

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN REPORT

FALL 2021



The Campaign for Willing Hands

800 Donors

\$2.4 Million Raised

Board & staff

Board of Directors

- Peter Carter**
President
- Carolyn Frye**
Vice President
- Shari McLaughlin**
Treasurer
- Bartlett Leber**
Secretary
- Anne Collins**
- Andy Friedland**
- Rebecca Hooper Holland**
- Birgit Humpert**
- Johanna Mirenda**
- Leslie Rimmer**
- Rob Schultz**
- Sheldon Stansfield**
- Tim Taylor**

Staff

- Rebecca Braun**
Administrative Assistant
- Chris Castles**
Operations Manager
- Sara Cavin**
Manager of Programs
- Peter Griggs**
Driver and Gleaning Assistant
- Krista Karlson**
Outreach and Development Manager
- Diana Munson**
Food and Hunger Program Assistant
- Katie Ryan-O'Flaherty**
Gleaning Coordinator
- Scott Trombley**
Warehouse Coordinator
- Mikey Van Siclen**
Farming Coordinator
- Brian Wagner**
Recipient Site Coordinator
- Gabe Zoerheide**
Executive Director

Staff Drivers

- Ray Brewster**
- Jonah Kasper**
- Lars Sandvik**
- Iain Wallis**

Letter from the Executive Director



Dear Friends,

It is with deep appreciation and gratitude that we share with you the success of our Capital Campaign. Since our founding in 2004, Willing Hands has understood that the need for our work addressing hunger and supporting healthy eating was much greater than our ability to meet that need. Our infrastructure simply could not support an increase in our services. In early 2019, when we purchased our facility at 198 Church Street in Norwich, we envisioned a vibrant community hub with expanded capacity to grow,

glean, recover, store, and deliver fresh, healthy, perishable food. It was clear from the enthusiastic response to the quiet phase of our Capital Campaign that the community understood the importance of meeting our Campaign goals, which include:

- Delivering more healthy food to those in need each year.
- Reducing the yearly costs of operating the new Willing Hands facility.
- Offsetting the release of CO2 emissions through increased energy efficiency, renewable energy generation, and food recovery.

As a result of the pandemic, the needs of the community increased dramatically and necessitated that we increase the campaign budget and fast track investments to our infrastructure. We achieved our initial fundraising goal about a year ago, which enabled us to:

- Pay off our mortgage.
- Build a barn for truck and equipment parking and storage.
- Install two large refrigerated coolers.
- Purchase two additional delivery trucks.
- Expand our food handling infrastructure.

These investments allowed us to dramatically increase the amount of food we delivered in 2020 by nearly 500,000 pounds, which offset the release of nearly 500 tons of CO2. Last fall the Willing Hands Board of Directors approved additional investments including:

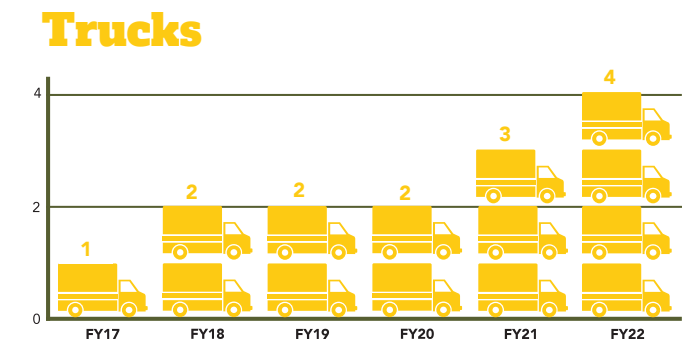
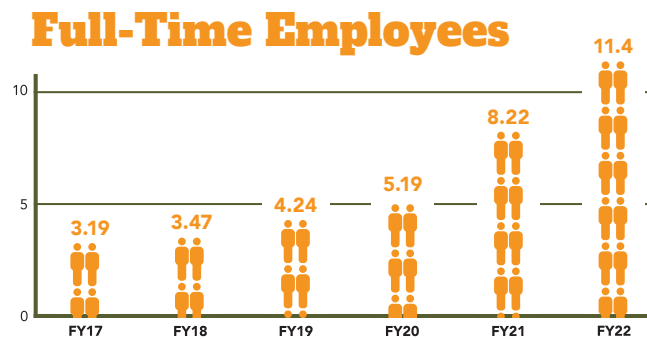
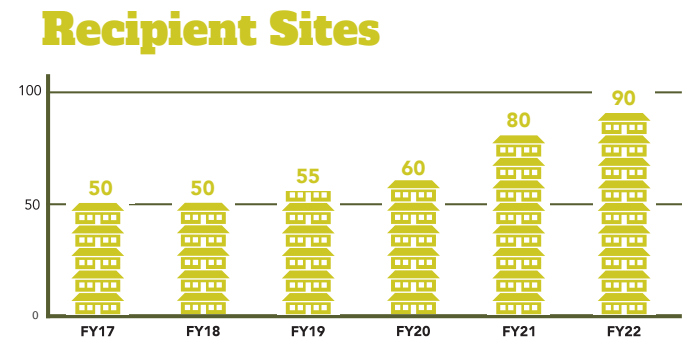
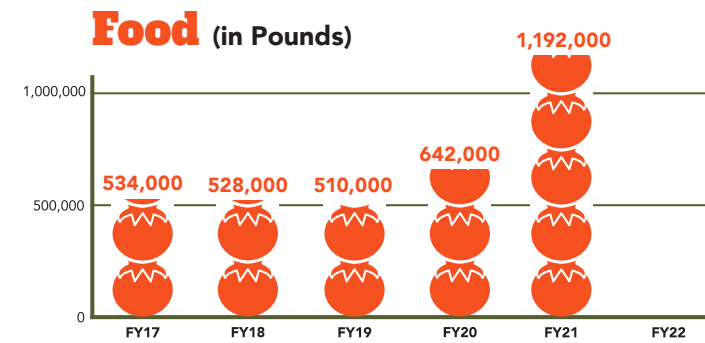
- Making improvements to the new barn including a concrete slab floor and garage doors.
- Adding additional refrigeration capacity and installing a walk-in freezer.
- Replacing two older delivery trucks.
- Increasing the planned solar capacity on the roof of our new barn.
- Investing in people. Over the past year we have added 6 new positions, doubling our staff.

We ultimately raised a total of \$2,420,361 to support our growth. This has had an immediate and meaningful impact in our community. We are delivering more food than ever before to more individuals than ever before. The success of the Campaign for Willing Hands was a testament to the incredible generosity of this community and to our shared vision for an Upper Valley where everyone has access to fresh, healthy food. We're deeply grateful for your support as we move forward.

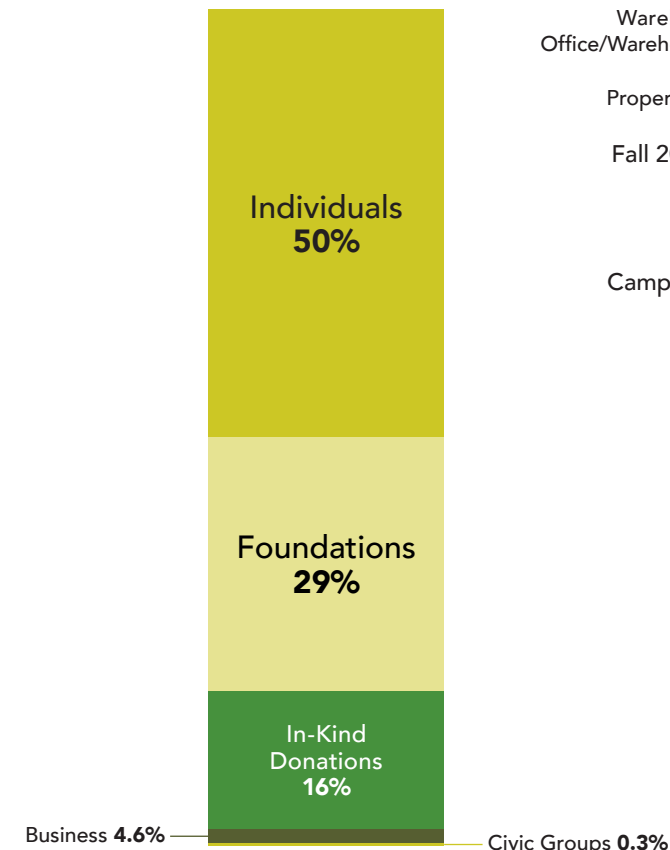
Sincerely,

Gabe Zoerheide, Executive Director (802) 698-0265 • director@willinghands.org

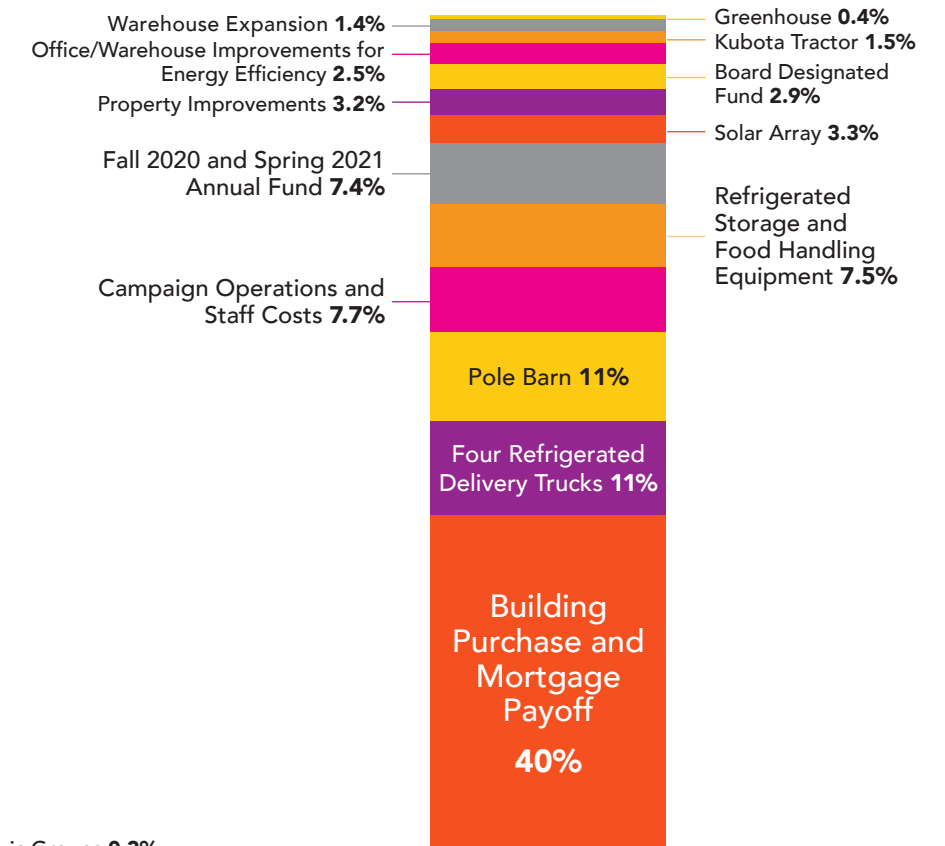
Willing Hands is GROWING!



CAMPAIGN INCOME



CAMPAIGN EXPENSES



What we've accomplished

Since 2020, our team has grown by **6 full-time staff**. Our operations are smoother and more efficient, thanks to new team members running our gardening and gleaning programs, partnering with our recipient sites, managing warehouse operations, and overseeing administrative projects.

Adding an on-site **garden** has allowed us to round out our food supply by growing specific vegetables that our recipients want to eat, while building a **greenhouse** (generously constructed by Hypertherm associates) means we can extend our growing season.

As part of Willing Hands' **Climate Action Plan**, we installed a **35-kw solar array** on the barn that covers all of our electrical consumption. We are also making **energy efficiency improvements** to our building, and installing a heat pump.

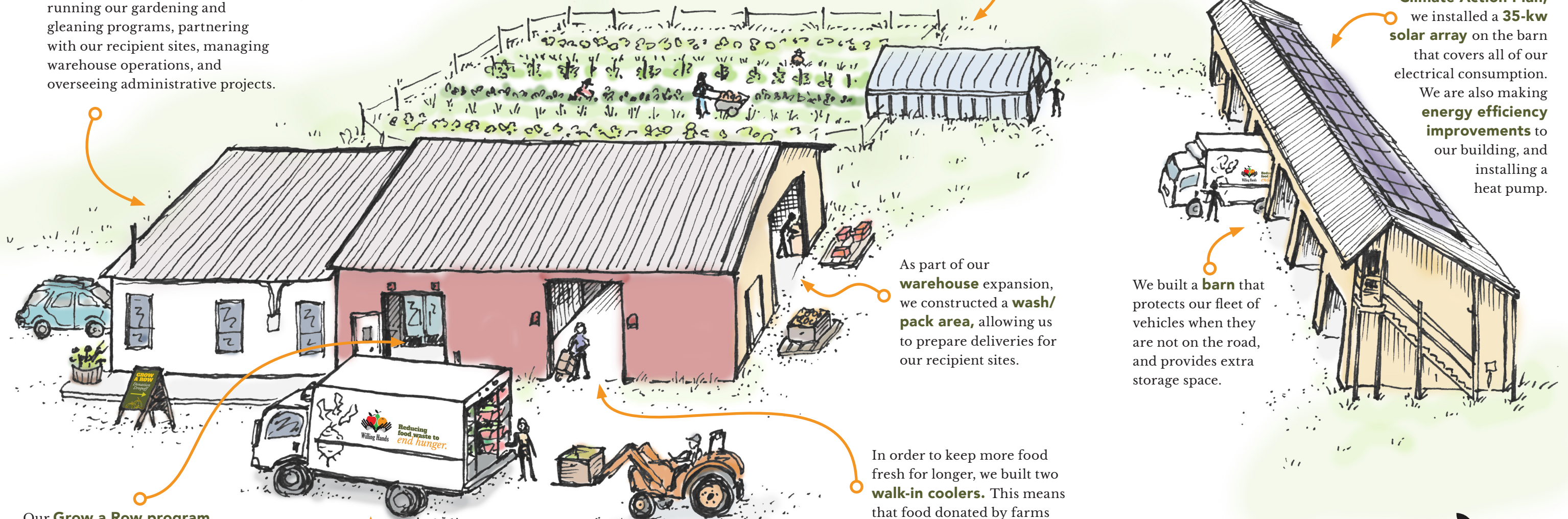
As part of our **warehouse** expansion, we constructed a **wash/pack area**, allowing us to prepare deliveries for our recipient sites.

We built a **barn** that protects our fleet of vehicles when they are not on the road, and provides extra storage space.

In order to keep more food fresh for longer, we built two **walk-in coolers**. This means that food donated by farms and markets, or harvested by volunteer gleaners and gardeners, can be stored and redistributed to our recipient sites in the winter months.

Our **Grow a Row** program encourages community members to grow extra produce in their home gardens and share it with others by donating it to Willing Hands. We've built a **new drop-off space** for those donations.

The purchase of additional **delivery trucks**, as well as a **tractor**, has allowed Willing Hands to add deliveries of fresh food to 30 new recipient sites.





The Claremont Soup Kitchen is truly thankful to be a recipient of Willing Hands. Without the support of Willing Hands the Claremont Soup Kitchen would not be able to offer the variety and quantity of fresh fruits, vegetables and dairy to our guests. **Our guests are often lined down the sidewalk on Friday waiting for the truck to arrive.** Willing Hands is an amazing organization with very knowledgeable staff and volunteers.

—Cindy Stevens, Claremont Soup Kitchen

What's Next?

The pandemic has exacerbated the urgency of addressing hunger and access to healthy food within our community. As the number of organizations we serve continues to grow, we are reminded that food insecurity will not end when the pandemic ends. The successful Capital Campaign allowed us to invest in the infrastructure and staffing necessary to operate at a much larger scale; now our goal is to maintain the capacity to source and deliver 1 million pounds of fresh, perishable food each year to an estimated 6,000 individuals in our community. To do this, we will:

- Invest staff time in planning and building internal systems that meet the needs of a larger organization.
- Replace one-time, USDA-funded food sources with an increased quantity of recovered and locally grown food.
- Conduct volunteer and recipient site surveys to measure our impact in the community, and report on the results.
- Revise our Strategic Plan to reflect our goals for the next five years.



To have been able to give food-insecure members of our community the fresh, often organically grown produce provided by Willing Hands each week was a great antidote to the stress of living through a pandemic. People were so grateful for the food, as were we for the privilege of being able to join the network of “helpers” during this challenging time. Having volunteered for several years at one of the Willing Hands organic farms, it was especially gratifying to me to finally experience the end results of our work in the fields—handing a box full of gorgeous, nutritious foods to people in need and seeing how appreciative they all were.

—Lynne Fitzhugh, volunteer at Fairlee's Free Friday Foods



Though we may be small, **Willing Hands continues to have a mighty impact on our food insecurity efforts.**

Without their partnership, we would not be able to meet our goals to provide fresh, nutritious food to anyone in need.

—Hannah Cerasoli, Sharing and Caring



Willing Hands has allowed us to transform our Food Pantry from mostly non-perishable foods to include fresh produce. We would have very little produce to offer our clients without their help. **The positive impact Willing Hands has on our community cannot be matched.**

—Valerie Thompson, LISTEN Community Services





Willing Hands

198 Church Street
Norwich, VT 05055



willinghands.org



**Reducing
food waste to
*end hunger.***