



Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2022–2023



Behind the scenes

Staff

Ray Brewster
Driver

Chris Castles
Operations Manager

Sara Cavin
Manager of Programs

Mary Daum
Administrative
Coordinator

Alec Fannin
Gleaning Coordinator

Peter Griggs
Driver & Gleaning
Assistant

Krista Karlson
Outreach &
Development Manager

Katie Ryan-O'Flaherty
Mission Impact
Coordinator

Lars Sandvik
Driver

Tim Seigny
Warehouse & Delivery
Coordinator

Scott Trombley
Warehouse Coordinator

Mikey Van Siclen
Farming Coordinator

Gabe Zoerheide
Executive Director

Board of Directors

Leslie Rimmer
President

Johanna Miranda
Vice President

Shari McLaughlin
Treasurer

Janet Hardy
Secretary

Gary Brooks

Rebecca Hooper
Holland

Saranya Loehrer

Suzanne McDowell

Cyndi Scott

Sheldon Stansfield

Tim Taylor



From the Executive Director

Building Resilience

Many of my casual conversations about Willing Hands this summer revolved around the weather and the sharp rise in food shelf visits. These topics reveal how challenging this past year has been for our partners, which is informing how we look at the next five years of our work.

The community need for free food has increased dramatically. At the same time as pandemic-era government programs ended, the cost of food rose steeply. For the clients of the 80 non-profit organizations we serve, Willing Hands food is a lifeline. Our food shelf partners are now welcoming as many as four times the number of visitors as they were just three years ago. Willing Hands has added several new delivery sites, and we have received more requests than we are able to meet.

As Willing Hands develops our new five-year strategic plan, one of the main themes is working harder to source more food so that we can make a deeper impact on hunger in our community.

It's also been a challenging year for our farm partners. In a good year, New England can be a challenging place to farm profitably; with climate change and this summer's devastating weather, it's nearly impossible. The late May killing frost, multiple flooding events, and incessant rain combined to destroy many of the crops that Willing Hands normally receives from generous farmers. Our summer food supply from local farms was down 50 percent. The challenges of this growing season speak to the desperate need for action on climate change. The good news is that our work recovering food that would otherwise not be eaten has a meaningful impact on reducing carbon emissions. Over the past two years we have been measuring this impact and strategizing ways to increase it.

Hardship tests the strength of community bonds. Despite all of the challenges of the past year, I have witnessed a tremendous amount of generosity and grace in our community.

Next year, Willing Hands will celebrate our 20th anniversary. As I look ahead to the next five years, I am buoyed by the commitment that you have shown to reducing food waste and ending hunger in our community. Now more than ever, thank you for making this work possible!

Gabe Zoerheide



Volunteer Spotlights

Willing Hands wouldn't exist without the help of volunteers (almost 700 in FY23!) These generous, hardworking folks chip in across all aspects of our work, from the gleaning fields and gardens to the warehouse and even mowing the lawn. We are deeply grateful for all of their contributions! **Want to get in on the fun? Become a volunteer at willinghands.org/volunteer**



Betsy Eaton

HELPS WITH: Sorting food at the warehouse + washing produce bins

"For me, Willing Hands has all the right components for a retirement volunteer job. It's real work, and I feel I've been helpful. The jobs I choose to do are those that involve physical work, so I feel I have had a workout without going to the gym. It's a win/win."



Donn Cann

HELPS WITH: Grounds maintenance

"My role frees up paid staff to do other jobs. It feels good to make even a small difference in the organization."



Ullas Krishnan

HELPS WITH: Norwich Farmers' Market pickup + CSA pickup

"I love this activity as it keeps me in touch with the changing seasons and corresponding produce." Thanks to Ullas' spouse Rekha for occasionally filling in!



Mike Hall

HELPS WITH: Sorting food at the warehouse + washing produce bins

"When we retired a number of years ago, we were recruited by a friend to help with the Willing Hands garden. Although we have volunteered for a variety of Willing Hands jobs since then, a special memory is hoeing the garden and enjoying early morning birdsong along the Connecticut River."



Jim Citron

HELPS WITH: Norwich Farmers' Market pickup + CSA pickup

"One Saturday, a vendor who was less familiar with what we do because he doesn't sell fresh produce called me over to his stand to ask if we could use some cucumbers. I said yes and explained how Willing Hands works. The next week when we arrived, he was waiting for us with 100 pounds of cucumbers that he had picked from his home garden. As he was telling us how much it meant to him to know that his labor of love would be shared with neighbors in need rather than go to waste, I was reminded once again how rewarding it is to be part of such a caring community."



FUN FACT: Mike has volunteered 150 times over the years!

Follow the Food

Farms

45 partners

Grocery/Wholesale

And bakeries! Thanks to King Arthur Baking Company for donating bread 7 days a week.

Thank you, volunteers!

In FY23,
700 volunteers
donated almost
5,000 hours
to keep Willing Hands running.

Home Gardens

76 food donors

Health & Social Services

Willing Hands delivers fresh food to **dozens of social service partners**. By providing free food at locations where neighbors are already receiving other services, we lower the barrier to getting the food they need.

Income-Eligible Housing

Thanks to partners including Twin Pines Housing Trust, Lebanon Housing Authority, Vermont State Housing Authority and more for **making Willing Hands food available to residents**.

Willing Hands

Total Food Sourced in FY23: **966,458 lbs**

78 delivery sites

Food Pantry

Thank you, Farm Partners!

The 2023 growing season was extremely challenging for our farm partners.

After a late frost that wiped out much of the apple crop, farmers suffered from flooding and incessant rains that severely reduced crop yields.

In spite of all this, we're grateful to our farm partners for donating what they could, and to our volunteers for helping make the most out of the season!

To see a full list of farm partners that you can support, visit willinghands.org/food-donors

Delivery Site Spotlight

Visions for Creative Housing Solutions

Every Monday afternoon, Katherine fetches the Willing Hands delivery and brings it home. Katherine, who is quadriplegic and has cerebral palsy, lives with 10 other adults at the Lebanon location of Visions for Creative Housing Solutions, a permanent supportive housing service for adults with developmental disabilities. With guidance from staff member Margo O'Day, residents will inventory the Willing Hands produce, create a meal plan for the week, and then purchase any remaining ingredients. Residents, who range in age from 25 to 60, cook and eat together every night.

LOCATIONS:

Enfield NH and
Lebanon NH

RESIDENTS: 22

**WILLING HANDS
DELIVERY DAY:**
Monday

**FRESH FOOD
DELIVERED
ANNUALLY: 3,000
pounds**

GET INVOLVED:
Volunteer or make a
gift at visionsnh.org

help residents meet their personal goals, like learning how to cook an entire meal independently or learning how to use a specific kitchen implement.

Visions' mission is to support adults with developmental disabilities through a unique model

Margo is a master at cooking just about anything with any ingredients, and repurposing leftovers: one time she made an ice cream cake for a resident's birthday, and then blended it up into milkshakes a few days later. She works hard to



Margo, right, and Betsy prepare a meal together using produce from Willing Hands.

that blends community and independence. Residents receive essential services and build relationships while also having the freedom to visit family and friends, to work at local businesses (most residents have jobs) and to achieve their personal goals. "The need and desire for something like Visions is pretty overwhelming," says Deborah Mashibini-Prior, Visions Marketing Assistant. In response, Visions is planning a third location in the Upper Valley, and they've created a toolkit to encourage other communities to replicate their model.

DID YOU KNOW?

Willing Hands serves
17 residential sites.



Delivery Site Survey

Willing Hands strives to serve our community with a consistent supply of free, fresh foods in order to reduce hunger and improve health. This year, we wanted to learn more about the needs of the individuals and families who eat our food, and to identify barriers that might be preventing more people from using our food. With support from the Center for Advancing Rural Health Equity (CARHE), we designed and conducted an impact study at six income-eligible housing sites where we make weekly deliveries of fresh food. In the coming year, we'll use that data to make improvements to our service.

Thank You, Board Members!

Thank you so much to each of these volunteers who recently stepped off our Board of Directors. We are deeply grateful for your time, wisdom and dedication to Willing Hands. Best wishes for your next endeavors!



*Andy
Friedland*
(2020-2023)



*Birgit
Humpert*
(2014-2023)

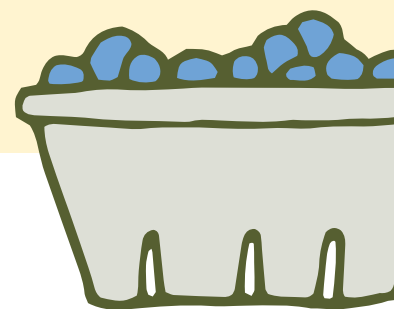


*Rob
Schultz*
(2019-2023)

Fun Fact

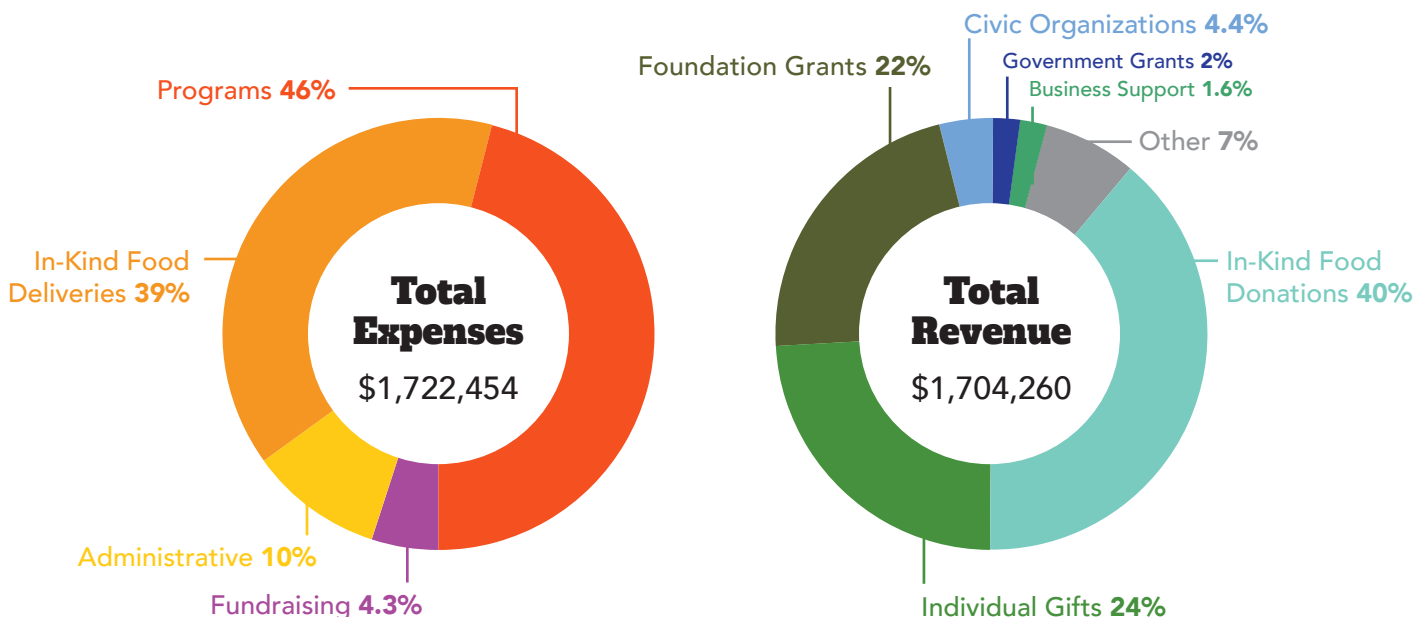
This year, volunteers gleaned over **1,500 pints of local blueberries** to share with neighbors who couldn't otherwise afford them.

That's almost **\$10,000** of sweet summery fruit!



Finances *Fiscal Year 2022–2023*

These charts represent the preliminary financial report for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023. The finalized audit will be available this winter.





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

198 Church Street
Norwich, VT 05055
willinghands.org

NON PROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE
PAID
WHT RIV JCT VT
PERMIT 86

Willing Hands Receives Ray of Kindness Award from Gov. Scott

When the Woodstock Farmers' Market flooded this summer, local volunteers worked hard to rescue as much food as possible (rescued food pictured here). Then Willing Hands distributed it to our network of food shelves, health centers and more. In recognition of this partnership, we recently received a Ray of Kindness Award from Governor Phil Scott.

