

# PLENTY

summer 2015

food gatherers®  
fighting hunger where we live

MEMBER OF  
FEEDING™  
AMERICA

## The Sun Shines on Food Gatherers' Summer Food Service Program



Summer vacation is a great thing when you're a kid, but the end of the school year may mean the end of a reliable breakfast and lunch for thousands of children in our community.

Food Gatherers and our partners have expanded our Summer Food Service Program to reach more children in the summer months. In 2014, we served 30,829 meals at 21 locations in Washtenaw County – 19,313 more meals than we served the previous summer. This summer we hope to serve 40,000 meals to kids at 22 sites throughout Washtenaw County.

Food Gatherers interns from the University of Michigan School of Public Health will be offering nutrition education activities to teach children and their families how to prepare fruits and vegetables and eat healthy on a budget. Thanks to support from the ConAgra Hunger-Free Summer Grant, families can sign up to receive a 20-pound box of fresh produce every month. We also include handy recipe cards to help support healthy eating at home.

Because of your support, when these kids look back on the summer of 2015, they're not going to remember how hungry they were – they'll remember sunshine, skateboards, swimming, and the good summer meals that kept them healthy and happy.

**Out of school does not have to mean out of food for children of our community!**

Why  
"Plenty?"

Our very first gatherers chose to call the Food Gatherers newsletter **PLENTY** because we know there really is plenty for everybody. The problem isn't supply, but responsible use and distribution. That's where Food Gatherers comes in. We rescue millions of pounds of food every year and distribute it to more than 150 partner programs to make sure it gets right to the people who need it most.



# From the President ~

Dear Gatherer,

We recently released the annual **Map the Meal Gap\*** study, which reveals that **14.7 percent of the Washtenaw County population, including 11,160 children**, are food insecure.

Food insecurity is the U.S. Department of Agriculture's measure of lack of access at times to enough food for an active, healthy life for all household members.

Of the 51,240 food insecure people in Washtenaw County, **40% do not qualify for SNAP or other federal nutrition programs based on their income.** This compares to 26% of the food insecure population throughout the state of Michigan. What does this mean for our community? It means that due to the high cost of living, many working families do not earn enough to meet basic family needs. **The private, non-governmental food support that our network of partner agencies supplies is crucial to the health and well-being of our neighbors.**

As we celebrate the generous support of more than 300 local food donors who enable us to distribute more than six million pounds of food, we are also daunted by the prevalence of food insecurity both locally and nationally. It is my hope that this newsletter conveys how hard we are working to nourish our community and inspires us all to do more to fight hunger where we live.

Gathering with you,



Eileen Spring  
President/CEO

*\*Map the Meal Gap 2015 is based on an analysis of statistics collected by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Census Bureau, and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics in 2013, the most recent year for which data is available. The study, commissioned by Feeding America, is a detailed analysis of the nation's food insecurity. An interactive map is available that allows viewers to explore the issue of hunger in Washtenaw County and across the country. The map can be found at [map.feedingamerica.org](http://map.feedingamerica.org).*



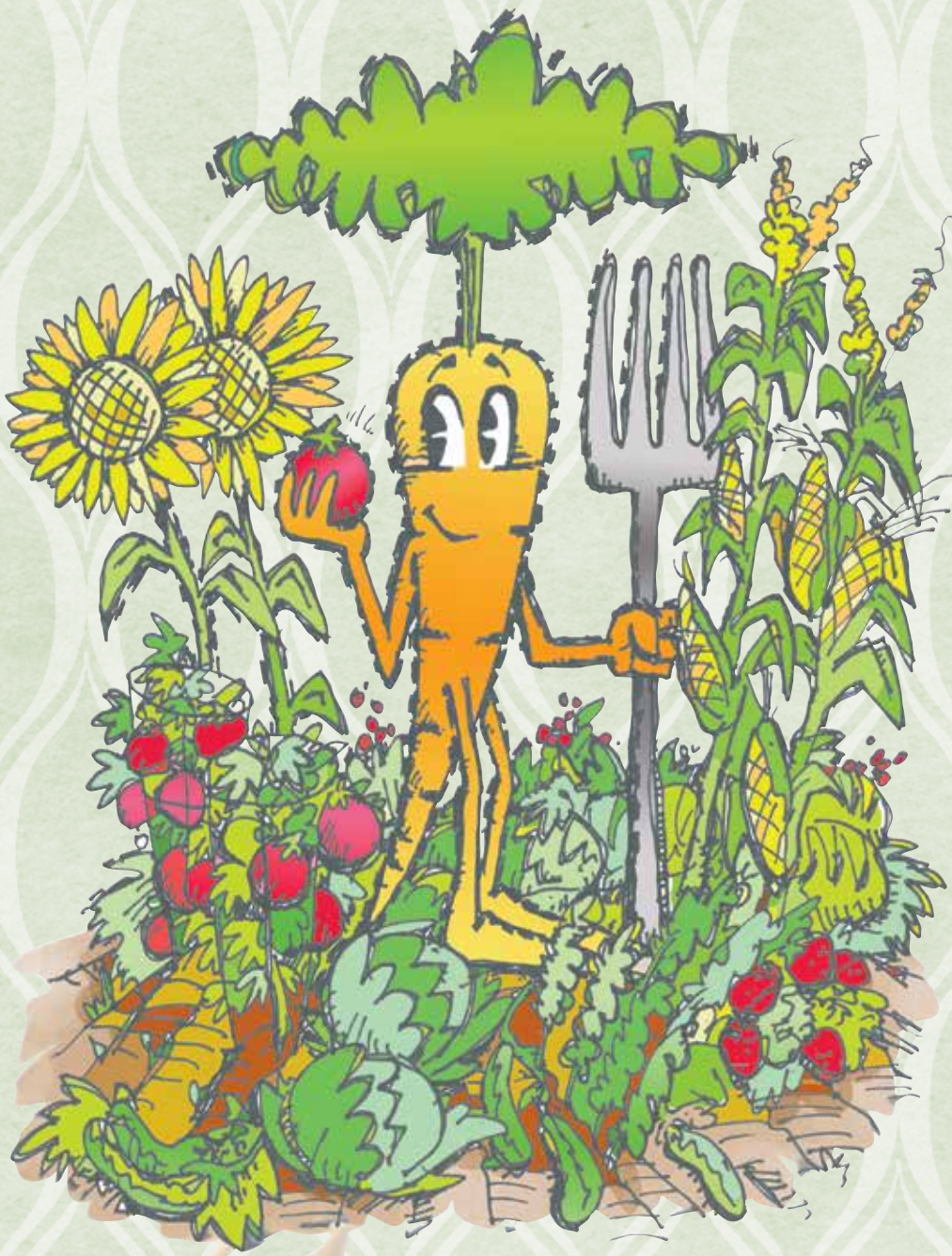
## Spotlight: The Community Food Programs Team

The Food Gatherers Community Food Programs (CFP) team is responsible for overseeing more than 150 partner programs on the front line of hunger relief. The department is headed by Manager Markell Miller, MPH, and Coordinator LeRonica Roberts, with staffing from our AmeriCorps VISTAs and public health interns. The CFP team trains, supports and monitors our partners to ensure that our neighbors have access to a variety of nutritious foods in their community.

CFP team members: Rachel Caty, Erin Freeman, LeRonica Roberts, Markell Miller, Diana Beltrán, Kristie Khatibi, Laura Alexander

# Agricultural Initiatives: Growing the Good

The growing season is upon us, and Food Gatherers is busy procuring a bounty of fresh vegetables to distribute to our partner programs, dedicated to nourishing our neighbors in need of food assistance. Whether you are a novice gardener or a seasoned farmer, there is an **Agricultural Initiative** for you:



## **Plant a Row for the Hungry:**

All community gardeners are encouraged to dedicate a portion of their plots to grow food for Food Gatherers. Tens of thousands of pounds of produce are donated every year from home and community gardens. One of our biggest participants is the Women's Huron Valley Correctional Facility Horticulture Program, an educational program where women learn to grow organic foods at the prison. Last year, these dedicated women donated nearly 20,000 pounds!

**Faith and Food:** More than 30 local congregations donate at least half of the produce grown in their gardens to our hunger relief efforts. Faith and Food gives congregants the chance to actively make a difference in the lives of people who struggle to afford the healthy foods they need. In May, we distributed 2,000 seedlings to our congregation partners.

## **Food Gatherers Gathering Farm:**

Under the careful supervision of our own Staff Farm Manager Britt Keene, volunteers and staff tend a half-acre plot to harvest thousands of pounds of tomatoes, beans, melons and greens.

...dedicated  
to **nourishing** our  
**neighbors...**

## **Donations of produce are accepted**

between 9AM-5PM, with extended hours on Wednesdays until 7PM,  
at Food Gatherers' warehouse, 1 Carrot Way, Ann Arbor, MI 48105.

**For more information, call 734-761-2796**

**or email [info@foodgatherers.org](mailto:info@foodgatherers.org).**

# Kindness Counts: Food Gatherers Healthy School Pantry in Action

This year, Food Gatherers Healthy School Pantry Program distributed 120 Kitchen Kits to low-income families at schools in Washtenaw County, where the majority of students qualify for free- or reduced-price school meals. The kits, funded through a Proctor & Gamble grant, included a cutting board, vegetable peeler, garlic powder, cumin, Italian seasoning, and canola oil in a reusable grocery bag donated by Whole Foods. The Kitchen Kit distributions accompanied the regular monthly produce distributions organized by Food Gatherers with help from the Junior League of Ann Arbor and Feeding America.

Along with the kit distribution, we offered fun, educational lessons, including a food tasting that illustrated how to use their new Kitchen Kit supplies and recipes to help them prepare produce. One Brick Elementary parent stated that the tastings "broadened my son's love of fruits and vegetables."

Parents and children alike were enthusiastic over the kitchen supplies. A Perry Early Learning Center parent explained that her new Kitchen Kit allows her family to "do more tasks together." The families responded to the produce distributions and their new Kitchen Kits with grateful smiles and overwhelming gratitude. Another parent remarked, "I hope to one day pay the kindness forward." We love to hear that!



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**President/CEO**  
Eileen Spring

## Upcoming Events:

### Hunger Action Month September 2015



Established by Feeding America, the national network of food banks, Hunger Action Month is a reminder to everyone that hunger exists – in your nation, your state, and your community. Every September, learn more about food insecurity and what you can do to fight hunger!

### Vampires' Ball Friday, October 30, 2015



Save the spooky date for Food Gatherers' fall fundraising event at Zingerman's Comman Farms. Enjoy dinner, dancing and Halloween shenanigans, with all proceeds to benefit our Community Kitchen and Job Training Program.



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