



the
**GIVING
GROVE**



OUR MISSION

Our mission is to develop replicable models for edible tree gardens, facilitate the implementation of those models by bringing together the needed resources, and provide a portion of the produce from each tree garden to feed those in need.

Edible Tree Gardening is an ecologically and sustainably grown food system based on planting fruits, nuts, berries, brambles and edible perennial crops from each tree garden to feed those in need.

The Giving Grove is a program of Kansas City Community Gardens (KCCG). KCCG's mission is to assist low-income households and community groups in the Kansas City metropolitan area to produce vegetables and fruit from garden plots located in backyards, vacant lots, and at community sites. KCCG began in 1979 as the Metropolitan Lutheran Ministry's "Community Garden Project," an initiative started to help low-income families save money on grocery bills. In 1985, the organization became incorporated as an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. For more than thirty years, KCCG's programming has empowered community and backyard gardeners throughout the Kansas City metropolitan area to improve nutrition and food security, reduce food costs, prevent obesity and other health risks, and promote locally grown and sustainable food. To learn more about KCCG's work, please visit www.kccg.org

HISTORY

The Giving Grove was founded in 2011 by three of the current Board members: Kevin Birzer, Greg Finkle and Ray Makalous. Deeply concerned for the growing number of hungry people and seeking a way to provide more sustainable nutrient-rich food, these men began exploring the idea of creating edible tree gardens across the metro area in order to feed the hungry.

Undertaking a year of research and planning, the expanded six-person core team worked to move The Giving Grove from concept to reality. Leveraging the expertise of noted horticulturists, nutrition experts, educational resources and landscape architecture firms, The Giving Grove team developed a business model founded on the principals of organic growing techniques, giving a portion of each harvest to the hungry and site stewardship. The active involvement and training of stewards and apprentices to provide them with the skills needed to care for the tree garden is fundamental to The Giving Grove model. The Giving Grove partnered with the Kansas City Community Garden on its first project and recognized the similarity of each organization's mission. Seeking to complement not duplicate - existing resources, The Giving Grove is in the process of organizing as a legal affiliate of the Kansas City Community Garden.

Another critical early partnership was established with the Society of St. Andrew (SoSA), a local hunger-relief organization that focuses on gleaning fields and orchards after the harvest. SoSA West has committed to glean produce at Giving Grove sites and to take the produce to food pantries, kitchens or food banks at the end of each growing season.

To implement the business model, The Giving Grove hired Rob Reiman as Executive Director, Ray Makalous as Director of Outreach, and Matt Bunch as Lead Horticulturist. With personnel in place, The Giving Grove team began to line up projects for the spring and fall of 2013.

The Giving Grove tree gardens have been located on abandoned urban lots, on church and school property, on the grounds of other non-profit organizations, at senior living facilities and in green spaces within urban apartment complexes. The Giving Grove has partnered with individuals, faith congregations, community organizations, schools and businesses to plant over 340 fruit trees and 180 berry bushes. With the inaugural planting year drawing to a close, The Giving Grove will have installed 21 micro-orchard projects – four times the number of sites originally envisioned for year one.

The Giving Grove executive team now includes Kevin Birzer, Greg Finkle, Becky Johnston, Ray Makalous, Lisa Ousley, Jill Quigley, Rob Reiman and Ben Sharda.

A MESSAGE FROM THE GIVING GROVE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



We live in a country with abundant resources, yet hunger exists for over 50 million Americans. As a nation of just over 300 million, hunger touches 1 in 6 of us – including more than 1 in 5 children. I’m certain that you, like me, find these statistics staggering and disheartening. Hunger is a complex problem. Good nutrition, particularly in the first three years of life, is the foundation for a child’s future physical and mental health, academic achievement, and economic productivity. Unfortunately, food insecurity threatens that critical foundation.

Hunger has become a long-term condition of poverty across the country and in our community. In our metro area, more than 66,000 people visit food pantries and feeding agencies weekly. More than half of them are children and seniors. In America, the price of processed food had dropped dramatically over the last 30 years, while the prices of vegetable and fruits have skyrocketed.

Because low nutrient, high calorie food is often the cheapest, poverty often brings with it a strange bedfellow – obesity and the associated chronic diseases including diabetes and hypertension.

I am immensely excited about the Giving Grove program because it offers a sustainable long-term solution to this complex set of problems. Woven into this program equips and inspires neighborhoods to learn how to develop their own alternative, nutritious food system. This is urban agriculture at its best. We are working with neighborhoods, schools and faith-based organizations to grow apples, peaches, pears, cherries, a variety of nuts and berries and some other less common but nutritious produce like Jujubes and figs.

This represents our very first annual report. I hope you will join me in celebrating our collective success. If you find our work compelling, we have many ways to get involved. First, we, like all non-profit agencies, deliver as much as we can based on our financial resources. If you can invest in our future, we would be grateful. Second, if you live in a neighborhood that would benefit from having its own healthy food system of fruits, berries and/or nuts, please call us (816) 931-3877 or go to our website and complete the “contact us” form. Third, we continue to need volunteers to help our neighborhoods plant their trees. Once again, call us or check out our website. Let’s solve our hunger and nutrition problem together.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Rob Reiman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Rob Reiman, Executive Director

DEVELOPMENT - FINANCIALS

Due to some very charitable giving by a small number of vested individuals and families and three generous grants, we have had a strong financial start-up year.

The three grants were received from:

- Unified Government – Hollywood Casino Grant Fund
- The Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce Centurions Legacy Project, and
- The Mariner Foundation Fund
This funding allowed us to exceed our expenditures for the short fiscal year (January through September), and position us solidly for the new fiscal year beginning October 1, 2013. Since the start of the new fiscal year, we are also honored to announce the support of two additional important foundations:

Notification has also been received of two additional grants which commence in the next fiscal year, including:

- The Healthcare Foundation of Kansas City
- John C. Griswold Foundation

Board Membership

Kevin Birzer, Chairman	Ray Makalous
Greg Finkle	Lisa Ousley
Becky Johnston	Rob Reiman
Jill Quigley	Ben Sharda

Fiscal Year End Statement of Activities:

Kansas City Community Gardens, Inc The Giving Grove Program FYE Statement of Activities October 2012 through September 2013	
Revenue	
Supporting Individuals	111,125.00
Supporting Businesses/Foundation	27,578.00
Project Reimbursements	<u>3,515.75</u>
Total Revenue	142,218.75
Cost of Goods Sold	
Cost of goods sold	6,401.55
Expense	
Salaries	63,893.91
Insurance - Employ Health	3,990.89
FICA & Unemployment Tax	5,192.80
Professional services	888.01
General & Admin	6,095.64
Garden Construction	1,908.90
KCCG Support	<u>13,019.23</u>
Total Expense	<u>94,989.38</u>
Change in Net Assets	<u>40,827.82</u>

Pre Audited Financials

OUR TEAM ON THE GROUND

We began our official operations on January 1, 2013 with two salaried employees, Rob Reiman as the Executive Director and Ray Makalous as Director of Outreach. We then leveraged the horticultural capabilities of Lani Meyer on an interim basis, until our permanent Horticulturist Matt Bunch was hired on August 15, 2013. Matt brings enormous fruit, berry and nut expertise to our operations. He was responsible for the Powell Gardens' Heartland Harvest Garden from its inception and installation. The Harvest Garden represents one of the largest edible landscapes in the country. We are simply delighted to have Matt on board.

A HORTICULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

While developing the Giving Grove business model, we depended on the expertise of the horticulture workshop participants.

Holistic Organic Approach

Our subject matter experts told us that, in order to manage our sites with a holistic organic approach, we must use the proper plant material. A series of workshops helped us collectively assemble a short list of 'accepted' plant varieties based upon 1) disease resistance, 2) production, 3) nutrition, 4) flavor, 5) low overall maintenance requirements, and 6) storage life. While there was significant discussion about a number of varieties on the "fringe" of the criteria, the group agreed to maintain a short list to maximize the probability of success with our early orchards. Each year, we will reevaluate the varieties and root stocks we offer, based upon our field observations and additional input from subject matter experts across the country.

This year we also dialogued with Andy Lipkis, the founder and President of LA-based TreePeople and his former operations manager who now resides locally in Kansas City. Andy began planting trees in Los Angeles as a fifteen-year-old and founded TreePeople in 1973. Our conversation revolved around Andy's lessons learned as he began making fruit trees available to the public in 1983. Our main take-away from our conversation with this environmental visionary was that continuing stewardship of the trees was critical to successful long term fruit production; he assured us that our Giving Grove stewardship model would increase the survival and production of our gardens.

Faith Relations

In this inaugural year, the faith community has been a strong partner in advancing the mission of the Giving Grove. Numerous organizations have partnered with us to establish giving groves; many others are in the planning stage. We were especially grateful for the good work of MORE2, which recently convened metro area faith communities to advance "health equity" within our urban core. As a result, five congregations expressed interest in establishing a Giving Grove site.

We continue to partner with the Johnson County Health Department to systematically approach communities of faith in that county about creating Giving Groves as a source of produce for the county's food pantries and kitchens.

New Partner - Habitat for Humanity

We are always looking for additional ways to advance our mission. To that end, we have reached tentative agreement with The Heartland Habitat for Humanity to incorporate The Giving Grove fruit trees and related edible landscaping into Heartland Habitat's new home development projects.

Each new home constructed by Habitat within the Heartland boundaries will have disease resistant, edible landscaping incorporated into their house plan and the new home owners will receive a specific curriculum designed to provide the skills needed to care for the plantings.

SUCCESS STORIES



Independence Habitat ReStore

With the support of the Independence Health Department, Habitat for Humanity ReStore in Independence has begun a garden project to help provide the community with fresh fruits and vegetables. Starting with a few raised beds, Giving Grove helped expand their production by adding 40 raspberry, blueberry, and blackberry shrubs. The beds will be maintained and harvested by community gardeners as well as Restore staff and volunteers, and the berry patch will be a u-pick for community members. Another unique aspect of the garden is a passively heated greenhouse shared by those who want to start their own seedlings. Future plans are to add more raised beds including strawberries from the Giving Grove. Currently, local Boy Scout groups, high school students, the Independence Garden Club, and Health Department and Restore volunteers have been actively involved with the expansion and upkeep of the garden. With a true community effort, the Habitat ReStore in Independence is going beyond just providing affordable shelters and healthy food.



St. Paul's United Methodist Church of Lenexa

St. Paul's Edible Tree and Vegetable Garden project is a program sponsored by the congregations' environmental ministry team - Being Environmental Stewards Together (BEST). St. Paul's has had a very active hunger ministry for many years supporting monthly Argentine Food Kitchen meals, donations to three local food pantries (Metropolitan Avenue Methodist Church, Johnson County Multi-services Center Food Pantry, and Shawnee Community Services), delivering meals to the homebound through Meals on Wheels, as well as providing meals for families in the Interfaith Hospitality Network. The fruit and vegetable community garden is a natural extension to the hunger ministry. One of the key objectives is to raise the nutritional profile of the congregations donated food to the local food pantries. The garden includes five dwarf varieties of fruit, 48 feet of blackberry and 8 beds of vegetable (with 4 more planned). The infrastructure also includes a 500 gallon water storage system utilizing the church's pond water, a new garden shed, and a 500 gallon rain harvest system.



Jerusalem Farms

Jerusalem Farm is a Catholic intentional community located in Kansas City, Missouri, built on the four cornerstones of Prayer, Community, Service, and Simplicity. Volunteers learn about the importance of sustainability and stewardship of the Earth while tending to home repairs in the local area. Jerusalem Farms recently installed their first community garden including chickens and, with the partnership of The Giving Grove, 5 fruit trees. Working hard to serve their community, they are seeking to secure other deserted land in the city and develop them into community gardens and orchards to help produce food for the neighborhoods.



Conception Community Garden

Conception Community Garden was started by the Oak Park Community group at the New Rising Star Missionary Baptist Church. Their vision is to bring “new life” into the neighborhood by creating a space not only to grow food but also to share it through community harvest events, vegetable swaps, and potlucks. Spring 2013 brought on big growth as they transformed an empty parking lot into a community garden space and a grassy hill into a Giving Grove ‘edible tree garden.’ A big focus of their continuous building is to use repurposed materials including old tires, cut up water totes, collected wood, etc. They also have a 7,000 gal tank harvesting rainwater from the church roof. With the 28 raised beds, 26 fruit trees, 22 berry shrubs, and 300 strawberry plants added to their existing vegetable beds, trees, and chickens, Conception will produce an abundance of healthy food for their neighborhood today and years ahead.



Mitzvah Garden KC

Starting with just a few raised beds at Village Shalom, The Mitzvah Garden KC, also located at The Temple, Congregation B’nai Jehudah, expanded into a 15,000 sq. ft. gathering, growing, and learning space for the Jewish community. Focusing on their goal to provide healthy food to those less fortunate, they donate over 8000 lbs. of produce yearly to the Jewish Family Services food pantry, Blue Valley Multi Service Center and Grandview Assistance Program. This spring, The Giving Grove with volunteers of all ages planted 8 fruit trees to expand the diversity and sustainable food availability of the garden. Beyond raising awareness about helping the hungry, the Mitzvah Garden strives to be a peaceful, exploratory environment to celebrate and learn both spiritually and secularly. Though they’ve continued to expand their garden, their true motto is: “It takes a garden to grow a community.”



Wayandotte Countians Against Crime

Wyandotte Countians Against Crime (WCAC) is an organization in Central Kansas City, Kansas dedicated to creating and supporting projects and events that help stop crime and start beautifying their neighborhood. WCAC partnered with The Giving Grove to create an ‘edible tree garden’ in a road intersection median. With the vision of providing a space for local neighbors to gather and grow food, they planted 22 fruit trees and 21 berry shrubs. Future plans include installing raised vegetable beds and a gazebo. Local neighbors are excited to see a once bare ground that collected trash transform into an attractive, positive socializing and food producing park.

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WHERE WE PLANT

From the outset of our visioning workshop in October of 2011, we decided to focus on addressing hunger/nutrition needs across our own metropolitan area recognizing that we have need in nearly every community. John Hornbeck delivered a powerful and compelling message at our December 2012 meeting sharing statistics that surprised even the experienced nutrition and hunger professional. In workshops, we identified three paths for identifying potential planting sites:

1.

We recognized that Kansas City Community Gardens has a rich set of relationships with communities across the metro area and that many of those existing community vegetable gardens can potentially add fruit and berries. As expected, Ben Sharda and his staff offered keen insight regarding project opportunities, many of which have already turned into Giving Grove sites. In addition, Sharon Goldstein and Bobby Wright became wonderful sources of new leads through the Community Partner Gardens as part of their "Get Growing" initiative.

2.

Longer term, we hope to take greater advantage of the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping technology, to help us target areas of greatest need. The Mid-America Regional Council (MARC) provided us with an initial set of custom developed maps that identify our metropolitan food deserts and the surrounding demographics, layered with schools and faith communities. We thank Donna Martin and her intern, Elizabeth Musoke for this wonderful resource.

3.

We also established a formal "outreach" effort led by Ray Makalous, Director of Outreach. Ray routinely attends the multitude of community development efforts across the city, including the Troost Alliance, Livable Neighborhoods, Kauffman's Million Cups, The Greater Kansas City Food Policy Coalition, the Quarterly Weigh-In, Johnson County's Health Department Quarterly meetings, and serves on the Advisory Board of Society of St. Andrew - West.

CALENDAR 2013 PROJECT SUMMARY

At the conclusion of our fall planting, we will have installed 21 projects for our first year of operations. Of those projects, 57 percent were installed in Jackson County, 29 percent in Wyandotte County and 14 percent in Johnson County. Consequently, that represents 57 percent in Missouri, and 43 percent in Kansas.

OUR STEWARDS AND APPRENTICES

We determined early on that the success of the Giving Grove business model would be highly dependent upon the identification and development of stewards and apprentices for each project site. We are humbled by the outpouring of generosity and commitment from our First Year volunteers.

These stewards have signed up to care for their individual micro-orchard, providing weekly watering during dry spells, pruning in the late winter, winterizing this fall, scouting for any problems throughout the growing season and participating in a series of workshops led by The Giving Grove team. The commitment to attend these workshops has been nothing less than outstanding. We extend our sincere gratitude to our current list of stewards and apprentices:

Jhampi Biswa
Leigh Blumanthal
Starla Brennan
Tom A. Brink
Theo Bunch
Fred Burns
Jacob Ceballos
Ever Ceballos
Juanita Dominguez
Michael Dominguez
Tiffany Dominguez
Andrea Dutt
Kelly Edmister

Paul Escareno
Becky Forest
Eric Garbison
Shelia Grimmett
Sam Harris
Lauren Heidebrecht
Sarah Holmes
Laura Horn
Randy Horn
Jennifer Hurst
Barbara Johnson
Helen Jones
Andrew Kaplan

Sophie Lapp
Laura Lavalley
Larry Lehman
Yolanda McGregor
Tawnya Metzler
Achim Mielke
Nancy Moylan
Matt O'Mally
Jennifer Padberg
Nick Pick
Rachel Pollack
Phyllis Ray
Allison Rozga
Brenda Ruppel

Jordan Schiele
Jessie Schiele
Joanie Shover
Terry Sinclair
George Skells
Ken Sonnenschein
Paul Soptik
Susan Stocking
Erin Stryka
Joy Thomas
Claudia Vines
Scott Willoughby
Bobby Wright
Jennifer Wright

Media Coverage

For our inaugural year, The Giving Grove was featured in a nice blend of local and regional media, including:
Greenability Magazine, "Greenability Challenge", November-December Issue, 2012
Edible KC, Issue 3, Fall Edition 2013, "Little Orchards Everywhere" by Jill Draper
Channel 41 News, October 24, 2013 – Crosslines Project, Highlighting National Food Day

WATCH US GROW

Website: givinggrove.org

Facebook: facebook.com/communitytreegardens

Twitter: twitter.com/givinggrove

Thank You

Thanks to Stark Bro's for partnering to provide fruit trees for our Giving Grove sites, the KAT Nursery for caring for our trees over the summer, and to Design Ranch for the production of this Annual Report.
