

Interweaving generosity with justice.

A MESSAGE FROM CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, THOMAS REYNOLDS

As Washingtonians, we live in tents, trailers, urban flats, suburban homes, farmsteads, public housing – a wide variety of housing stock that is indicative of our broad spectrum of financial security in this State. Where we live is an indicator of what we can afford to eat, what facilities we have to store and prepare foods, and the conditions in which we are navigating the daily routine of feeding ourselves and those we care for.

I deeply appreciate that neighbors here in Washington have a strong sense of community and continually practice the sharing of resources when households experience scarcity. This is the type of community I want to contribute to and be a part of – a generous and just world where everyone experiences sufficiency without the specter of hunger.

When we are in position to give – and I believe everyone is in this position at times throughout our days as we all have areas of abundance and we all have areas of deficit – I think it is important to connect to our interwovenness with each other.

To be driven by and fed with a sense that we all benefit when we all have enough. To give from a place of connection, rather than out of pity or societal pressure or guilt. I am reminded of Aboriginal activist Lilla Watson's quote, "If you have come here to help me, you are wasting your time, but if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together."

We all want to be seen, heard, known, listened-to, respected, cared for, connected with – by interweaving generosity with justice, we are creating a society in which all can experience sufficiency at the dinner table.

Best regards,

Thomas



SPRING: GROWING & THRIVING



Spring is a time of recovery and replenishment—after a long winter when the cold starts to subside, foliage starts sprouting and new growth begins. However, for plants to bear fruit, they must be in a supportive environment. Seeds need water, sunlight, and rich soil to take root and thrive. The work of Northwest Harvest is more than supplying nutritious meals to those who need them – it calls on all of us to act so everyone has a chance to take root and grow. How do we create an equitable food system where everyone has the opportunity to thrive? We look to where awareness and action converge.

With surging food prices and the cessation of critical government programs, a hunger crisis is a real threat to many people in Washington. Supply chain disruptions and soaring fuel prices have contributed to Northwest Harvest's food inventory being down 80% from last year, and why we increased our purchasing budget by \$2.5 million to serve this great need.

Northwest Harvest is responding to the recovery of families and individuals across Washington by replenishing our food inventory to help families thrive. As always, we recognize that building a sustainable future takes a shared effort, collective awareness, and joint action. We are contributing to this future through advocacy for just policies, through community building across the state, and through the collective action of our supporters. This has culminated to reducing hunger in households over the last three years – from 1 in 8 to 1 in 12.

Can you help us build an environment for others to grow and thrive? Let us work together towards our shared vision of ending hunger.



MY NEIGHBOR'S TABLE

The Pacific Northwest is a beautiful place full of so many wonderful cultures and with that, lots of great food. Northwest Harvest wants to honor those we call our neighbors, while offering a quick look into their culture and bringing us closer to understanding the importance of food as a right. Now, every month you can look forward to an amazing recipe gathered from all corners of our beautiful state to make at home. Dive into flavor and learn about our communities while recreating some staple dishes and cultural favorites.

Scan the QR code with your phone or tablet to view the full recipe on our blog! And don't forget to follow us on social media @NWHarvest to make sure you don't miss out on any of these recipes! If you are really proud of your creation please tag us on our social media and show everyone! Hope you enjoy these recipes from all of us at Northwest Harvest and from all over the Pacific Northwest!

JOLLOF
RICE



The Problem is Solvable: Feeding Feasible Feasts and Community Solutions

"They call me the barrier buster," says Angel Swanson, founder and leader of Feeding Feasible Feasts, a wry smile on her face.

"I just don't know how to take 'no' for an answer."

Feeding Feasible Feasts is a non-profit organization, started in 2016, offering food relief, community outreach, and nutrition education services to Pierce, Thurston, and King County. Their team focuses on addressing community hunger through low or no-barrier programming, including:

- **Food hubs:** Free-standing weather and rodent-resistant structures that are stocked daily with refrigerated items as well as shelf-stable options, accessible 24/7, solar-powered and located in areas with fewer food resources.
- **Bulk food delivery:** This enables partner organizations to tailor their food delivery methods to fit their needs.
- **Custom box program:** Food selections are custom chosen by the partner organization or its end users.
- **Customizable food and commodity support and program development:** These services are appropriate for schools and other large service agencies looking to address food insecurity.

The designs for the food hubs were initially drafted by Angel and built by her husband years ago. Though the hubs are stocked every day, they do not purchase food to distribute - everything is either donated or gleaned (traditionally, gleaning is thought of as picking surplus or fallen fruit and vegetables in fields and orchards. Today, the term also includes the practice of food recovery by collecting and distributing unused food from retail outlets).



Before the food hubs existed, the food Angel shared with her community was grown in her own garden. Her family tends over 9,000 square feet of garden and when they had more produce than they could eat themselves, they put the extra food on a table on a busy cross street with a sign encouraging people to take what they needed. Word got out, and more and more people started arriving to collect the extra produce. Eventually they ran an extension cord down the neighbor's driveway so they could keep refrigerated items next to the table. Then that refrigerator needed a platform to sit on. Eventually, the prototype of the food hubs was created. Now the food hubs serve 150-179 cars a day on average.

Angel and her family also teach skills and classes to marginalized communities in their home: topics range from canning, to farming basics, to foraging, to processing chicken for consumption. Angel knows that knowledge does not automatically change systems, but empowering communities to take full advantage of their resources is important. Two of the tenets that guide the work of Feeding Feasible Feasts is that there is a deep, painful, and relevant relationship between hunger, nutrition and basic human needs and that barriers to food, nutrition relief, basic housing, basic commodities, and education can be overcome.



Angel has a personal connection to hunger. In the 60s, when Angel was attending school in Chicago, there was no free school breakfast and lunch program, so she would go home for lunch every day. "I had rice and Spam for lunch every day one year," she recalls. "The hardest part for me as a young girl was missing lunch and recess with my peers. I missed the opportunity for play, I missed that social aspect because I didn't eat lunch at school."

Her own experiences with hunger as a child have contributed to her approach to her current work, especially partnering closely with schools and Head Start programs. Feeding Feasible Feasts currently has partnerships with Fife, Bethel, Sumner, and Puyallup School District, as well as a relationship with Bates College (a technical college that houses and sponsors several Head Start programs).

What's next for Angel and Feeding Feasible Feasts? They are working on opening a second warehouse to increase the amount of food they can store and distribute. The organization is also one of the recipients of a grant from Kaiser Permanente to do a study on food insecurity in the unincorporated areas in Pierce County. These areas do not have the same access to resources from the city, generally lack public transportation, and have large communities of color. Part of Angel's work is to "bring justice to these places" by providing resources and targeted community outreach. "How do we figure out how to appropriately service these areas in a way that's sustainable? This is a solvable problem, we just have to commit to it."

If you are interested in learning more about Feeding Feasible Feasts or making a gift, please visit their website: feedingfeasiblefeastsllc.org.

EVENTS

WASHINGTON
WESTERN | CENTRAL | EASTERNMore events and up-to-the-minute details at: northwestharvest.org

GIVEBIG 2023 | Spring is finally here, and with it comes the excitement and momentum of GiveBIG – Washington Gives' annual statewide fundraising campaign begins April 20th and will culminate with a 48-hour giving event on May 2nd and 3rd. Because food justice needs all of us, this year we encourage you to learn about and support grassroots organizations that are led by communities often left behind as a result of systemic injustices – particularly Black, Indigenous and People of Color organizations working to end hunger and financial insecurity. Check out this list of our partner organizations within the Food Access Network and give BIG to these groups! Link: northwestharvest.org/our-work/food-access-network/.

On behalf of our community, thank you for your endless dedication to ending hunger in Washington. Have a great GiveBIG 2023!

IT TAKES MORE THAN FOOD TO END HUNGER: FOOD JUSTICE WEBINAR – SPONSORED BY PCC COMMUNITY MARKETS: Wednesday, May 17, 2023, 4:30pm PT, Zoom Webinar | Northwest Harvest recognizes that hunger and poverty are rooted in systemic oppression. We envision an equitable society where everyone can access the resources required to reach their full potential. We are unflinching in our work to transform an unjust food system into one that is more responsive and accountable to the communities most impacted by discrimination.

Join Northwest Harvest CEO Thomas Reynolds, Director of Community Engagement Jeanie Chunn, and other food justice advocates for a panel discussion focused on food justice, and the systems that need to change to create a more equitable food system. Register at: bit.ly/NWHWebinarFoodJustice

Fruitvale Community Market Grand Opening

This spring, Northwest Harvest will open its 4,000-square-foot neighborhood market on Fruitvale Blvd in Yakima.

The Fruitvale Community Market will allow shoppers to have an experience similar to that of any grocery store, except no payment is required at the end. In this model shoppers get to be engaged in their in-store experience. Searching bins of fresh fruits to find the perfect apple, perusing the refrigerator to find the crispiest head of lettuce, and finally leaving the store to go home and prepare a meal for their families. Through this model, people are customers and allowed to shop with dignity.

"The truth is hunger doesn't have a certain look or demographic: hunger can happen to anyone. Hunger hurts all of us; ending hunger will take all of us. No one should feel ashamed or fear asking for help, and this model removes the stigma of hunger and strengthens our sense of community."

-Christina Wong, Director of Public Policy & Advocacy

Over the last few months conversations around the cost of produce like eggs has stirred the discourse surrounding consumers' buying habits, which ultimately influenced where they shopped. The free grocery store model will actively make it possible for nutritious foods to be more accessible. Food will be given freely with no questions asked or documentation required.

"We have been working tirelessly to bring this resource to the Yakima Valley. We are thankful to the many Yakima-based businesses our donors and supporters from across the state who helped this center move from vision to reality. This market allows us to align with our overarching goal of helping to put a dent in food insecurity across Washington state."

- Laura Perez Hamilton, Chief Advancement Officer

Hunger Action Day 2023: Growing Food Justice Through Collective Action



On February 7, Northwest Harvest had the honor of supporting Hunger Action Day at the State Capitol in Olympia. We worked in collaboration with the Anti-Hunger and Nutrition Coalition (AHNC) and partner organizations around Washington to put on this annual event. Hunger Action Day is a lobbying day for residents from across the state to meet with their representatives and talk about anti-hunger and anti-poverty legislation.

The AHNC have been hosting Hunger Action Day for nearly 20 years, and this was our best year yet! Over 120 people from across Washington attended in-person and at least 20 more joined us online. Constituents joined us this year from 71 different hunger-relief or community partner organizations representing 37 of 49 different legislative districts. Our community turned out, from Port Orchard to Spokane!

We cannot understate the power of our collective voice, as we were able to have 73 meetings throughout the day, all with different state legislators. This means that half of our state legislators heard about anti-hunger priorities from their constituents, and the impacts have already been visible this session.

This year, we focused our advocacy efforts on providing school meals at no cost for all students in Washington, Hunger Free Campuses to ensure that college and community college students meet their basic needs for food and other essential needs, investing more funding in the Fruit & Vegetable Incentives Program to increase affordability of nutritious food, and increasing support for We Feed Washington and our emergency food system.

We also added an early action budget request to our primary agenda: HB 1784. Since "emergency allotments" to SNAP benefits ended on March 1, at a time when inflation is still at record high levels and food banks are struggling with significantly lower inventory, there is a need for hunger relief. This bill proposes \$28 million dollar investments in: food banks statewide, matching dollars when SNAP is used to buy fruits and vegetables, and senior meals.

If you are interested in reading our weekly legislative updates and stay current on what's going on during the session, check out our blog on our website!



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Interested in learning more about working for Northwest Harvest? Check out our job openings at northwestharvest.org/careers.

OUR DONORS ARE ON THE DEAN'S LIST FOR THEIR FINANCIAL SAVVY

Over the past four years we've been watching the growth of lifetime giving from Qualified Charitable Contributions and legacy gifts where Northwest Harvest is named one of the beneficiaries of the deceased's retirement plan such as a 401(k) or a traditional IRA. The growth of these gifts show the savvy of our donors.

The Qualified Charitable Distributions gifts represent donors who've reached 70 ½ years of age and have a Traditional IRA Account. Each year these owners can gift up to \$100,000 total to their favorite nonprofit organizations.

The money is transferred directly by the IRA sponsor (for example, Fidelity, Vanguard, etc.) to the nonprofit. There is no tax due by the donor, nor is there a charitable deduction. The beauty is that if you had received the money first, you would have owed taxes and it may have put you in a higher tax bracket and affected your Medicare payment levels.

The legacy gifts represent gifts from those who have passed and wanted to remember Northwest Harvest in their estates.

As a 501(c)3 Northwest Harvest does not pay any taxes on these funds received. If that IRA money had been left to an individual, at some point income taxes would be due from the recipient.



If you would like to learn more about these types of gifts, please email Anne, Senior Planned Giving Officer at annek@northwestharvest.org; or, call her at 206.390.6094. Check our Planned Giving website resource page on our website: plannedgiving.northwestharvest.org.

Coordinated Care Spotlight

Building community is essential to ending hunger – that's why we are grateful to partners like Coordinated Care whose vision is to transform the health of the community—one person at a time. They provide healthcare services to more than 280,000 members across Washington state with Apple Health (Medicaid) and are the only managed care organization that covers children and youth in foster care.

Coordinate Care's community giving values propel the work of food justice by investing in communities and igniting systemic change. Coordinated Care acknowledges that access to nutritious food is essential for health and wellness. Our shared effort to reduce hunger in Washington is emboldened by their investment in our new facilities in Yakima. Coordinated Care has been a pillar of support for Northwest Harvest since 2020. They were early contributors to the construction of our new facilities in Yakima, the Northwest Harvest Distribution Center and Fruitvale Community Market. We look forward to welcoming Coordinated Care into the Market's Resource Room, a space where shoppers can receive information about available services, such as healthcare, medical care, and housing. Transforming access in Washington by reducing barriers to nutritious food and affordable healthcare is a critical step to fostering thriving communities, and we are thrilled to be partnered with Coordinated Care.

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