Annual Report
Fiscal Year 2021-2022

By the Numbers

860,000 pounds of food sourced
796,202 pounds of food delivered*
64 food donors
82 delivery sites
1,000+ volunteers
(150 volunteers in a single week in July!)
3 box trucks,
1 pickup truck and
1 cargo van
(our fleet is complete!)

*We compost produce unfit for distribution, and then use the compost in our gardens.
I once heard that each non-profit organization, if it is lucky enough, will have a “moment” when its mission resonates with the community in a deeper way, captures the attention of the public, and is able to dramatically increase its impact. Over the past two years, Willing Hands has been the beneficiary of such a moment. When the pandemic hit, we had just begun a Capital Campaign and were prepared to dramatically increase our capacity. **In just two years, we doubled the amount of food that we grow, glean, recover, and deliver to the community.** Because of the investments in our infrastructure, we have been able to take advantage of one-time federal pandemic relief programs, delivering more food to the community in a single summer than we did previously in an entire year.

This was all made possible by an incredibly inspired, generous community.

The most frequent question I’ve received over the past two years gives me pause: “In light of so much growth, have you been able to meet the needs of the community?”

The answer unfortunately is no, especially right now. The truth is that as Willing Hands has grown, so have the needs of our community. The charitable food system, the network of food shelves and other non-profits we serve, is strained by the same higher food and overhead costs that are driving more and more people to use their services. Thanks to the work of Willing Hands and many others, in the Upper Valley we have a stronger safety net—in the form of free, healthy food—than many other places. But it is nowhere near enough. Our partners are reporting record numbers of clients and running out of food faster than ever before. We are proud to say that we can keep most of our recipient organizations well-stocked with fresh fruits and veggies during the summer months, but there is a deep need for more proteins, milk, eggs and off-season produce.

Over the next year, the Willing Hands Board of Directors will be shepherding the organization through a Strategic Planning process to shape the next five years of our impact. We look forward to engaging those we serve, food donors, recipient organizations, financial donors, and volunteers, and learning how we can be more effective in meeting our mission. While the moment of dramatic growth for Willing Hands has come and gone, we are committed to sustaining our vital programs and learning how we can continue to rise to meet the needs of our community.

Best,

Gabe Zoerheide
Welcome New Board Members!

After a careful community-wide search, we are thrilled to welcome Cyndi Scott, Saranya Loehrer, Gary Brooks and Janet Hardy to the Willing Hands Board of Directors. Each of them brings essential skills and knowledge that will help guide the next generation of Willing Hands. Read their full bios at willinghands.org/who-we-are

Gary Brooks
PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE: Retired lawyer and former Assistant Professor of Law and Director of the General Practice Program at Vermont Law School
INTERESTS: Willing Hands volunteer with strong interest in all efforts to address food insecurity

Janet Hardy
PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE: Conducting snow research and managing CRREL's Antarctic program
INTERESTS: Beekeeping, fly fishing and volunteering for her favorite local non-profits including Windsor County Mentors, Willing Hands, Upper Valley Haven, and Dismas House

Saranya Loehrer
PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE: Mobilizing health and health care leaders in service of improved health outcomes and a more just and equitable society. Presently: Chief Health Equity Officer for Teladoc Health.
INTERESTS: Spending time with family and friends, hiking, reading, and traveling

Cyndi Scott
PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE: Fundraising for Dartmouth-Hitchcock Health, the Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth, and Dartmouth College
INTERESTS: Playing in the sand at sunrise or sunset (or both!) with her young son

Notes from a Food Shelf

“Being able to provide such amazing produce makes me proud…It’s not a hand out. It’s a hand up.”
—Morgana Isenberg, White River Junction Vet Center

Thank You, Outgoing Board Members!

It has been our immense privilege for Carolyn Frye (bottom photo), Peter Carter (below left) and Bartlett Leber (below right) to serve on our Board of Directors. Their dedication and careful leadership has shaped every aspect of our work, from our volunteer programs to our internal policies and practices. Carolyn, Peter and Bartlett helped expertly guide the organization through a successful Capital Campaign that has allowed Willing Hands to flourish at a larger scale than ever before. Through it all, they brought patience, humor and a willingness to roll up their sleeves and get their hands dirty. Thank you Carolyn, Peter and Bartlett, and best wishes for your next adventures!
Reducing food waste to end hunger.

Willing Hands Annual Report 2021–22

Food Donors
1. Black River Produce
2. Brookmaid Food Pantry Garden
3. Cedar Circle Farm
4. Coop Food Stores: Hanover
5. Coop Food Stores: Lebanon
6. Coop Food Stores: White River Junction
7. Crossroad Farm
8. Crossroad Farm Stand
9. Dartmouth Organic Farm
10. Deep Meadow Farm
11. Edgewater Farm
12. Farmcary Garden
13. Fat Sheep Farm
14. Four Corners Farm
15. Friends of Mascoma
16. Green Dragon Farm
17. Hemingway Farms
18. Hill Farm
19. Hookfield Farm
20. Hurricane Flats Farm
21. Killdeer Farm
22. King Arthur Baking
23. La Pecora
24. Long Wind Farm
25. Luna Bleu Farm
26. Marion Cross School
27. McNaomy Dairy
28. Mink Meadow Farm
29. Morrill Mountain Fruit Farm
30. Mountain School
31. New Hampshire Food Bank
32. Norwich Farm Creamery
33. Peaked Moon Farm
34. Pete & Gerry’s Organic Eggs
35. Pete’s Stand
36. Pierson Farm
37. Poverty Lane Orcharde
38. Provisions International
39. Riverview Farm
40. Root 5 Farm
41. Salvation Farms
42. Spring Brook Farm
43. Stern’s Quality Produce
44. Sunrise Farm
45. Sunset Farm
46. Sweet Cow Yogurt
47. Sweetland Farm
48. Tucker Hill Flats Farm
49. UNFI Fresh
50. Upper Valley Produce
51. Vermont Foodbank
52. Watershed Farm
53. West Lebanon Feed & Supply
54. Whitefield Brook Orchard
55. Wild Hill Organics
56. Willing Hands Garden
57. Willsburg Farms
58. Willsburg Food Co-op
59. Windham Organic Farm
60. Woodstock Farm
61. Xericus Farm
62. Yarmouth Farm
63. Zyskon’s Organics

Recipient Sites
1. Baby Steps
2. Bethel Food Shelf
3. Bradford Food Shelf
4. Bradford Teen Hub
5. Bugbee Senior Center
6. Change the World Kids
7. Claremont Soup Kitchen
8. Community Harvest of Central VT
9. Cornish Food Pantry
10. Crafts Hill Family Housing
11. D-H Women’s Health Center
12. Earl Bourdon Center
13. End 68 Hours of Hunger
14. Fairline Orford Food Shelf
15. Full Mountain Food Shelf
16. Friends of Mascoma Food Shelves
17. Good Folks Pantry
18. Good Shepherd Ecumenical Food Pantry
19. Gut Lunch
20. Graystone Village
21. Groton Emergency Food Shelf
22. Growing Peace
23. Hanover Community Kitchen
24. Hartford Dismas House
25. Hartford High School
26. Hartford Food Shelf
27. Headstart
28. Heirloom Resource Center
29. Hollow Drive
30. Horse Meadow Senior Center
31. Joseph’s Storehouse
32. Lebanon Towers
33. Listen Dinner Site
34. Lisbon Food Shelf
35. Little Rivers Health Care
36. Lime Food Pantry
37. Maple Manor
38. Mascoma Senior Center
39. Mascoma Village
40. Newbury United
41. Northwoods Apartments
42. Norwich Senior Housing
43. Olde Windsor Village
44. One-4-All
45. Orange East Senior Center
46. Oxford Food Pantry
47. Overlook Apartments
48. Plainfield Food Shelf
49. Plymouth Notch
50. Ready Set Grow
51. Roger’s House
52. Roman Circle Family Housing
53. Royalton Seniors
54. Sacred Heart
55. Sacred Wind
56. Sharing and Caring
57. Sharon Food Shelf
58. South Royalton Food Shelf
59. Southwestern Community Services
60. Springfield Family Center
61. Take a Bite Out of Hunger
62. The Family Place
63. The Wilder School
64. Thetford Food Shelf
65. Time Out
66. Trinity Church of Nazareth Food Pantry
67. Turbridge Food Shelf
68. Turning Points
69. Upper Valley Haven
70. Upper Valley Pediatrics
71. Upper Valley Senior Center
72. VA Medical Center
73. Vashon Apartments
74. Village Apartments
75. Visions for Creative Aging
76. W. Halpin’s Food Pantry
77. W. Jackson’s Food Pantry
78. West County Food Shelf
79. White River Junction Vet Center
80. Windsor Food Shelf
81. Woodstock Food Shelf

Welcome New Partners
★ Acushnet Harvest
★ Eureka Organic Farm
★ Etna General Store
★ King Blossom Farm
★ Kineland Farms
★ Maverick Farm
★ Orange County Parent Child Center
★ Ward Berry Farm
★ Winding Brook Farm

Notes from the Field
“Gleaning felt so much more meaningful than I expected. I knew I would be happy to have gotten some time outside in a nice place and felt good that I had helped contribute delicious veggies to folks who needed it. But I did not expect the sense of connectedness that came from this and from working (sometimes chatting, sometimes just quiet) side by side with others. I felt connected to nature, connected to my community. But I also felt connected to the idea that we could live in a society that takes care of everybody. Gleaning ground me in a sense of hope for humanity and the planet each time I went, giving me a moment’s respite from all the terrible news that suggests we are not up to the task.” —Abigail, gleaning volunteer

Delivery totals are for calendar year 2021.
Program Highlights

Gardens
For the past year, volunteers and staff have been working hard to build soil quality at all of our garden sites, and the transformation is evident above and below ground. With mulch, compost and cover crops enhancing fertility, we are seeing worms, improved soil texture and color, and better crop growth. All of this means that our gardens will be more sustainable in the long-term. We can spend more time tending and harvesting high-quality food for our neighbors, and less time weeding.

The Willing Hands gardens aren’t just building soil—they’re creating friendship and community. It is so rewarding to see veteran volunteers coming back week after week to tend the gardens, and to see new faces join the gardening ranks each week. Thank you everyone for your willing hands!

Gleaning
We couldn’t do what we do without the partner farms who generously offer surplus produce to help us meet our mission to make high-quality, local food available to everyone in our community. This year, volunteer teams gleaned dozens of types of crops at farms and orchards across the Upper Valley. A special shoutout goes to the five farms that have generously offered Willing Hands a season-long weekly gleaning opportunity:

Food Recovery
Did you know that reducing food waste is one of the most impactful climate solutions? We pick up thousands of pounds of food every week—from grocery stores, wholesalers, bakeries and farms—that would otherwise not make it onto someone’s dinner plate. By ensuring this good food is eaten instead of wasted, we’re preventing the emission of about 1 million pounds of CO₂ annually. Stay tuned for more information about our Climate Action Plan, which is in the works!

Grow a Row
The Grow a Row fridge is brimming with beautiful produce and eggs donated by home gardeners. One neighborhood in Eastman took their contribution to the next level by arranging a weekly community harvest for Willing Hands. Every week, more than a dozen home gardeners contribute their produce to a collective cooler that a volunteer then delivers to Willing Hands. We hope this neighborhood model will catch on elsewhere!

Share a Share
This year, 307 donors came together to purchase $40,000 worth of CSA shares from local farms for Willing Hands to distribute to food shelves. This program expands access to the highest quality local produce for those who might not otherwise be able to afford it, while also directly supporting our farm partners and the local farming economy.

Thank you to everyone who chipped in to this impressive total, and to our trusty volunteers who pick up Willing Hands CSA shares every week!
Closing the Gap to 1 Million Pounds

In each of the past two years, Willing Hands sourced more than 1 million pounds of healthy food, in part thanks to federal pandemic assistance programs like the USDA Farmers to Families Food Boxes. As those programs end, we’re working hard to fill in the 150,000-pound gap in order to sustain deliveries to our community of 1 million pounds of nourishing food annually.

Above, loading the Willing Hands truck at a gleaning site. Left, our small but mighty truck picking up produce donations from UNFI Fresh.

Finances Fiscal Year 2021–2022

These charts represent the preliminary financial report for the fiscal year ending 6/30/22. The finalized audit will be available this winter.
Anne was an integral part of the Willing Hands community. She was a believer in games, manners, high standards and a positive outlook. In the late 2000s, she helped Willing Hands purchase our first refrigerated delivery van, which allowed us to pick up more surplus produce from farms and grocery stores and then deliver it to food shelves. In many ways, this catalyzed Willing Hands’ growth from a fledgling nonprofit to an essential social service in our community.

Then, in 2018, Anne joined our Board of Directors and helped guide Willing Hands during another pivotal time as we undertook a Capital Campaign and doubled the size of our impact in the community. Anne’s humor, inquisitive spirit and practicality were a welcome addition to the Board.

Anne led an adventurous life. A doctor by trade, she worked in Sri Lanka, Brazil, Haiti, Nicaragua and Guatemala. In the late sixties she became engaged to an Australian journalist who was lost in Vietnam in 1970. She went on living, “spirited by memories of Tim.” Indomitable as ever, she became a pilot of small aircraft and float planes, and a para-skier until a photograph of her hang-gliding seen by her doctors at DHMC brought such activity to an end. After retirement, she lived at Kendal for nearly 20 years.

Now, thanks to a generous bequest that she left behind for Willing Hands, Anne is supporting Willing Hands at a third pivotal moment as we work to sustain the ability to source and deliver 1 million pounds of food annually to our community. We are so grateful for Anne’s longtime dedication to Willing Hands’ mission, and we strive to embody her dauntless spirit as we work to end hunger in our community.

**In Remembrance: Anne Collins 1938–2022**

Planned Giving

Are you interested in supporting the long-term sustainability of our work and leaving a lasting legacy in the community? We invite you to consider naming Willing Hands as a beneficiary of your retirement plan, will or trust.

**CONTACT** Executive Director Gabe Zoerheide
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