



THE GOOD ACRE
FOOD + COMMUNITY



BUILDING *community through food*

ANNUAL REPORT 2020

Cover Photo: Farmer Pheng Yang
offloading produce to Hailey Schmidt,
2020 LEAFF Intern. Photo by TJ Turner.

Farm Program Director,
David Van Eeckhout



We know local food is **ESSENTIAL**

Connecting and strengthening farmers, food makers and communities through good food. Never has our mission been more tested – and more critical – than in 2020. The coronavirus pandemic and the uprising following the murder of George Floyd had an undeniable impact on our local food system. Widespread food insecurity, loss of markets, not to mention the devastating COVID-19 health crisis which disproportionately affected our communities of color. It was a year where building trust and staying true to our mission was essential. In the pages that follow, read about how our people, our programs, and our relationships with partners adapted during a year of uncertainty.

We are a non-profit food hub offering programs and services that improve market opportunities for small, local farmers, giving more consumers greater access to healthy produce and strengthening our local food economy.

PROGRAMS:

Farm Share

Farm to School Culinary Training

Grower Support

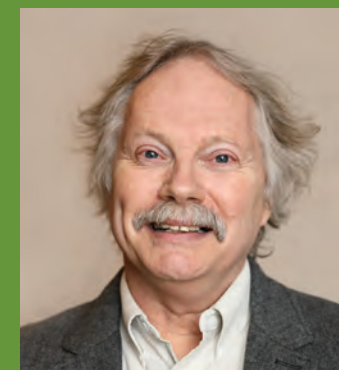
LEAFF

Shared-Use Kitchen

Vocational Culinary Training

Warehousing

Wholesale



The past year has been transformative for The Good Acre. Coming into 2020 we had planned on building our Farm to School work and increasing the variety of cooking classes. Little did we know the impact the pandemic would have on our community and how shaken our city would be with the social unrest of the summer.

When it became apparent that our community needs had changed, we realized that The Good Acre had the means to contribute. With a talented and dedicated staff, we jumped into action by partnering with Minnesota Central Kitchen to distribute fresh food that would be turned into prepared meals for families facing hunger statewide. With tremendous support from our farm share members, donors, and peer organizations, we used our facility to help with hunger relief in ways that we never had before.

The establishment of The Good Acre's new program, Local Emergency Assistance Farmer Fund (LEAFF), was vital to our hunger relief work in 2020. The LEAFF program was established to assist farmers who needed a place to sell their produce and food shelves who needed fresh and healthy, culturally appropriate produce. It was an effort that couldn't have happened without our partners and the generosity of our community.

Our new vocational culinary training program, VoCul, was scheduled to begin in the spring of 2020, but had to be drastically changed to adhere to safety protocols. Even with the delay and safety adjustments, it was remarkably successful. By the end of the program's first 10 weeks, each participant had landed a paid internship in a partnering kitchen.

As the year progressed, TGA continued to adapt on every front. Our focus turned to the safety of staff, volunteers, and those who use and depend on our facility to make or distribute their products. We instituted strict safety protocols and became Zoom experts.

Our partnerships grew and strengthened through the most trying of times. We also experienced the resiliency of our local food community, as we worked together to help feed each other. In the future we mustn't lose the trust that has formed as we will continue to build stronger partnerships that will make our local food system equitable and accessible for all.

Thank you,
Rhys Williams
Executive Director

Farm Share: Laying the essential

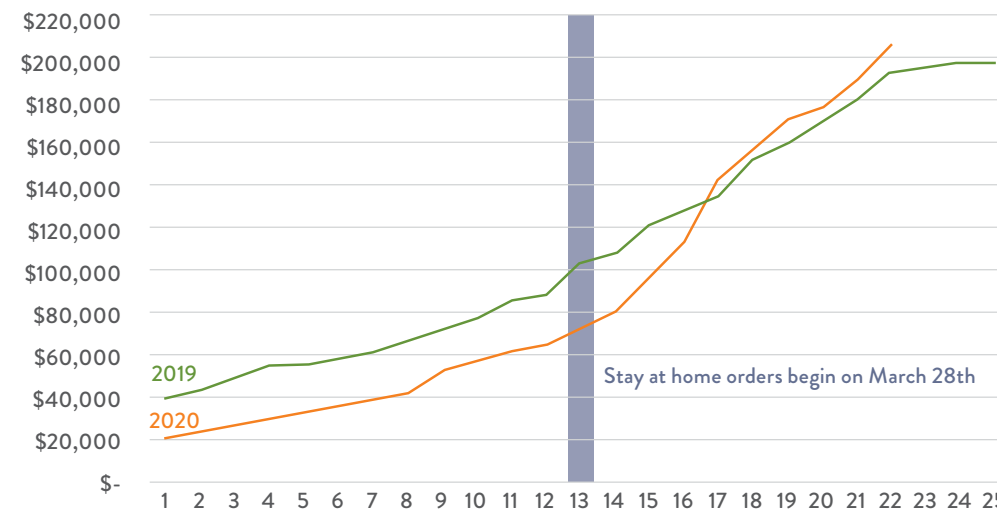
GROUNDWORK

The Good Acre's farm share, now in its fifth year, is our foundational program for working with local farmers and getting locally grown produce distributed to those in our community. Based on a community supported agriculture, or CSA model, we source produce from a network of over 20 farms, many of whom are new to growing for wholesale. The start of the global pandemic in March of 2020, marked a shift toward an increased interest in local food, shorter supply chains, and safer ways to shop. We were well positioned for the influx in new members and we sold out of shares in record time. We partnered with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture's Minnesota Grown team to help connect consumers to area CSA farms that still had shares left to sell.

“The Good Acre and other agriculture partners were integral in spreading the list far and wide to customers seeking local CSA shares during the pandemic.”

KAREN LANTHIER, PROGRAM MANAGER, MINNESOTA GROWN

Farm share revenue annual comparison



Membership not required

With demand far outpacing the supply of farm shares in the Twin Cities, we launched seasonal curated boxes of local meats, produce, and value added goods with no membership or full season commitment necessary. These boxes helped create an additional \$10K in sales for local farmers and food producers beyond our farmshare and wholesale program sales.

Holiday gift box featuring products from local makers



Pilot year: Frogtown Fair Share

The Frogtown Fair Share was designed to increase access to the Farm Share for those in the Frogtown neighborhood of St. Paul who might not have been able to participate in the program otherwise. Six households participated in the pilot year of this *pay what you can program* with great success, leading us to plan for program expansion in the future.



506 FULL SEASON
farm share members



85 LATE SEASON
farm share members



24 FARMERS
sourced from



ADD ON ITEMS
eggs, meat, Maker Medley,
mushrooms, bread,
peak season fruit



57 CAMPUS
share members



\$252,469
spent with farmers



\$89,144
add-on sales



83 VARIETIES
of produce

SAFE

RELIABLE

CONVENIENT

Farmer Forward

The Grower Support program in 2020 pivoted to include market support during the pandemic, with the creation of the LEAFF program in partnership with other organizations. One reason LEAFF was so successful was the ‘farmer-forward’ nature of the program, focusing on the needs of the farmers every step of the way.

Farm visits became less frequent in 2020 due to COVID-19 restrictions, making it challenging for us to offer one-on-one technical assistance as we prefer to do. Phone calls, text messages, and even facetime calls on field walks were used to help keep lines of communication open.

The success of the LEAFF program also meant many opportunities to talk with farmers while helping to unload their vans when delivering. We continue to be grateful for the strong relationships we cultivate with many farmers in the community, enabling us to dig deeper into what it takes to operate a successful farm business. This includes new work that we began in 2020 in partnership with the Center for Farm Financial Management at the University of Minnesota. The partnership examined longer-term farm viability with a cohort of 20 farms.



Wholesale and grower support: Essential RELATIONSHIPS

In 2020, no other program had to pivot quite as much as our wholesale program. On March 15, we closed the office and warehouse to non-essential staff. K-12 schools, caterers, and restaurants began to cancel their contracts for local produce purchases. Food insecurity was on the rise as our nation’s economy took a historic tumble and unemployment reached unprecedented levels. As a food hub, our concern was first and foremost the farmer. A harvest was coming, but where would it go?



Metro Food Justice Network

In a collaborative effort to make fresh food accessible, members of the Metro Food Justice Network collaborated to create the Community Cooks Meal Box Delivery Program. Each week boxes with fresh grocery items were distributed for free to over 400 households. The boxes contain ingredients to prepare two nourishing meals for a family of up to six, featuring products from local vendors and culturally relevant recipes.

11,161 boxes or 133,932 meals were distributed by the Community Cooks Meal Box program in 2020



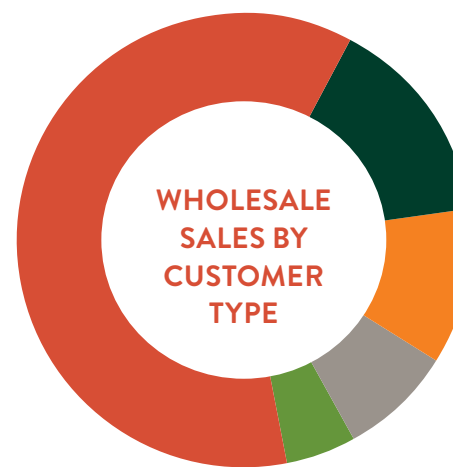
Photo by Helios Photography for Appetite For Change



Farm to Food Shelf

One afternoon in the last week of August, our Wholesale Manager got a panicked call from a farmer: one of their customers had canceled their biggest order of the season. Two acres of sweet corn, ten pallets of watermelons, and 800 lbs of honeydew melon was already harvested and packed for delivery. Now in search for a new home, this produce needed to be moved quickly. Otherwise this would be a loss that would sting for months, if not years, to come.

Our new partnership with Second Harvest Heartland was just taking root, but they immediately said yes when we explained. We made three deliveries to Second Harvest Heartland the week after Labor Day. Almost a semi trailer’s worth of rescued produce found a home and entered the hunger relief supply chain. Those intense first couple weeks of the harvest season set the tone for our work together. Their commitment to solving hunger and our mission to find new markets for growers became the basis for our alliance with Second Harvest.



61% Hunger Relief
\$410,000

15% Community Cooks Meal Box program
\$103,000

11% Food Service
\$73,000

8% K-12 Schools
\$56,000

5% Other
\$35,980



Prepared meals courtesy of Minnesota Central Kitchen



Minnesota Central Kitchen

As soon as the pandemic began, Second Harvest Heartland and founding partners, Chowgirls Catering and Loaves and Fishes rallied resources to create Minnesota Central Kitchen. The mission of this collaborative effort was to rescue food, re-employ service industry workers, and to prepare and distribute nutritious meals to community sites throughout the region. Our role as a food hub allowed us to be a critical partner in storing and delivering recovered and locally grown produce to MCK satellite kitchens throughout the Twin Cities. At the end of 2020, nearly 180 food service workers were employed at eight satellite kitchens and MCK was on track to serve over one million meals.

“Minnesota Central Kitchen’s success was because of many organizations’ ability to be agile and quickly respond to our communities’ needs, and TGA was there right from the beginning. Their ability to transport and store food is an extremely important part of how we are able to make so many meals.”

ELIZABETH MULLEN, CHOWGIRLS CATERING

LEAFF PROGRAM

Collaborative solutions to support community well-being

See Vang delivering produce to the LEAFF program



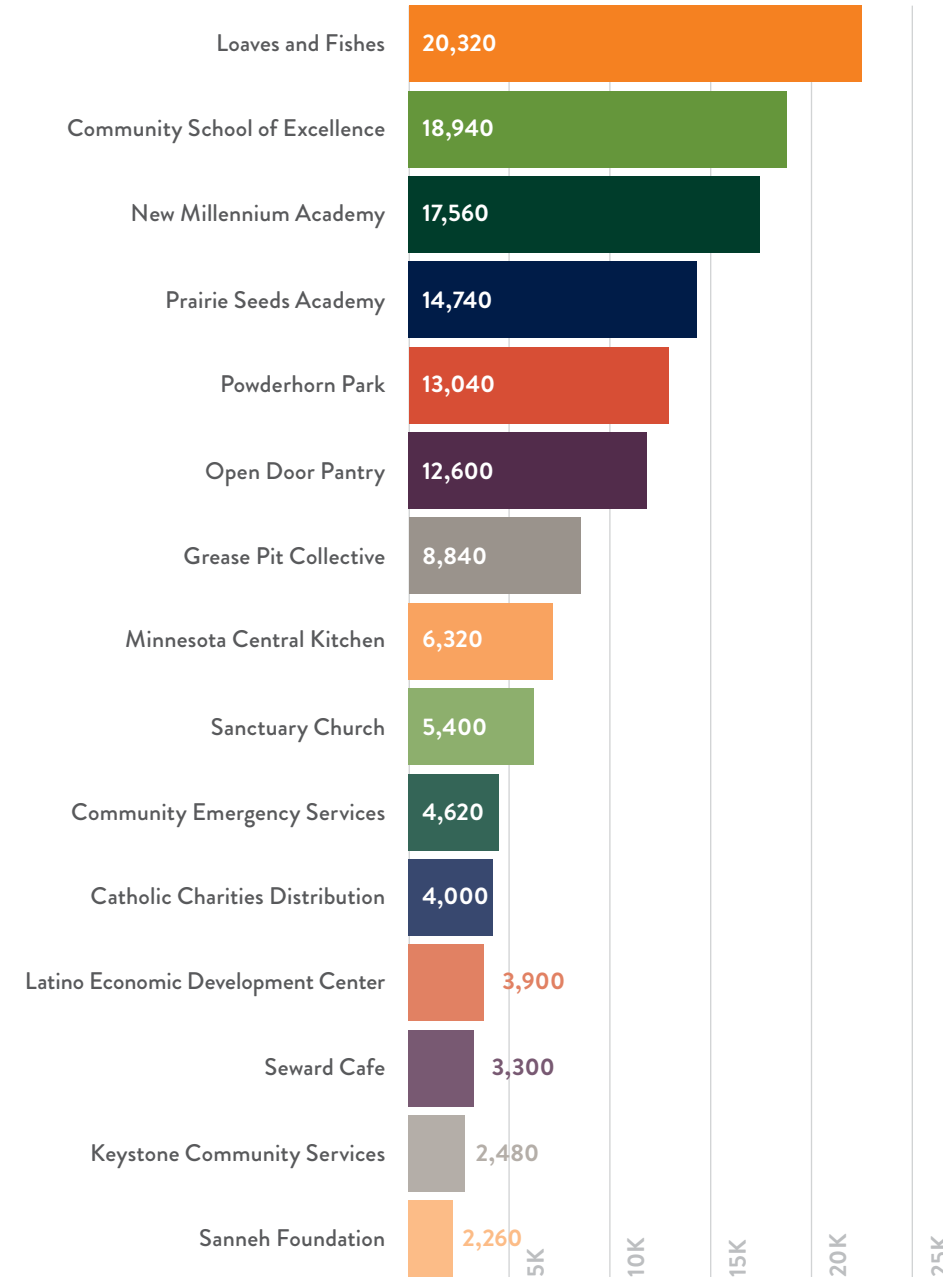
In the spring of 2020 when the pandemic began, we saw market opportunities for farmers disappear overnight. The uprisings after the murder of George Floyd only exacerbated the need to connect communities to fresh produce. There was a need for equitable and fair purchasing of food for those facing hunger. Working virtually, we quickly came together with partnering organizations Mill City Farmers Market Charitable Fund, Lakewinds Food Co-op, Hmong American Partnership (HAP), Latino Economic Development Center (LEDC), The Food Group, and the Minnesota Department of Agriculture. Funds and resources were pooled to create a program in which BIPOC farmers could sell harvested produce to LEAFF at full price, and the produce would then be donated to hunger relief partners throughout the Twin Cities.

Because of LEAFF's focus on BIPOC growers, hunger relief partners had choices that included many crops culturally specific to Hmong and Latino communities. By acting as a conduit between local growers and local communities, LEAFF served as an example of how a community-based food system can be a catalyst for resilience and connection while also demonstrating an ability to pivot in order to meet community needs.

In total, 47 BIPOC farms participated in LEAFF in 2020. With ample funding, we were able to guarantee up to \$7,500 in purchases per farm, with most participating farmers utilizing that entire amount. By the end of the growing season we donated \$301,100 worth of locally grown produce to hunger relief partners in our community, translating to nearly 7,500 cases, or 148,930 pounds of produce that moved through our warehouse and out into the community.



Total produce donations by site in pounds



*Based on an average of 20 lbs per case. This chart illustrates numbers from the top 15 drop sites. LEAFF produce was distributed to a total of 23 hunger relief partners in 2020.

2020 Community Innovation Grant

Testing ideas, solving problems, and creating opportunity are the tenets of The Bush Foundation's Community Innovation Grant. We received \$206,000 through this grant which supported the establishment of the LEAFF program. This injection of funding enabled us to increase the number of farms that were able to participate from 25 to 43 as well as increase the total funding available to each farmer from \$2,500 to \$7,500. Our work in 2020 would not have been possible without extensive collaboration between our partners and the rapid response of the Bush Foundation.



“The fresh produce that the LEAFF program provides us to distribute helps our families significantly. They are making great healthy meals that would not have been possible without this partnership.”

PLANG VANG
THE COMMUNITY SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP MANAGER,
HAP

Diba Ramirez, a member of our first VoCul cohort, prepping in the kitchen

An essential place for cultivating CULINARY SKILLS

Like in other areas of our work, the past year forced a reckoning around what our priorities really are when it comes to fulfilling our mission. Because of COVID-19, our cooking classes were paused, a change that became permanent after much reflection of whether our classes were both serving our mission and our bottom line. This difficult decision ultimately freed up time and resources so we could re-imagine our kitchen programs.

Shared-Use Kitchen

With COVID-19 protocols in place, we kept our kitchen open so local food business renters could make their products safely. We were also able to open doors to new businesses since kitchen time was prioritized for makers rather than cooking classes. Sadly, the pandemic had a negative impact on many small food businesses, rental hours in the kitchen decreased by 32%, and some of our long term renters closed their operations for good.

2020: 3820 hours

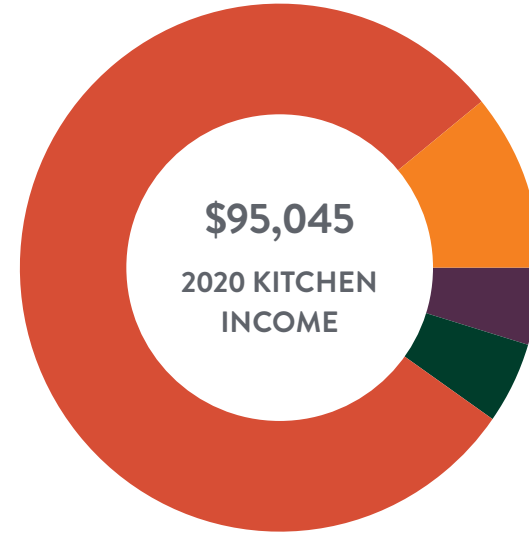
2019: 5673 hours



Classes

We started the year with a fresh new line up of classes featuring diverse instructors sharing global flavors with our core group of class takers. Our last class before the pandemic was Super Sushi lead by Chef Koshiki Smith on March 12th.

2020 class revenue: \$10,461



SHARED-USE KITCHEN
\$75,424 (79%)

CLASSES
\$10,461 (11%)

MISC/EVENT RENTAL
\$4,700 (5%)

CULINARY TRAINING
\$4,460 (5%)

Culinary Training

We lead only four trainings in 2020 before closing our facility to essential staff only. The few we could do focused on next level farm to school with Brooklyn Center, Brooklyn Park, Saint Louis Park, and Roseville/St. Anthony school districts.

2020: 4 hands-on trainings

2019: 8 hands-on trainings

Farm to School Support with Renewing The Countryside

As recipients of a 2019 USDA Farm to School Grant, Renewing the Countryside received funding to help rural Minnesota school districts build capacity to expand Farm to School initiatives. Part of this work included partnering with us to offer culinary training through regional workshops. Before distance learning went into effect, we participated farm to school culinary workshops in Aiken, Chisago City, and Cannon Falls.



In 2019, we received a \$312K grant from the Cargill Foundation to launch a Vocational Culinary Training Program (VoCul). With Culinary Education Manager, Lachelle Cunningham, at the helm what was slated to be an in-person training program pivoted to a hybrid model with virtual and in-person labs. By the end of the year, our first cohort were able to complete nearly 300 hours of culinary training. At the end of 2020, with new skills and food handler licenses in hand, we graduated six VoCul participants through our program who then moved on to paid internships with partnering kitchens.



VoCul is made possible with grant funding from Cargill



Events: Maintaining essential

CONNECTIONS

Dead of Winter Dining

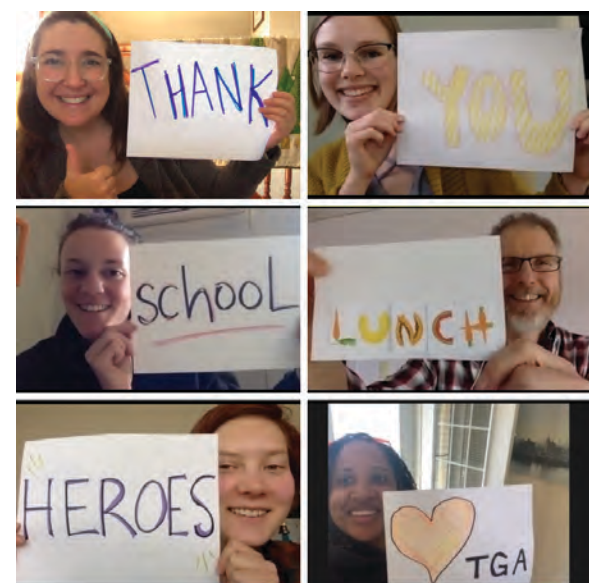
Our February fundraising gala positioned us to face the critical challenges of the impending pandemic on solid ground. Supporters enjoyed a beautiful evening at PAIKKA and a delicious meal catered by Chowgirls Catering. Attendees made incredibly generous donations during our Fund-A-Need and raised over \$115,000 to support VoCul and TGA programs.

Farm to School Food Forum

Schools shifting to virtual learning had an undeniable impact on the lunch room. Schools with thriving farm to school programs were now laying off food service workers and relying on commodity dollars to build weekly meal boxes that could be distributed to families at bus stops and drive-through pick up sites all across the metro area. With a desire to acknowledge and support the work of nutrition directors across the state, we hosted a virtual farm to school food forum on October 28th. We brought together over 40 nutrition directors, The Commissioner of Education, Mary Catherine Ricker, and the Assistant Commissioner of Agriculture, Patrice Bailey, for a virtual event. We celebrated farm to school successes in the midst of the pandemic and expressed gratitude for the school food workers ensuring that children and families in school districts across the state had access to healthy food.

Discover

The abrupt end of our in-person programming led us to seek new ways to stay connected while remaining physically distant. The Discover series of classes we launched the year prior lent itself well to a virtual format and so riding the quarantine trend of baking at home, we launched our first virtual class in August with local bakers from Laune Bread. Following that first class we explored topics ranging from weather and climate, baking cookies, knife skills, holiday cocktails, and more. Throughout the year we engaged over 600 participants and logged nearly a dozen hours learning and sharing on Zoom.



Examining equality through essential

PARTNERSHIPS

Food justice is racial justice.

The murder of George Floyd sparked a national reckoning on racial justice and prompted us to take a hard look at both our personal and organizational biases. We took the opportunity to reflect as individuals and institutions on how we have contributed to systems of oppression.

We asked ourselves what equity looks like in the programs and services we offer, how can we best support historically under-resourced Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) growers, and how we can construct organizational policies that are anti-racist. There is much to be done yet on this front, and this work will surely shape the future of our organization for years to come.



82 PARTNERSHIPS
with produce farms and cooperatives

57 (70%)
were BIPOC lead



\$897,638.75
was spent with growers in 2020

\$589,733.25 (66%)
spent with BIPOC growers

“ We are committed to becoming a more diverse, equitable and inclusive organization, which we recognize may require change at all levels of the organization. We are dedicated to reimagining our purpose and actions through this lens. ”

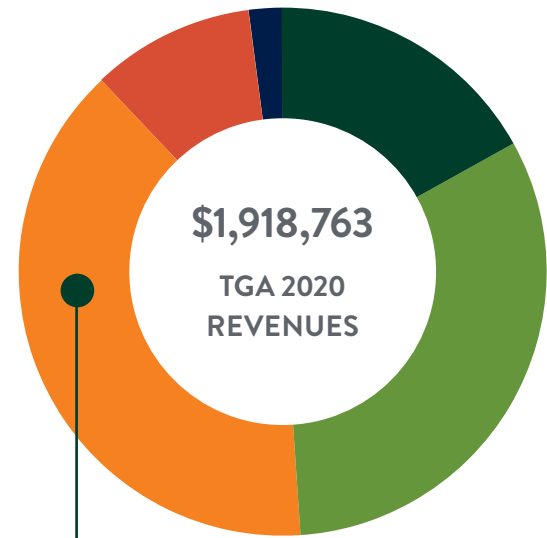
MEGAN MORGAN, BOARD PRESIDENT

Farmers, Lenny Xiong and Tou Vang



Financials: Planning for essential

GROWTH



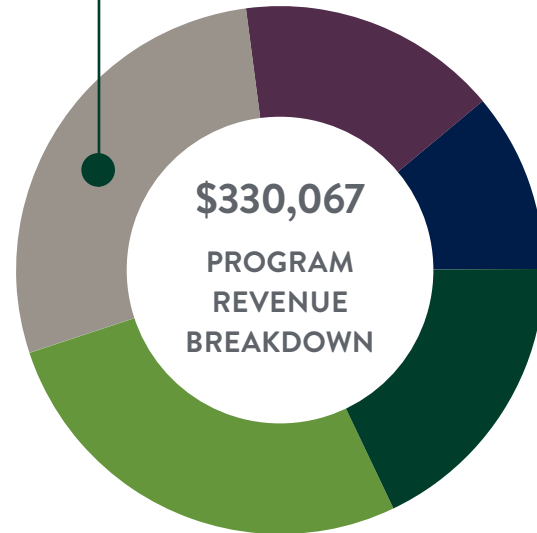
PROGRAM REVENUE
\$330,067 (17%)

FOUNDATION FUNDING
\$627,000 (32%)

GRANTS
\$751,708 (39%)

DEVELOPMENT
\$197,449 (10%)

MISCELLANEOUS
\$12,538 (1%)



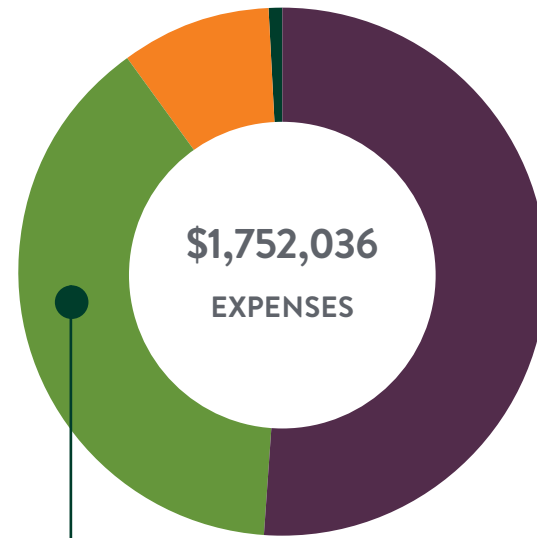
FARM SHARE
\$60,344 (18%)

WHOLESALE
\$90,345 (27%)

KITCHEN
\$94,001 (29%)

WAREHOUSE
\$51,916 (16%)

GROWER SUPPORT
\$33,462 (10%)













STAFFING
\$898,374 (51%)

DIRECT PROGRAM COSTS
\$680,724 (39%)

PROGRAM SUPPORT
\$162,659 (9%)

FUNDRAISING
\$10,278 (1%)

Top 10 produce in 2020

-  Carrots*
-  Butternut Squash*
-  Sweet Corn
-  Sweet Potatoes*
-  Hmong Postpartum Herbs*
-  Brussels Sprouts*
-  Kale*
-  Watermelon Radish*
-  Mushrooms*
-  Lettuce Mix*

*indicates that items were grown organically

Lakisha Witter,
Live Organically Farm



Volunteers

Volunteers have always been a critical part of our work but they rose to the challenge and made our contactless Farm Share drive-through possible. Many of our kitchen volunteers made the shift to the warehouse and we welcomed many new faces to our volunteer efforts. The Farm Share required a minimum of 15 volunteers every week to build, pack and deliver boxes to members in the TGA parking lot.

TOTAL HOURS = 1,200
Equivalent to another Farm Share Assistant





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