

STUDY GUIDE



THE PROBLEM

America has 50+ million food insecure people... people who are either hungry or people who are at real risk of being hungry.

THE OPPORTUNITY

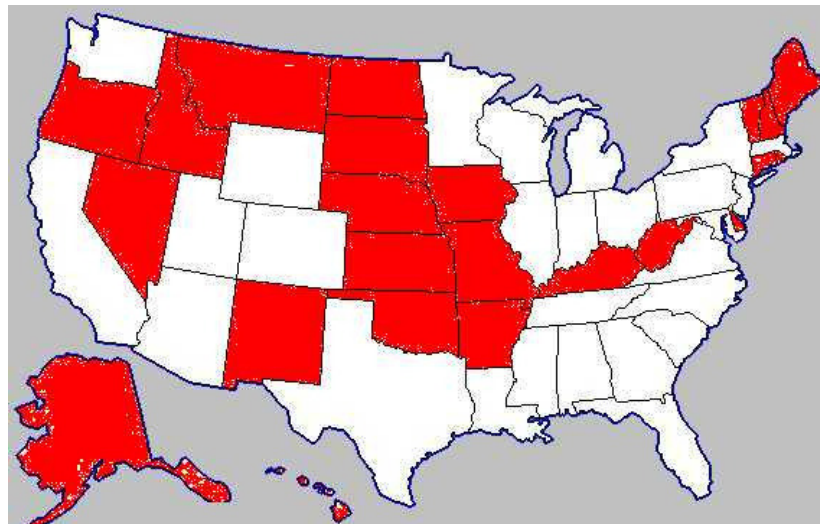
42 million Americans grow food in home gardens... often far more than they can use, preserve or give to friends. The rest is often left to rot in gardens.

THE CHALLENGE

If locally grown produce could be delivered directly to neighborhood food pantries, it would immediately provide a free source of fresh produce to the people who most need it.

THE SOLUTION

AmpleHarvest.org - a national non-profit registry of food pantries - educates, encourages and empowers millions of home and community gardeners to easily find a local food pantry eager to accept their excess garden produce. This opened the door for fresh food to displace canned produce, introduces fresh food to children, keeps produce out of landfills, and enables people to diminish hunger, malnutrition and systemic poverty in their own community without spending a dime by simply reaching into their backyards instead of their back pockets. No more wasted food.



50+ million equals the combined populations of 23 of our 50 states.

THE THOUGHT PROCESS

In the building of AmpleHarvest.org, a number of Jewish concepts contributed to the design of the site.

1. People should be helping their neighbors. (Tzedakah)
2. The excess food from our gardens should be set aside for the needy in our community. We believe in "No Food Left Behind". (Leviticus).
3. The food pantries are encouraged to arrange for the donation of locally grown produce a few hours before the clients come in to prevent the possible humiliation that would result from one neighbor donating food while another was there to receive some. This also eliminates the need for additional refrigeration and storage. (Maimonides)
4. Excess food should not be thrown into trash dumps as it contributes to the waste-stream and methane (CO2) emissions. (Tikkun Olam). Food recovery heals the planet.



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“And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corner of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest; thou shalt leave them for the poor and the stranger”

Leviticus 23:22

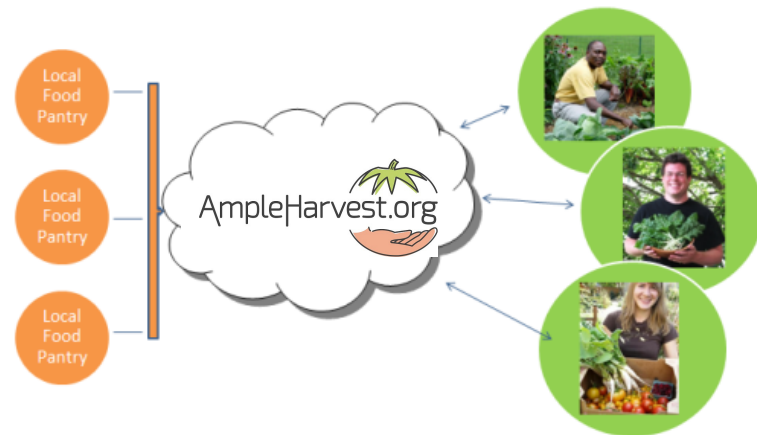
5. Local gardeners eager to donate food usually don't know where to take it and local food pantries eager to receive the food don't know how to reach growers. AmpleHarvest.org enables 42 million home gardeners to easily find a local food pantry eager to accept it. (Shidduch)

6. And while not explicitly stated in AmpleHarvest.org, common growing techniques including crop rotation lend themselves towards the idea of letting the land rest periodically and letting any remaining crops be available to the needy. It is modern day gleaning. (Shmita).

MAKING IT WORK

AmpleHarvest.org is an innovative solution to diminishing hunger and improving the environment in America. We do not grow, make or move food but we do make it possible for those who do to share their excess with local food pantries across America. AmpleHarvest.org moved the fight against the waste of food, hunger and malnutrition into the “cloud”. Additionally, its design takes advantage of “just in time” inventory logic used in business to assure that food pantries won’t need additional storage or refrigeration, donors and recipients (who may well be neighbors) won’t cross paths and that the food donated will be fresher than the same food available at local supermarkets. It’s a “Google” for America’s food pantries.

".. [our food bank] has sent your website and produce offer out to us....I do have to say 'Hot Diggity!!'"
- LIFE Food Pantry, Loveland OH



THE BIGGER PICTURE

Food insecurity along with the ready availability of cheap calories in many communities has created the apparent contradiction that millions of Americans are both well fed and malnourished simultaneously. People eating potato chips instead of potatoes and fruit drinks instead of whole fruit has contributed to our epidemic of obesity, diabetes, and other health issues. Getting fresh produce into food pantries is an important step towards helping people, especially our children, learn that apples don’t normally come pre-sliced in cellophane, peas normally come in pods and not cans, and carrots are normally crunchy and can be fun to eat. The solution to hunger and malnutrition is in your back yard. Here are some thoughts for making our solution, yours too:

1. Understand that one out of six Americans doesn’t have enough food for their families. Many are recent victims of our economy who are “middle class white collar” people who for the first time need the assistance of their community. It is important to know that being hungry, while unfortunate, is nothing to be ashamed of or to pity. Indeed, it is likely some of your friends live in food insecure homes.

2. Understand that growing food is part of our heritage as Jews and that it’s a mitzvah (plus it is fun) to grow food. It could be a farm, a backyard garden or just herbs in a flower pot. For even young children, simply planting the leftover horseradish root from the Passover Seder table or herbs such as chives or parsley in a flower pot will help.. Children grow by eating as well as donating what they grew.

3. Understand that sharing, especially excess food, is the right thing to do. By way of example, many years ago, EVERYTHING went in the trash blighting America. Now much of that goes into recycling. Similarly, excess food can also be “recovered” ... from a restaurant in take home containers to be offered to someone on the street, from the supermarket in “dented” cans for a local food drive, or from your backyard garden to be donated to a local food pantry. Food should never be wasted, especially when people in the community are hungry.

4. Help gardeners in your own community learn about the opportunity to donate from their garden by distributing the flyer at AmpleHarvest.org/gardenshop. Ask local garden shops/nurseries and community bulletin boards to post it in conspicuous locations.

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5. If you belong to a community garden, urge other members to donate their excess – especially if they leave for a summer vacation. Ditto for farmers' markets

6. Tell your friends nationwide (by email, Facebook, twitter, texting) about hunger and about the AmpleHarvest.org solution. The more people know about their opportunity to diminish hunger, the less hunger there will be and the healthier the country will become.

7. Urge CSA members to donate the excess/unwanted allocation when the farmer provides more than they can use. See AmpleHarvest.org/csa to learn more.

8. Help us help more of the needy in your community get fresh locally grown produce by finding a local food pantry in your own neighborhood or one affiliated with a synagogue, church, mosque, JCC, YMCA, etc. Give the flyer at AmpleHarvest.org/pantry to the pantry manager. Nearly 8,000 food pantries nationwide are on AmpleHarvest.org today.

9. Reach out to the press and media as well as your favorite bloggers to urge them to write/report on AmpleHarvest.org . A press kit is available at AmpleHarvest.org/press



This photo represents the food lost by a family of four in a month.

10. Lastly, help diminish hunger in your community by asking your rabbi, educator or other lay leader to spend a Shabbat talking about it. They can visit AmpleHarvest.org/jewish to get ideas.

*Your generous donations help support this program.
AmpleHarvest.org/support
AmpleHarvest.org is a 501c3 not-for-profit organization.*

Learn more about AmpleHarvest.org at www.AmpleHarvest.org/faq
Solve hunger in your own community at www.AmpleHarvest.org/local
See the AmpleHarvest.org TED Talk at www.AmpleHarvest.org/TED
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