



THE GOOD ACRE

2017 ANNUAL REPORT



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STAFF

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Executive Director

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Programs Director

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Logistics & Sales Director

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CSA Manager

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Finance & Grants Manager

NATALIE VANDENBURGH
Kitchen Manager

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Marketing Manager

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Grower Support Specialist

JULIA COHEN
Culinary Support Specialist

ZACH DOWD
Warehouse & Distribution Manager

SEASONAL STAFF

Andrew Swenson - Hoop House Manager
Kristen Anderson - CSA Assistant

2017 BOARD MEMBERS

SARA POHLAD

JOHN BYOM

MEGAN MORGAN

HELENE MURRAY

JANE SHEY

SCOTT PAMPUCH

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



As I reflect on a successful 2017, I take heart in the impact of our collective work on behalf of good food. As part of the wave of food hubs taking root across the country in recent decades, The Good Acre continues our efforts to provide expanded infrastructure and innovative services to farmers and food makers alike, doing our part to build capacity in the local food system.

This year saw a tremendous expansion of both the scope and scale of our efforts. Our wholesale program expanded more than twenty-fold, with public schools, healthcare institutions, and local food makers buying fresh produce from our network of small-scale, independent farmers. Use of our commercial kitchen by local food entrepreneurs has more than tripled over the course of the year, and we were able to help launch four new food businesses from concept to retail shelves. Our culinary training program supported 13 school districts, helping them to build successful and sustainable farm to school programs. And our cooking classes continue to be a bridge connecting local chefs and our community.

Integral to our growth and success this year has been the creation of a five-year strategic plan. It has helped us grow while staying true to our mission and keeps farmers' best interest central to all we do. The plan gives us focus as we build new relationships, continue to develop programs that are both timely and relevant, and diligently work to further the sustainability of our food system alongside our talented and diverse set of partners.

Looking at the year to come, I am filled with optimism and gratitude. We are fortunate to have hardworking, compassionate, and dedicated staff and volunteers who give their time and talents to embody our mission. As we prepare for our next season, we will continue to work toward growing markets for farmers and food makers, expanding access to good food, and nourishing our programs and people, all from right here on our modest acre of land.

Rhys Williams

MISSION

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

Here at The Good Acre, we take the role of a food hub and add the spokes, the wheels and the energy to keep them turning. We develop cutting-edge programs and productive partnerships that help us more effectively support and drive positive change in our community and our local food system. 2017 was a year of growth for us. With a strategic focus, we established a set of programs that address critical gaps and opportunities in our local food system. Read on to learn about our work.



With just two wholesale buyers in 2016, we started 2017 with the goal of expanding sales through cold calls, referrals, and lots of networking. From two school district buyers, we ended 2017 with 13 area school districts procuring produce through our wholesale program, increasing our year over year sales more than twenty-fold. For us, it's integral that our wholesale program embodies our mission, and through these sales we are able to simultaneously support sustainable agriculture, boost our local food economy, and influence a new generation of eaters in cafeterias in and around the Twin Cities.



2016 WHOLESALE SALES
\$2000

2017 WHOLESALE SALES
\$89,000



WHAT WE OFFER:

- > Quality Produce
- > Culinary Training Opportunities
- > Culinary Support Staff
- > Easy Ordering and Delivery
- > Farm to School Promotional Materials

HOW IT WORKS IN FOUR STEPS

- 1 Preseason planning so we're sure we'll have what our buyers want when they want it.
- 2 Weekly availability lists providing products sourced from over 40 farmers and food producers including transparent pricing and a run down of what's in season.
- 3 Source-identified and lot-coded products are delivered to you in our refrigerated truck Monday through Friday, bringing what you need when you want it.
- 4 We support your procurement program with materials about the farmers we source from to help eaters connect the dots between what's on their plate and the people and places behind it.

HELPING TO PUT THE FARM IN FARM TO SCHOOL

When schools buy local produce from us, it's a win for farmers, a win for us, and a win for the kids who eat school food!



Brooklyn Center, Eden Prairie, Fridley, Hopkins, Inver Grove Heights, Prior Lake/Savage, Robbinsdale, Roseville, South St. Paul, St. Anthony/New Brighton, St. Louis Park, St. Paul, White Bear Lake

Our innovative grower support services program hit its stride in 2017 when we hired David Van Eeckhout. An organic farmer himself for over 20 years, David has been able to provide farmers with valuable assistance in implementing on-farm food safety measures, convenient access to resources and supplies, and new market connections to help them cultivate a sustainable farm business. No matter the time of year or stage of production, from planning to planting to harvesting, David is an ally for farmers, contributing to their advancement every step of the way, because at The Good Acre we believe that a successful farmer is a sustainable farmer.

TESTIMONIAL



“David’s visits have been incredibly helpful for me on my farm. As a beginning farmer, David’s advice has helped me thwart off (potentially large!) mistakes, as well as encouraged me to make important, timely, and efficient improvements on my nine-acre vegetable farm. His expertise as a production farmer is incredibly valuable to me.” -Becca Carlson, Farmer/Owner, Seeds Farm



“David’s visits have been helpful to me. He has a fresh set of eyes and has occasionally observed issues that I hadn’t noticed, along with giving ideas that came from his visits with other growers and his own time farming.” -Dana Jokela, Sogn Valley Farm

INCREASING ON-FARM FOOD SAFETY GRANT

APPLIED: MAY 2017
AWARDED BY: TARGET IN JULY 2017

\$57,950

OBJECTIVE

To help farmers cover the costs associated with implementing on-farm food safety practices and provide targeted one-on-one support to farmers to help them achieve food safety certifications.

Early on in the process of scaling up our wholesale program, we identified a gap in the ability of institutions to successfully prepare the whole, unprocessed produce that they procured from us. Our Culinary Training program was thus developed to address this skills gap. With a custom curriculum that focuses on scratch cooking techniques using whole seasonal produce, we got to work teaching the skills that our buyers need to succeed while saving time and money.

This ever-evolving program has expanded to include:

- Recipe development that adheres to budget and nutritional guidelines
- Technique training, including knife skills, roasting, and flavor profiles
- Produce- and equipment-specific training, including combi oven, steam kettle, and Robot Coupe



TESTIMONIAL



“The Good Acre has been an invaluable partner for us as we build our Farm to School program from the ground up. Their support staff has been so helpful, from recipe development, to menu planning, to staff training. They have held our hands the entire way and made getting local food onto Roseville lunch trays a reality.” - Angela Richey, Nutrition Services Supervisor, Roseville Area Schools

USDA FARM TO SCHOOL GRANT SPOTLIGHT
Building Responsive Farm to School Models

APPLIED: DECEMBER 2016
AWARDED: JULY 2017

\$99,956
to be used over two years

OBJECTIVE

This grant allows us to work directly with four local school districts to increase the capacity of their Farm to School programs and develop a replicable model that will be made available to other schools in the greater Twin Cities region.

A FOCUS ON PROCESSING

In order to supply schools with local ingredients year-round, funds from this grant will be used to help us purchase the equipment needed to make value-added goods (think sauces, or cubed and frozen squash) in our commercial kitchen.

LEARNING AND SHARING

Our goal with this grant is to be able to address the challenges schools must overcome to establish a sustainable Farm to School program.



Our shared use kitchen is an invaluable asset to new, growing, and established food makers. Our convenient state-of-the-art facilities and services allow makers to produce, source, store, and transport their produce-heavy products, all through a single relationship. That's the kind of streamlined support that builds a better business. In 2017 we had 12 makers in our kitchen, and they have helped make our local food economy all the richer.

HOURS LOGGED:



- 12 renters
- Shared use kitchen rates start at \$12 an hour
- In addition to kitchen time, makers pay a fee for cold/dry storage and distribution
- 1/3 of our makers source ingredients through our wholesale program during the growing season
- 100% of our makers' products are produce-based value-added foods

THE FOOD CORRIDOR

The Food Corridor's mission is to enable efficiency, growth, and innovation in local food by empowering shared use kitchens and their food businesses. Through their shared use kitchen management platform, we are able to handle all of our kitchen reservations, billing, document and licensing storage, reports, and more. Their services and support have been integral to the growth of our shared use kitchen program.



COOL CLASSES LIKE:

- Pho the Love of Soup
- Killer Party Food
- Ferment It!
- Banh Mi Bonanza
- Rise Up and Bake
- Sous Vide 101

Instructors from some of the hottest restaurants and food businesses in the Twin Cities

- Mucci's
- Chef Shack
- The Bachelor Farmer
- Chowgirls Killer Catering
- GYST! Fermentation Bar
- Union Kitchen MN

“My wife and I attended the Khao Poon class last month with Yia Vang. He brings humor to his class. Since then, we have made this, or a variation, at home four times. It is great. I would recommend these classes and Chef Yia of Union Kitchen to all.” - Scott Hendrix

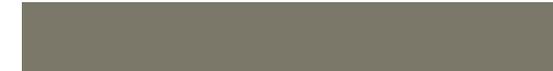
The goal of our cooking classes is to share tasty and creative ways to cook with locally grown seasonal produce as much as possible. Our fun, unique, and affordable classes are led by expert instructors who are eager to share their passion and knowledge about good food. Depending on the format, class takers may work in pairs or small groups, but regardless, all will leave with new skills and recipes, a full belly, and fresh reasons to have people over for dinner.

COOKING CLASS SALES

2016 sales were \$10,500



2017 sales were \$37,000



Spotlight on Yia Vang

Yia Vang, co-founder of Union Kitchen, a Minnesota based Hmong pop-up restaurant, has been teaching classes with us since the fall of 2016. He is passionate about making the food he grew up with more accessible to non-Hmongs, while also passing traditions down to the next generation of Hmong Americans. “Our history is intrinsically woven into the food we eat,” he says. “Every dish has a narrative, and if you follow that narrative closely enough, you understand the people.” Yia brings flavor, fire, and a passion for storytelling through food to his hands-on classes that mix Hmong flavors with Minnesota ingredients.



MAKER TO MARKET SPOTLIGHT



2017 saw the launch of the first cohort of our Maker to Market program, a partnership with Lakewinds Co-op designed to support small food start-ups from concept to shelf. Applicants were vying for kitchen time, business and marketing support, and ultimately shelf space at 3 Lakewinds Co-op locations.

4

successful product lines launched

\$15K

in sales and 1,600 units sold over 6 months

8

farmers expanded income sources

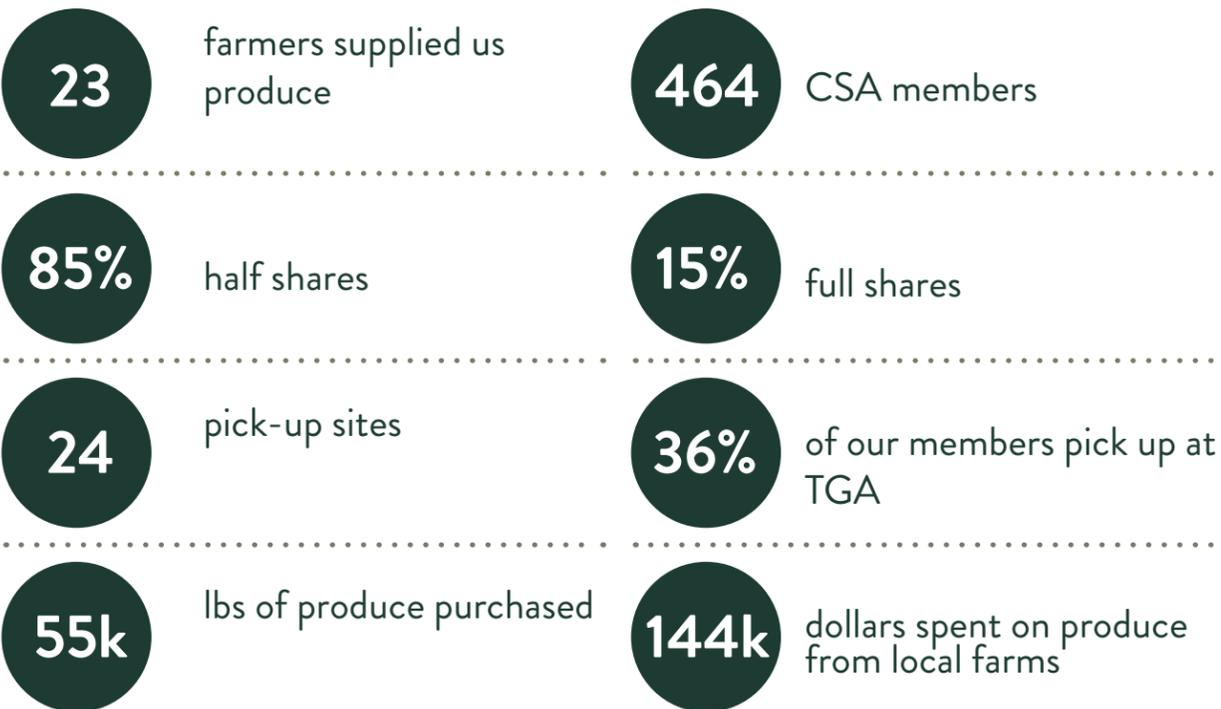
\$7,500

in commercial kitchen time and storage provided by Lakewinds Co-op

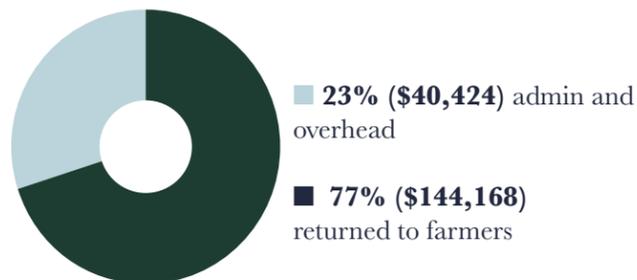




Our CSA program continues to be the way we are best able to put our mission into action. Through it we are able to introduce our farmers to growing for wholesale markets, as well as connect our member community to fresh healthy food. In 2017, nearly half of our members had never participated in any sort of CSA -- a figure that carries with it the responsibility to educate and drive preference for local produce throughout the entirety of our 18-week season. In our end of season survey, 93% of members said they would sign up for a CSA program in the future. Mission. Accomplished.



Supporting Local Farmers w/Fair Prices



Comparison

According to the USDA in 2016, only 7.8¢ of every dollar consumers spent on food went to farmers — a record low that reflects shifts in how Americans eat. (source: *The Washington Post*)



77¢ OF EVERY CSA DOLLAR WAS RETURNED TO FARMERS

What does the other 23% pay for?

- Delivery
- Boxes
- Tote Bags
- Member Events
- Administration and Marketing
- Miscellaneous Supplies

How our CSA Benefits Farmers

- Access to our Grower Support Services
- Financial stability through Grower Agreements, based on fair pricing
- Practice growing for wholesale markets
- Connections to TGA's Wholesale Buyers

Member Survey Says: Top Reasons Members Love our CSA



NEW IN 2017!

Gopher CSA

Students love fresh produce, but sometimes they have a hard time accessing it on campus which is why we, in partnership with the Minnesota Student Association at the U of MN, created the Gopher CSA. We piloted a six week fall student CSA share geared toward students on a budget. We sold 50 shares and look forward to expanding the program to more students and more campuses in 2018.

Late Season CSA

Many of our growers specialize in storage crops, which allows them to have quality product available despite frigid winter temperatures. With an abundance of local cabbage, carrots, potatoes, squash, beets, and more to offer, we decided to create our first Late Season CSA. We limited this pilot to just 50 members, and delivered four boxes of produce over eight weeks in November and December.



Sharing our Shares



900 LBS

When members miss a week, they have the option to donate their shares. Over the course of our full season CSA, 89 shares were donated. They went to support The YWCA of St. Paul's Transitional Housing Program

\$25,400 spent with local businesses for CSA add-ons in 2017

Add-ons in 2017 included fresh baked bread, organic fruit, honey from local hives, certified organic mushrooms, and farm fresh eggs.



WAREHOUSE

Our warehouse is the heart of our food hub. It's a place where farmers can access the resources and infrastructure that are often lacking in the small farming community. With distribution, warehousing, and cold storage readily available at affordable rates, our warehouse space is where the rubber meets the road when it comes to making change in our food system.



**Frogtown Farm:
Getting Good Food into the Community**

Located just four miles south of us is Frogtown Farm, one of the largest certified-organic urban farms in the country. Lacking the facilities to wash, pack, and sort on-site, Farm Manager Iman and her crew came to our warehouse weekly to use our facility and prepare their harvest for the seasonal Friday Fresh free food distribution site hosted by the Frogtown Neighborhood Association. Just over 10,000 pounds of produce came through our doors and were donated in 2017.

**Twin Cities Flower Exchange:
Creating a Market for Area Flower Growers**

In 2017 The Good Acre became home to the Twin Cities' first 100% local wholesale flower market. Founder Christine Hoffman started this market to build a local economy, as well as to provide area floral designers with an alternative to traditional flower wholesale markets. Through the Twin Cities Flower Exchange, Christine is able to support over a dozen flower farmers who now have a marketplace at which to sell their blooms.

PRIVATE EVENTS

To maximize the use of our commercial kitchen, we offer private events and rentals during off-peak times. We have developed facilitated private cooking classes for everything from corporate team-building to bachelorette parties. We have also found various unexpected rental revenue channels like food styling photo shoots, videos, and recipe testing. Private events at TGA give us the opportunity to spread the word about our mission and work to new audiences, as well as cultivate our donor base.

"We recently had a team event at The Good Acre. The entire experience was excellent. They catered to food sensitivities and allergies like a pro. The food was so tasty and everyone was involved from start to finish. I highly recommend!" - Beth Anna Adams Vossen, Room & Board

Businesses who have had private events with us include:



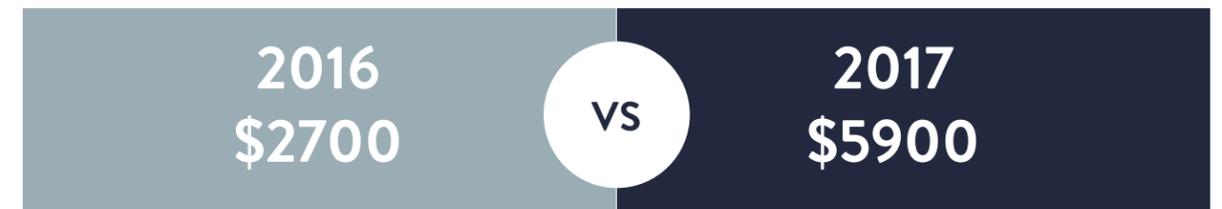
CLASSROOM

We combine practical amenities like high speed internet, a projector, and conference call capabilities with the excitement of being surrounded by a bustling food hub. Whether it be a GAP training for farmers, a marketing workshop for food entrepreneurs, or a networking lunch for a public school's Nutrition Services team, our classroom is a place where people can work together to build up our local food system.

Classroom renters include

- ▶ Twin Cities Startup Week
- ▶ Mill City Farmers Market
- ▶ Les Dames d'Escoffier
- ▶ Grow North
- ▶ University of Minnesota
- ▶ Women, Food and Agriculture Network
- ▶ Life Time Foundation

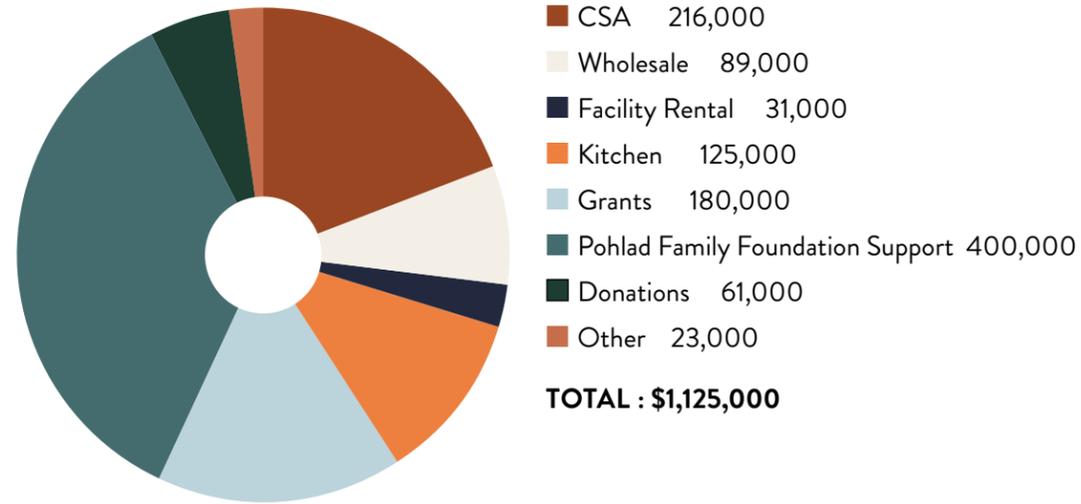
**WE DOUBLED THE USAGE IN OUR CLASSROOM
OVER THE PREVIOUS YEAR.**



FALL FUNDRAISER

We raised nearly \$40,000 at our first large event since our grand opening. With an indoor farmers market and a local harvest feast, our space was transformed for one enchanted evening. Funds raised went directly to our Innovation Fund, which enables us to be proactive, innovative, and stay ready to face challenges and offer solutions to urgent needs in the local food system.





THE NUMBERS

\$1,125,000
Total Revenue

\$400,000
Foundation Support
Reduced our reliance on foundation support from 61% in 2016 to 38% in 2017

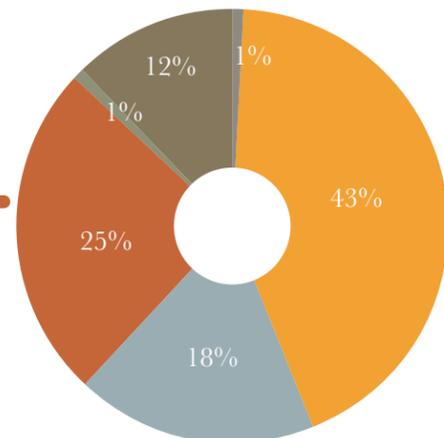
\$290,000
Total Grant Dollars Awarded
\$180,000 of which was available for use in 2017.

This year was marked by growth and diversification of our revenue streams beyond our CSA program. For example, in one year our kitchen went from generating 12% to 25% of our revenue. Becoming more financially sustainable and reducing our reliance on foundation support is a key strategic focus for us. Our operating budget reached the one million mark in 2017, an indicator of the impact we're making in our local food economy.

KITCHEN



TOTAL 2017 REVENUE



■ CLASSES ■ TRAINING ■ SHARED USE ■ RENTAL ■ CSA ■ WHOLESALE ■ KITCHEN ■ FACILITY ■ DONATIONS ■ OTHER

DEDICATION

Ronald Lee "Gitchi-nibi" Libertus
1938 - 2018

The first employee of TGA was CSA Manager Sarah Libertus, who did so much great work for us in our foundational year. Little did we know that we'd gain so much from her wonderful family, as well, including her father, Ron Libertus, who passed away last spring. His selfless volunteering had a positive effect on all of us. Ron was particularly adept at storytelling and lightening the load of hard work with his wit and humor. Whether he was helping put CSA boxes together or dropping in to chat, we looked forward to his visits, always. Ron's passing was a very difficult time; those who knew and loved him know that he can never be replaced. In honor of Ron and his family's indelible impact on our organization, we dedicate this annual report to him. We also pledge to donate CSA shares to the Minneapolis American Indian Center, an organization which Ron founded.





THE GOOD ACRE

FOOD + COMMUNITY

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