



# 2016 ANNUAL REPORT

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## STAFF

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Executive Director

**EMILY PAUL**  
Programs Director

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Logistics & Sales Director

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CSA Manager

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**NATALIE VANDENBURGH**  
Kitchen Manager

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**DAVID VAN EECKHOUT**  
Grower Support Specialist

## 2016 BOARD MEMBERS

**SARA POHLAD**

**JOHN BYOM**

**JANE SHEY**

**SUSAN STOKES**

**SCOTT PAMPUCH**

**JAY BELL**

## LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



*Education, access to resources, training, and capacity building are what set  
The Good Acre apart from other food hubs.*

The Good Acre accomplished a lot in the past year, both within these walls and outside of them. It seems like only a few short months ago that we were opening the doors to our brand-new facility on October 30th, 2015. Since then, we have operated a successful 432 member CSA spread over 19 weeks. Our farmers were at the heart of this endeavor and we were able to return 79.2% of our earnings back to the 22 farmers with whom we worked.

Our commercial kitchen became progressively busier - our cooking classes filled up and it became a production space for small food makers. The kitchen also hosted culinary training for food service professionals and weekly "Food as Medicine" classes for University of Minnesota Medical Students. The diversity of the classes continues to grow as we explore the cultural components of food and its production. Our classroom had over 5,000 hours of use with a wide array of subjects and has become an active community gathering space. Volunteers gave us over 600 hours of their time, for which we are very grateful.

As we embark on another year of strengthening food and community in our area, we will add healthcare facilities to our growing roster of local wholesale clients. To keep up with the growing demand, The Good Acre will be training farmers in on-farm food safety and supplying infrastructure to help them expand their markets. Our kitchen program will continue to grow as we add more food makers and schedule more cooking classes, which are routinely selling out. Our hoop houses will come to life this growing season as well and will become a focal point in our farmer training program. We have just begun this work, and so much more, to contribute to a diverse, equitable food system, and I look forward to the continuation of our journey.

Rhys Williams

## OUR MISSION

WE CONNECT  
AND  
STRENGTHEN  
FARMERS, FOOD  
MAKERS, AND  
COMMUNITIES  
THROUGH  
GOOD FOOD

**MEETING MARKET DEMAND WITH THE POWER OF MANY**

The one thing that all food hubs have in common is that they aggregate produce from many small growers in order to meet demands larger than any one farmer could fulfill on their own. In 2016, we were able to establish ourselves as a resource for farmers, cooperatives, and businesses who needed a place to wash, pack, and/or store their produce or prepared food items. Before our CSA program started in June, we cultivated relationships with growers looking to store their winter crops, starting with Featherstone Farm in December 2015.

**WASH, PACK & STORE: COLD STORAGE RENTAL**

The Good Acre provides a reasonably-priced option with a flexible fee-based structure starting at \$10/week/pallet with storage for upwards of 500 lbs. We're intentionally keeping barriers to working with us low, so farmers don't waste or lose their hard-earned harvest.

**2016 STORAGE FACILITY PARTNERS**

- Brightside Distributing
- Featherstone Farm
- Hoch Orchard
- Hmong American Farmers Association
- Locust Lane Vineyard
- Minnesota Food Association
- Big River Farms
- Mighty Axe Hops
- Shared Ground Farmers' Coop
- Sin Fronteras Farm

IN 2016 APPROXIMATELY  
**65,000 LBS OF**  
FOOD MOVED IN AND  
OUT OF OUR FACILITY.

Our facility was certified organic in early 2016, and we are currently preparing for a GAP/GHP certification through a third party auditor – a food safety benchmark that many potential wholesale customers are looking for from their local food sourcing partners.

**FARMERS MARKET**

Another pillar of our mission is to support making healthy, locally grown foods accessible to all. To fulfill that mission in our first year, we decided to open a farmers market in our parking lot.

- 13 weeks: June 2nd - August 25th
- A dozen local farmers and makers
- \$200 in SNAP benefits redeemed + Match (up to \$10/transaction) with Hunger Solutions Statewide Market Bucks Program

**RESULTS:** Feedback from market vendors was mixed. Because of the success and focus on some of our other programs, we're evaluating new ways to reach low income neighbors in 2017.



Photo by: Mike Hazard, HAFA

### SUPPORTING AGRICULTURE

The heart of our mission is growing great farmers, and in 2016 we were able to do that with specific training and support. With over 20 years of organic vegetable farming experience, our Executive Director mentored and coached the farmers we've worked with in our first year on farm visits, in group training sessions, and in one-on-one meetings. In addition to Rhys as a resource for our farmers, in 2017 we hired a Grower Support Specialist. The role's sole focus is to be an on-farm resource for all things related to growing, including: support for soil fertility, product quality, pest prevention, food safety measure implementation, and growth of high-yield healthy crops. The goal of this work is to ensure our growers are being the best stewards of land that they can be, while producing healthy, bountiful harvests. We strive to be a resource for our farmers because we believe that a successful farmer is a sustainable farmer.

In addition to our individual work in the field with farmers, we are also able to offer training at our Falcon Heights facility for those interested in season extension. In Fall 2016, we built two high tunnels on our property with the intent of using them as a training tool, demonstrating how to construct, grow, and maintain them as well as showing the value of season extension. We plan to use the high tunnels to test out various crops in 2017 – our way of helping to troubleshoot for our growers so they don't have to make costly and time-consuming mistakes in high tunnels of their own.

### WHAT OUR FARMERS HAVE TO SAY



“A friend recommended *The Good Acre* to me because they buy from minority farmers... Our partnership has worked very well. The prices they offer are good. If I have extra harvest -- onions, beans, etc. -- they will buy it.”



“*The Good Acre* is a high quality partner. They taught me how to clean everything well, and also have classes around food safety and nutrition. These have been helpful.”



“I've been working with *The Good Acre* since their beginning. Early on, Rhys came out to the farm. *The Good Acre* does a good job. Whenever they contract, they buy.”



“Working with *The Good Acre* means that I'm working with a great organization that contributes to the community and helps small farmers like me meet my bottom line. Selling my produce to *The Good Acre* has helped me increase my revenue and decrease in my produce loss.”

## GRANT SPOTLIGHT NCR SARE GRANT



### \$30,000 GRANT

The Good Acre applied for the North Central Region Sustainable Agriculture and Research Education Grant in October 2016 and was awarded \$30,000 in December 2016 by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture.



### HIGH TUNNEL GROWING:

The grant supports *The Good Acre* as a conduit between existing research regarding high tunnels and underserved farmers in the Twin Cities area. Our aim is to improve access to the information they need to successfully implement high tunnel growing on their own farms.



### INFORMATION ACCESSIBILITY:

Using grant funds, *The Good Acre* created and translated a thorough instruction manual for high tunnel farming into both Spanish and Hmong.



### RESEARCH:

In partnership with UMN and 3 farms, *The Good Acre* is researching strategies to preserve soil fertility with practices such as crop rotation and the use of various cover crops.

## 2015: CSA Pilot

Before our facility opened in October 2015, we piloted our CSA Program.



**1**  
Refrigerated Truck



**3**  
Staffers & Many Volunteers



**16**  
Partner Farmers



**175**  
Shares for 175 Members

### HOW IT WORKED



**STEP 1**  
Produce was aggregated and packed at HAFA.



**STEP 2**  
CSA boxes were delivered to 9 drop-off locations throughout the Twin Cities

### OUR NEW HOME

Two weeks after our CSA pilot ended, we moved into our brand-new facility located on Larpenteur Ave in Falcon Heights.



“  
*Our CSA program serves as a great introduction to growing for wholesale markets for the immigrant and underserved farmers we work with*”

– Anna Richardson, CSA Manager

## THE HMONG AMERICAN FARMERS ASSOCIATION



Hmong American farmers occupy a unique place in the history of Minnesota’s local foods movement. Since Hmong refugees began resettling from Laos and Thailand to Minnesota in the 1970s as political refugees after the Vietnam War, many families have relied on their agricultural heritage to make a living growing produce and flowers for local farmers markets. In 2011, a group of Hmong American farming families formed the Hmong American Farmers Association (HAFA) to offer support to Hmong farmers and to assist those facing barriers to accessing land, financing, training, markets, and more. Today, HAFA manages a 155-acre farm in Dakota County where member families can lease land, hone their business and agricultural practices, and sell produce to the HAFA Food Hub which aggregates and sells members’ produce through community-supported agriculture (CSA) shares, schools, retailers and institutions. HAFA currently works with over 100 local Hmong family farmers, and we are grateful to be able to partner with such a vibrant and diverse organization to help further a sustainable, fair food economy for all.

## 2016: CSA From Our New Home

With the growing season in Minnesota beginning in late spring, our facility started getting busy once our CSA started up again in June 2016.

**22**

Partner  
Farmers

**432**

CSA  
Members

**27**

Drop-Off  
Locations

“  
*I’m so glad I gave you a try, I loved the variety each week. I will definitely be back next year!*”

## CSA WEEK

**MONDAY:**  
Area farms deliver fresh produce to our Warehouse

**TUESDAY:**  
Staff and volunteers pack

**WEDNESDAY:**  
Delivery or Pick-Up for Members

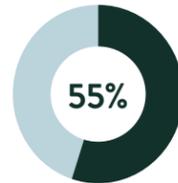
**THURSDAY:**  
Delivery or Pick-Up for Members

**FRIDAY:**  
Prep for the next week with phone calls and farm visits to make sure crops are ready for the next week’s harvest

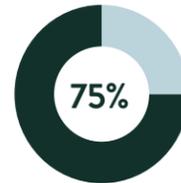
## CSA BENEFITS

- ▶ Members enjoyed 19-week program
- ▶ Stunning variety: >70 different crops
- ▶ Opportunities to volunteer
- ▶ Weekly recipes and recurring meal planning workshops

THE (END-OF-SEASON) SURVEY SAYS...



>55% of members were first-time CSA shareholders



>75% think differently about where their food comes from

We are capturing people who are new to community-supported agriculture – a positive sign that we are making change and helping to drive preference for local produce in our community.

PARTNERSHIP SPOTLIGHT

CSA ADD-ONS

In 2016, we offered two add-ons to the program – honey from The Beez Kneez and fresh baked bread from Honey & Rye Bakery. The total revenue from add-on sales came to about \$7,000 – all of which went directly to these small area businesses, keeping dollars in our local food community and making our program more robust and unique for our members.



The Beez Kneez is committed to reviving the hive by establishing and maintaining beehives in the Twin Cities, delivering honey by bike, and teaching sustainable beekeeping by providing training and support through the Beez Kneez Honey House and Camp Beez Kneez programs.



Honey & Rye Bakehouse is St. Louis Park’s neighborhood bakery. It’s owned and operated by Anne Andrus, who grew up baking by her mother’s side in a rural MN kitchen. Given Minnesota’s rich history of grain growing and milling, the artisan breads and pastries baked daily are largely comprised of local ingredients that highlight the flavors of the changing seasons.

In 2017 we are expanding our add-on offerings to include local fruit, eggs and mushrooms.

SHARING OUR SHARES

Every week we donated eight shares to Building Blocks, a north Minneapolis based non-profit focused on mentorship programming, affordable housing, and sustainable community development. These shares were paid for through our CSA member donation program. We look forward to continuing our work with local non-profits by providing extra shares and donated/excess produce for those in need.



*What really surprised me about being part of the CSA is how little I spent on food otherwise. We had a lot more vegetarian/vegan meals than we would have if I was still going to the supermarket for everything. We have been eating very healthy.”*



*I really enjoyed learning about and trying new vegetables, and I was surprised by how much we enjoyed the community aspect of the CSA. It was really satisfying to be connected to the work of The Good Acre through the CSA and a lot of fun to get to know the people who work or volunteer there.”*



Roseville Area Schools Nutrition Services Staff

In the search for new markets for our farmers, we began doing outreach to institutional wholesale buyers in Fall 2016. Our initial efforts have primarily focused on the education sector, with our first sales to Robbinsdale and Fridley public school districts.

As an added value, our unique facility allows us to offer assistance with creating and hosting staff education sessions - either on-site or in our kitchen. In 2016, more than 75 Nutrition Services staffers came through our doors to learn basic scratch cooking techniques using the produce we procured for them. We also assist our clients in developing recipes that fit within their nutritional guidelines and their budgets.

THE (EASY) WHOLESALE PITCH: A WIN-WIN FOR ALL

- Safe, traceable food from our network of approved farmers.
- 3rd-party certified with full liability insurance.
- Efficient procurement.
- One produce list. One order. One invoice.
- Familiar, competitively-priced offerings.
- Convenient weekly deliveries with our refrigerated truck.
- Assistance with creating, facilitating and hosting staff education - either on-site or in our kitchen.
- Customizable, if required: pre-season crop planning with local farmers to meet wholesale customers’ unique produce needs throughout the year.

GRANT SPOTLIGHT  
Scaling Up Sales to Meet Wholesale Market Demand

APPLIED: SPRING 2016  
AWARDED: NOVEMBER 2016  
AWARDED BY: THE USDA

**\$95,000**  
to be used over 3 years.

The grant allows us to provide the food safety training needed for farmers to participate in selling in Farm to School wholesale channels. Helps us build capacity of small farms to meet the product requirements of institutional buyers - a huge boost in getting locally-grown produce front-and-center within the Twin Cities food system.



*“The Good Acre has proven to be a valuable partner and resource for school districts, such as ours, who source local produce. They have provided the facilities, training, and support that many farmers need to be ready to sell to large institutions. They are an asset in helping our district expand our Farm to School Program and growing our ability to work with new farms!”*

- Kate Seybold, Mpls Public Schools Farm to School Coordinator

### COMMERCIAL KITCHEN

Our commercial kitchen doesn't just host a wide array of cooking classes in the evenings. During the day, you'll find our kitchen buzzing with local food makers. Our classroom has also been a crucial component to some of our education-based cooking classes like UMN's Cooking Matters Instructor Training Program, where trainees gain the skills needed to teach SNAP recipients how to prepare healthy meals on limited budgets. In addition to nutrition education training, we've also rented our kitchen to various businesses looking for fun and unique corporate and team building retreats.

### LAKEWINDS FOOD CO-OP MAKER TO MARKET PARTNERSHIP

We embarked on an exciting new partnership with Lakewinds Food Co-op in December 2016. Lakewinds is helping to underwrite the cost of kitchen time, licensing, and marketing support for four startup food businesses, taking them from concept to the shelves of Lakewinds locations throughout the Twin Cities. We look forward to helping launch new food businesses that strive to source local produce from our food hub in 2017 and beyond.

### COMMUNITY SPACE

Our education and training classroom space has been key to so much of the community building we've been able to do in our first full year of operation. Our classroom has also been a crucial component to some of our education-based cooking classes like UMN Extension's Cooking Matters, Minnesota instructor training program. These classes teach SNAP recipients to prepare healthy meals on limited budgets. We've also rented our kitchen to businesses looking for unique corporate and team building retreats.



“

*What makes The Good Acre valuable to a local maker would be, of course, their enviable facilities but also the staff who seem to have their finger on the pulse of the Twin Cities food scene. Bringing together the established with the new and making lasting connections through the food hub, the cooking classes, and the farmers The Good Acre works with is exactly what makes being a local food maker exciting!”* -Heidi Skoog, Serious Jam

<p><b>175</b> commercial kitchen hours logged in 2016 (up to 540 by March 2017!)</p>	<p><b>+7</b> new renters on the roster</p>	<p><b>4</b> food startups selected for the Lakewinds Food Co-op Maker to Market program</p>
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### SPACE FEATURES



Tables & Chairs for up to 40 people



Projector, surround sound and high-speed Wifi



Low rental rates to encourage community building

### 2016 COMMUNITY SPACE REVENUE

**\$10,000** Kitchen Rental **+** **\$3,000** Classroom Rental

### RENTERS INCLUDED:

- Big Brothers/Big Sisters
- Grow North MN
- HealthPartners – Como Clinic
- Hmong American Farmers Association
- Hunger Solutions
- Les Dames d'Escoffier International
- Local Foods Advisory Committee
- MARL
- Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service (MOSES)
- Midwest Pantry
- Mill City Farmers Market
- Minnesota Food Charter
- National Co-op Grocers Association
- National Farmers Union
- University of Minnesota
- Women's Environmental Institute



“As more food community members learned about The Good Acre food hub and our commercial grade teaching kitchen, and as we met more artisan food makers, it became apparent to us that there was a need for another shared commercial kitchen space on the north side of town that offered not just the facility but the connection to sources for local ingredients. Our shared commercial kitchen program continues to grow and our makers are scaling their businesses, improving their commitment to local sourcing which supports and strengthens the local food economy as a whole” – Emily Paul, Program Director

### CLASSES

We've hosted more than 100 classes since our very first class on April 11th, 2016.

**Typical format:** 2-4 hours, led by experienced local cooking instructors including chefs and cookbook authors.

**Debut:** Family Favorites - an affordable class on how to prepare a healthy meal for a family of four.

**Objective:** With a variety of topics offered each month, we aim to reach a diverse audience with our classes, all of which incorporate innovative and tasty ways to cook locally grown, seasonal produce.

#### Classes Offered:

- After School Apps for Teens
- Chicken Challenge: Breakdown Your Dinner
- Cooking Well for Less
- Great Bowls of Food
- Kids Cooking Camp with MPS (Minneapolis Public Schools)
- Pho Soup Making Class
- Rise Up and Bake: Sourdough Class

#### Instructors Include

- Amy Brown & Heidi Andermack Chowgirls Catering
- Jenny Breen - Chef, Author & Educator
- Robin Asbell - Chef and Author
- Yia Vang - Chef, Union Kitchen
- Marshall Paulsen – Chef, Birchwood Café

With primary backing and abundant support from The Pohlads Family Foundation, The Good Acre has the unique circumstance that has allowed for the development of a vision, mission, and programs that go beyond the scope of a typical food hub. Our philanthropic support gives us a different set of challenges to navigate during our inaugural years which include:

- becoming a trusted community partner
- maintaining strategic, feasible organizational focus
- developing a sustainable revenue model, while providing solid economic return to farmers
- reflecting the diversity of the Twin Cities community, in governance, staffing, and programming
- contributing to food access efforts for low-income communities and providing economic mobility to new immigrant, minority and otherwise underserved farmers who are looking for new markets
- making the most of The Good Acre’s resources and facilities



- CSA Shares \$157,791
- Produce Sales \$2,354
- Kitchen \$26,891
- Facility Rental \$17,788
- Donations \$7,506
- Other \$9,006

THE NUMBERS

**\$200,000**

REVENUE: from CSA, Produce Sales, Facility Rentals, and Individual Donations

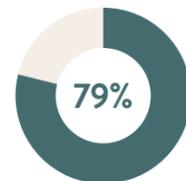
**\$350,000**

FOUNDATIONAL SUPPORT: from The Pohlads Family Foundation

**\$160,000**

GRANT DOLLARS AWARDED

CSA REVENUE



79.2% of our total CSA revenue was returned to our farmers.



With a 20.2% overhead for the management of our CSA program, we mitigate farmer risk with our contracts for produce. Plus, we handle marketing and management, freeing up farmers to do what they do best: focus on growing and being stewards of their land.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would not be where we are today without the help of the following:

- Appetite for Change
- Co-op Partners
- Cornercopia
- The City of Falcon Heights | Mayor Peter Lindstrom
- The Food Corridor
- The Food Group
- Hmong American Farmers Association (HAFA)
- Lakewinds Food Co-op
- Mankato Food Hub
- Minneapolis Public Schools Nutrition Services
- Minnesota Food Association – Big River Farms
- Minnesota Department of Agriculture
- The Pohlads Family Foundation
- Shared Ground Farmers’ Cooperative
- Union Kitchen MN
- University of Minnesota
- University of Minnesota, Center for Spirituality and Healing

SPECIAL THANKS GOES TO:

- Maggi Adamek
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- Terry Egge
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- Pakou Hang
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- Tori Hoepfner
- Vic Hoffiman
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- Sarah Libertus
- Judy Libertus
- Ron Libertus
- Alyssa Lundberg

- Marina Lyon
- Beverly McGuire
- Anna Miller
- Dana Minion
- Tony Pavelko
- Allie Pohlads
- Lindsay Pohlads
- Briana Riley
- Susan Bass Roberts
- Jim Ricketts
- Tom Rodmyre
- Les Rogers
- Mary Rogers
- Michele Schermann
- Courtney Tchida
- Tom Warnke
- Janet Weivoda
- Rachel Wood



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