



**United States
Department of
Agriculture**

Research,
Education, and
Economics

National Institute
of Food
and Agriculture

Office of the
Director

1400 Independence
Avenue SW
Washington, DC
20250

To whom it may concern:

The purpose of this letter is to second the nomination of Gary Oppenheimer for the World Food Prize.

Gary began AmpleHarvest.org building on his experience as an Extension Master Gardener. I had the pleasure of providing federal leadership for that program, just as Gary was in the “idea formation” phase of how to use crowd-sourcing to connect hungry families to gardeners with excess produce. His experience as one of around 90,000 Extension Master Gardeners, who provide science based information and programming to millions of consumer horticulturalists, told him that the bountiful yields of some gardeners often went to waste. Many times the over 42 million Americans that grow fruit, vegetables, herbs, and nuts in the United States didn’t even know where the nearest food pantry was or if it even accepted fresh produce. The fact that there was a lack of comprehensive state and national food pantry databases made these connections even more difficult.

Gary decided to solve the problem.

He began Ampleharvest.org. With the help of many state and local master gardener websites, the Extension Master Gardener eXtension.org community of practice, the USDA Peoples Garden Initiative, and other cooperators too numerous to mention, gardeners could find food pantries that could use fresh produce. Gary rallied these resources like few others could. Even though they knew that over 50 million homes in America were food insecure, they were not sure how their talents could provide a significant solution. Gary showed them.

He didn’t stop there. A website with a database of 6700 food pantries, most likely the most complete existing nationwide food pantry database, was too good a resource to only partially utilize. Gary also made an iPhone and Android app so people could pick up an item or two in the grocery store for their local food pantry, fresh or shelf stable, for which the local food pantries used AmpleHarvest.org to communicate a need.

For these reasons, based on my professional dealings with Gary Oppenheimer as a former National Program Leader serving the Extension Master Gardener Program, I second his nomination for the World Food Prize.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "WJ Hoffman".

William Hoffman
USDA/NIFA