

COMMUNITY IMPACT REPORT 2023



THE NASHVILLE FOOD PROJECT





LETTER FROM THE CEO

For 12 years now, The Nashville Food Project has brought people together to grow, cook and share nourishing food with the goals of cultivating community and alleviating hunger in our city. Over the years, this humble pursuit of gathering around food has transformed how we engage with one another. It has also taught us to see the abundance that already surrounds us, and use it to sustain and strengthen our lives in community.

2023 was a year of exceptional abundance. With a growing network of Nashvillians, we shared more meals and grew more produce than ever before. We expanded our infrastructure, building a greenhouse at the Growing Together farm and a walk-in fridge at our headquarters. We partnered with more organizations, supporting more people, than ever.

This year also marked the launch of FeedBack Nashville, a first-of-its-kind initiative that brings community members together to build a just and sustainable food system for our city. We are proud to be among the founding organizations who see gaps in our current food system, and who dare to imagine alternatives that prioritize the needs of our community.

In this report you will find the fruits of our collective labors. I hope you will be as inspired as I am, and be moved to join us in the year to come. There is indeed much to do, and we cannot do it without you.

C.J. SENTELL

Chief Executive Officer

GROW

From sowing to harvest, growing food connects us more deeply to the land and to one another. Our gardens are vibrant urban ecosystems where community members gather to learn from one another and grow nourishing foods for themselves and their families.



COMMUNITY GARDENS

McGruder Community Garden in North Nashville and the Community Farm at Mill Ridge in Antioch connect people of all ages with the resources— from land and water to seeds and education – to grow food that is fresh, healthy, and culturally relevant. Both gardens use regenerative agriculture to grow produce that is shared with community members who lack reliable access to fresh produce.

BY THE NUMBERS:

1,666 → **285**
hours volunteered by individuals

52 individual/family garden plots occupied
10,757 pounds of produce grown



“Being outside and among things that are growing from the ground is less and less common in the modern world. So to get your hands in the dirt and to come back week after week and watch things slowly turn into bigger, fruitful things, and to watch some things not grow the way we'd hoped, that whole process feels very refreshing.”

—Ben, Mill Ridge community gardener



BY THE NUMBERS:

\$129,207

in farmer revenue generated

35,748

pounds of produce grown

GROWING TOGETHER

Growing Together is an urban farm stewarded by Burmese and Bhutanese farmers who came to Nashville as immigrants and refugees. The program connects farmers with land, training, and market access to generate income for themselves and their families. In 2023, the seven Growing Together farm families grew produce to sell to restaurants, food access partners, and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) customers.



GROWING OUR FUTURE

In October, the “Love, Tito’s” team visited the Growing Together farm to celebrate their gift of a new greenhouse, which will enable farmers to extend their growing season and expand their skills through full-season production.

Tito’s also helped us beautify the farm by planting a pollinator garden, fruit trees, and berry bushes, as well as installing new water catchment structures to harvest water throughout the year.

COOK

Cooking brings us together. Recipes tell stories that connect us to places and people, and by sharing dishes, we share ourselves. Our kitchens use recovered, donated, and garden-grown food to cook scratch-made meals that nourish our community and create new stories around the table.



FOOD RECOVERY

40% of all food is wasted, while 1 in 8 Nashville residents lack reliable access to nutritious, affordable food. Our food recovery program bridges this gap by redirecting would-be wasted food away from landfills and onto plates. We partner with grocers, farms, restaurants, and individuals to glean high-quality excess food, which becomes ingredients in nourishing meals shared with our community.

BY THE NUMBERS:

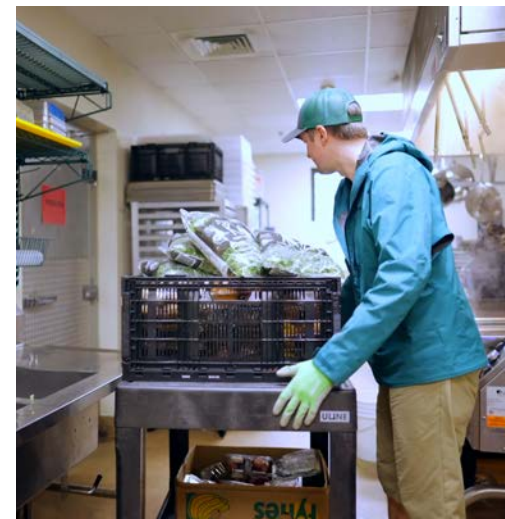
109 farms, grocers, and individuals contributed to food recovery

pounds of food recovered

287,117

80%

of each meal is made with donated or recovered ingredients





COMMUNITY MEALS

In our kitchens, we transform recovered and donated foods into nourishing and delicious meals, using a variety of fresh produce, dairy, and dry goods to develop unique menus each week. A growing team of cherished volunteers join us daily to help prepare pastas, salads, casseroles, and more. We then work with community-building and poverty-disrupting organizations across the city to distribute these meals to community members.

BY THE NUMBERS:

325,504

meals cooked and shared,
prepared by more than

700

dedicated volunteers

RESPONDING IN A TIME OF NEED

In December, a line of tornadoes wreaked havoc across Middle Tennessee, destroying homes, leaving thousands without power, and resulting in injuries and fatalities. A coalition of relief organizations across the city, known as the Nashville Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD), immediately stepped up to help. We joined the coalition and, with help from volunteers through Hands On Nashville and FiftyForward, shared 2,020 meals with families affected by the storms.



SHARE

We share food with partner organizations across the city to support their work. Whether a youth program providing an after-school meal or a refugee support group offering veggies to newcomer families, we believe food is most powerful in community.



COMMUNITY MEALS

Good food alone is not a solution to the challenges that many Nashvillians face. That's why our community meals are distributed to more than 50 poverty-disrupting and community-building organizations in middle Tennessee. Once staff and volunteers prepare the meals, we share them with partner organizations so that nourishing food can get onto the plates of those who need it.

“The food is plentiful and it sustains students throughout programming. We have peace of mind knowing our youth are eating a well-proportioned nutritional snack. It is also an introduction to American meals and can be a jumping-off point for conversations regarding how cultures eat different foods.”

—Nations Ministry

A partner since 2016, Nations Ministry works with first generation refugee children to cultivate belonging and increase literacy.

53 community meal partners across **67** sites

PARTNERS INCLUDE:

After School Programs • Children & Family Services • Grassroots Organizing • Transitional Housing & Emergency Shelters • Homeless Outreach • Medical & Health Services • Senior Services • Adult Education & Workforce Development





BY THE NUMBERS:

2,000
individuals received
produce through

12
partner
organizations

32,124

pounds of produce shared
from our three garden sites

PRODUCE ACCESS

We envision a world where everyone has access not only to the food they need, but want, too. That's why we share vegetables grown in our gardens with community members, increasing access to fresh, culturally relevant foods. Like the community meals program, our produce access program works with a network of partner organizations to distribute fresh, local food to community members.



A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT

In 2023, a partnership with Second Harvest Food Bank enabled us to expand our produce sharing program and gain valuable insights about food access challenges in our city. Second Harvest's USDA Local Farm Purchasing grant enabled Growing Together farmers to distribute about 60% of all produce they grew to communities in need. The grant also enabled us to purchase produce from local farms to supplement our produce offerings.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



VOLUNTEERS

From bread baking to beekeeping, weeding to watering, chopping to blending, to packing food into boxes, volunteering at The Nashville Food Project takes many forms. Every day, we rely on a dedicated, diverse community of volunteers who give their time, skills, and hearts to help create a city that is nourished by a just, sustainable food system.

BY THE NUMBERS:

1,083

volunteers across all programs

7,196

volunteer hours worked

BUILDING A WELCOMING COMMUNITY

In partnership with Welcoming America, a national nonprofit dedicated to fostering welcoming communities for immigrants and refugees, we hosted a series of Welcoming Week events in the fall.

At a family festival at the Community Farm at Mill Ridge, more than 100 people gathered to share a meal, play games, and get to know each other. Later in the week, we also hosted a panel that explored how organizations in our city are working together to make Nashville a safe and welcoming city for everyone.



VOLUNTEER PORTRAIT PROJECT

Photographed by our dear friend Aidan Fitzpatrick, the Volunteer Portrait Project documented just a few of the faces in our community who helped to carry this work forward in 2023. The small, consistent, and caring gestures of our many volunteers are the beating heart of The Nashville Food Project.



FOOD SYSTEMS CHANGE

A New Strategic Priority



WHY SYSTEMS CHANGE?

Nashville residents face all kinds of inequities: limited access to healthy, affordable food, persistent health disparities, the loss of agricultural land, food waste, and environmental degradation. All of these challenges are interrelated, caused by a food system that does not work for farmers, grocers, restaurants, or eaters – which, of course, is all of us.

A systems change approach leverages community engagement and cross-sector collaboration to address these challenges. By integrating this approach to our work, we will better understand why food-related challenges persist, and how we can work together to create a food system that actually works for everyone in our city.

Over the next few years, you will see this approach informing our work, especially in FeedBack Nashville. From convening key food system stakeholders to hosting neighborhood meetings, we are counting on your engagement to create lasting change in our city. Together, we can achieve our vision of vibrant community food security, where everyone in Nashville has access to the food they want and need through a just and sustainable food system.



Feed Back

NASHVILLE

BUILDING A BETTER FOOD FUTURE

This year, we launched FeedBack Nashville, a new initiative to build a better food future for our city. Started by a coalition of food-centric organizations, FeedBack Nashville is led by a steering committee of 16 residents with deep ties to communities most affected by injustices in our food system. FeedBack Nashville uses a systems change approach to build a better food system for everyone in our city. We serve as the coordinator of the initiative.



PROJECT GOALS

1

Understand why current challenges like hunger and food waste exist in our city

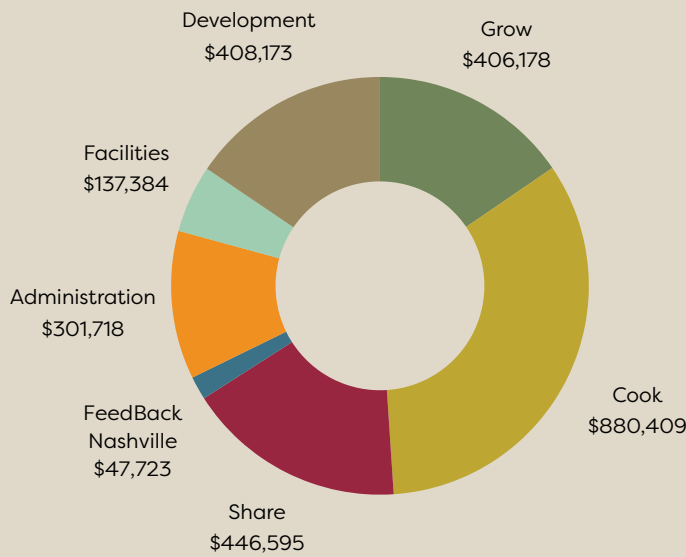
2

Create community-driven visions of a better food future for Nashville

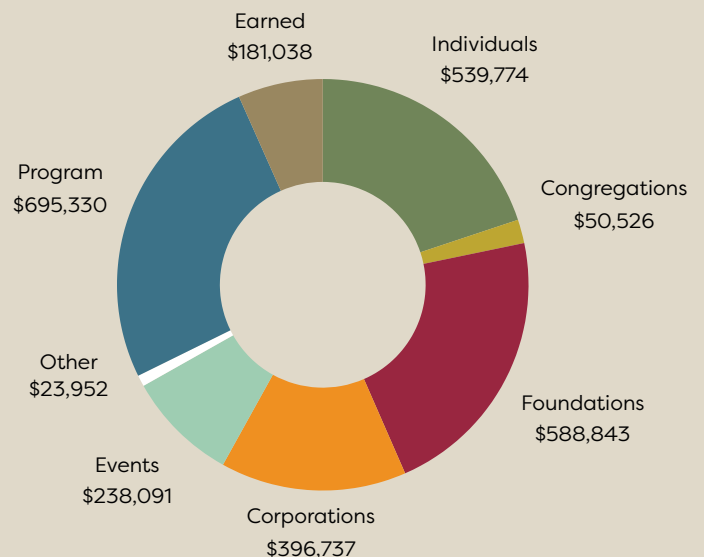
3

Identify transformational opportunities to build a more just and sustainable food system

FINANCIAL STATEMENT



OPERATING EXPENSE: \$2,628,180



OPERATING REVENUE: \$2,714,291

2023 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chair:

Antonio Carroll, NES

Chair-Elect:

Josh Westerhold, Nissan

Treasurer:

John Pearce, Ernst & Young (retired)

Secretary:

Sunny Bray, Catalyst Collective

Immediate Past Chair:

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Angie Bergman, Bass, Berry & Sims
 Ashlee Brooks, Brooks Tax Consulting
 Mary Lea Bryant, Harpeth Hall Academy
 Marcie Bryant, YWCA (retired)
 Ann Fundis, Community Volunteer
 Katherine Hartle, Hartle Holdings, LLC
 Katie Johnson, HCA Healthcare
 Kim Johnson, Jackson National Life
 Vanessa Lazón, MNPS
 Christy Moberly, State Farm (retired)
 Kristy Offitt, Bridgestone
 Harsha Ramayya, Bank of America
 Jennifer Rusie, Jackson Lewis
 Jarrett Strickland, UBS
 Tandy Wilson, City House

Young Leaders Council Interns

Dana Patel, HCA Healthcare Foundation
 Angie Sessoms, Koya Partners

THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS!

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Golden Tree Asset Management
The Healing Trust
Marlene and Spencer Hays Foundation
The Memorial Foundation
Christy & Michael Moberly
West End Home Foundation

\$25,000-\$49,999

Andrea Waitt Carlton Foundation
The Atticus Trust
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Christ Church Cathedral
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Joe C. Davis Foundation
Patagonia
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Universal Music Group

\$10,000-\$24,999

Anonymous
Bancel Philanthropies
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Dettwiller Foundation
First Horizon Foundation
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Hofseth LLC Corporation
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Kroger
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Milton & Denice Johnson Family Foundation
Nissan North America Inc.

Piedmont Natural Gas
Sodexo Stop Hunger Foundation
Sparkjoy Foundation
TN Public Health Foundation
Thomas & Mamie Houser Charitable Foundation
United Way of Greater Nashville
Vanderbilt University Medical Center
Woodmont Christian Church

\$5,000-\$9,999

American Family Insurance
Dreams Foundation, Inc.
Angie Bergman
Bryant Family Foundation
John S. Bryant
Buckingham Foundation, Inc.
C&B Hearn Foundation
Michael & Jane Ann Cain
Anna & Brandon Carl
The Carolyn Smith Foundation
Caterpillar Financial Services
Mary Britton & Jody Cummings
The Dorothy Cate and Thomas F. Frist Foundation
The Enchiridion Foundation
Sara Finley
Charmion Gustke Hearn
Healthcare Realty
Greg Lanford
Mitsuki Laycock
Gracey Lipman
Martin's Barbecue Joint, LLC
Susan Mezger
Nashville Electric Service
Nordstrom Cares
John & Lori Pearce
Publix Super Markets Charities
Stephen & Sara Anne Quinn
Fran Schell
Shoba Foundation
Michelle Supko
The Reynolds Family Foundation
Josh Westerhold
Cristina Wieck

\$2,500-\$4,999

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Isaiah Beard
Susannah & Jonathan Berry
Lady & Billy Bird
Trudy & Bill Carpenter
Sunny & Bryan Cartmell
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Andrea Conte & Phil Bredesen
Laurie & Steve Eskind
Fairepointe Planning
The Farm and Forest Families of Tennessee
Hugh Francis
Joe & Penny Hodgson
Immanuel Baptist Church
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Terri & Doug King
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Michele McMinn & Neil Weber
Jon Michael
James & Diane Mulloy
Nanni Family Giving Fund
National Association of Fixed Annuities
Gail Pusey
Randy Rayburn
Rogers Group Inc.
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Shirley Zeitlin



THE NASHVILLE FOOD PROJECT



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