles and links from other sites all point to AmpleHarvest.org.

High Praise

AmpleHarvest.org has received support and backing from Google Inc., the White House and the USDA, the National Council of Churches, the National Gardening Association, Feeding America and its member food banks, Garden Writers of America as well as numerous religious organizations.

Among its many accolades, AmpleHarvest.org's founder Gary Oppenheimer has been lauded for his invention of this unique solution. He has been nominated for the World Food Prize, named a CNN Hero, a Huffington Post Greatest Person of the Day and Game Changer for 2011 and won the Points of Light Award in 2013.

AmpleHarvest.org has been highlighted by First Lady, Michele Obama in "Let's Move" speeches, featured on such programs as PBS's "Growing A Greener World" and has been recognized by the USDA, the National

Council of Churches, National Gardening Association and dozens of other hunger fighting organizations in America. Even the EPA as part of its effort to diminish the environmental impact of food waste, has highlighted AmpleHarvest.org as a nationwide food rescue resource.

"AmpleHarvest.org is one of the most innovative groups I've met."

Jon Carson, Director of the White House Office of Public Engagement

More information is available at

www.AmpleHarvest.org

[AmpleHarvest.org TED Talk](#)

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