



## AmpleHarvest.org – The Virtual Solution To Hunger

### Executive Summary

Since 2009, and especially in the last year, [AmpleHarvest.org](http://AmpleHarvest.org) has become one of the highest praised projects in the United States on the challenge of solving domestic hunger. The timing of AmpleHarvest.org's national debut could not have been better. Last fall, the New York Times wrote that 46.6 million Americans now live in poverty – the highest number in 52 years of Census Bureau records. Worse, the USDA reports that 50 million Americans, including 17 million children, are regularly food insecure. In a nation of 305 million people, 1-out-of-every-6 people are poor and struggling to eat!

To provide **just a small fraction** of the attention AmpleHarvest.org has received to substantiate our bold opening line, please consider that AmpleHarvest.org's founder has been named a CNN Hero as well as a Huffington Post Greatest Person of the Day **and** Game Changer for 2011; has been repeatedly praised by the White House in "Let's Move" speeches; has been featured on such programs as PBS's "Growing A Greener World" and the Larry King Show; has earned the 2011 Glynwood Wave of the Future Harvest Award; has earned the Elfenworks "In Harmony With Hope" Award and has been warmly embraced by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the National Council of Churches, America's Grow a Row, Plant a Row for the Hungry, National Gardening Association, United We Serve, Feeding America, and dozens of other hunger fighting organizations in America. Even the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), as part of its effort to diminish the environmental impact of food waste, has highlighted AmpleHarvest.org as a food rescue resource.

The most compelling validation of AmpleHarvest.org stems from the fact that due to the work of this sensational new non-profit organization, more than 6,000 emergency food pantries in America 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. In fact, because the number of food pantries already registered at AmpleHarvest.org has become so large, so quickly, Microsoft Explorer "chokes" on displaying a real-time map.



Lee Iacocca once said "We are continually faced by great opportunities brilliantly disguised as insoluble problems."

AmpleHarvest.org, created by a problem solver who believes that you can do the impossible if you believe it isn't, addressed one such opportunity by using the Internet to connect existing resources – 40 million growers and neighborhood food pantries nationwide. A simple approach that both educates and empowers people to be the solution.

### The "Insoluble" Problem of Hunger – NOT!

Straight-out, AmpleHarvest.org does not believe the problem of hunger is "insoluble." In the final analysis, we believe the biggest challenge that perennially thwarts a solution to the problem of some 50 million "food insecure" people in the United States is simply a lack of political will. With decades of politicized debate about "fair and proper" levels of government support for food assistance programs producing only the reality that we now have more people in the United States who are hungry than ever before, AmpleHarvest.org was created to advance a simple, "game-changing" approach that favors old fashioned American values of neighbors helping neighbors rather than divisive government subsidies or even well-intentioned but nutritionally limited food banks.

## **Needed – A New Solution to Hunger in the United States**

If only two words were permitted to describe AmpleHarvest.org, those words would be ***innovative and collaborative***. We know we cannot solve the problem of hunger alone and that is why our first action when confronting a challenge is always to examine who or what organization we can collaborate with to effect a solution. AmpleHarvest.org is certainly not attempting to replace our nation's primary hunger safety net – SNAP (Food Stamps) – or the vast U.S. network of 203 strategically placed food banks and their 33,500 partner food pantries. While these two traditional approaches have at least kept the problem of hunger to a point where it affects 1-out-of-6 people nationally, few people would ever call this a success. At right are just a handful of components contributing to what traditional hunger fighters across America are now calling ***“the Perfect Storm”***. Through three years of research and countless hours of dialogue with all varieties of stakeholders, AmpleHarvest.org knows these systems are struggling to keep up and unequivocally need fresh, innovative, and collaborative partners to win the war against hunger.

Along with these alarming “Perfect Storm” examples of resource erosion has come another problematic phenomenon that threatens the viability of traditional hunger solutions ***to the very core***. Insidiously, even with nearly 50 million people in America receiving SNAP benefits and even with 203 strategically placed food banks and their 33,500 local food pantry partners providing some 3 billion pounds of emergency food annually, our nation's low-income population is suffering from skyrocketing levels of nutrition related diseases including Type 2 diabetes, hypertension, conditions ripe for stroke, and obesity. AmpleHarvest.org believes all these phenomena lead to the conclusion that America does indeed need a new solution to hunger.

- Currently, nearly 6,000 food pantries across all 50 states are registered to receive a sustainable and recurring supply of freshly harvested, locally grown food (many for the first time) from area growers - for free!
- Our 2011 end of year survey showed more than **20 million pounds** of freshly harvested locally grown produce donated to food pantries, up from **3 million pounds** gleaned from an August 2010/mid harvest survey when the campaign was only 15 months old.
- Millions of pantry clients can feed their family fresh food instead of food packaged with added salt and sugar thereby reducing the likelihood of diet related illness such as diabetes, high blood pressure and obesity.
- Children, now at greater risk of obesity than ever before, are exposed to fresh produce with many learning for the first time that apples do not normally come pre-sliced in cellophane, peas come in pods and not cans, and carrots are normally sweet and crunchy.
- Gardeners across America enjoy the satisfaction of knowing that they are helping their neighbors in need by reaching into their backyard instead of their back pocket.
- Low-income families are introduced to new varieties of food they may have had no prior access to.
- The carbon footprint of the pantries is reduced as locally sourced food, without packaging or cans that are usually trucked across the country and which present costly disposal challenges, is used.
- The community waste stream is reduced as excess food is donated instead of being thrown away. This approach provides significant reduction in methane emissions and the need for tax-supported land-fills. As a matter of interest, methane is a “climate change gas” with 20 times the impact of CO<sup>2</sup>.

***The efficiency of connecting the dots - moving information instead of food to improve both nutrition and the environment across all 50 states makes AmpleHarvest.org the most cost efficient hunger program in America.***

***Your Support Will Improve The Health and The Wealth of America!***

More information is available at [www.AmpleHarvest.org/FAQ](http://www.AmpleHarvest.org/FAQ), [www.AmpleHarvest.org/CNN](http://www.AmpleHarvest.org/CNN), [www.AmpleHarvest.org/TED](http://www.AmpleHarvest.org/TED) and [www.AmpleHarvest.org/PBS](http://www.AmpleHarvest.org/PBS).