



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
March 23, 2020

CONTACT: Rob Reiman, CEO  
The Giving Grove  
(913) 486-2340  
rob@givinggrove.org

#### KANSAS CITY NONPROFIT OPENS AFFILIATE IN MEMPHIS

*Giving Grove orchards provide free fruits, nuts and berries for neighborhoods facing food insecurity*

Kansas City, MO – A Kansas City-based nonprofit serving food insecure communities has opened its fourth national affiliate in Memphis, Tennessee, through a partnership with Memphis Tilth. Launched in 2013, The Giving Grove has 241 orchards (including 188 in Kansas City) that provide free, holistically-grown fruits, nuts and berries for neighborhoods with high rates of food insecurity.

Giving Grove's mission is to provide healthy calories, strengthen community, and improve the urban environment through a nationwide network of sustainable little orchards that dramatically increase access to healthy foods. After finding success with its model in Kansas City, Giving Grove began expanding to other cities with high rates of food insecurity, launching affiliate programs in St. Louis and Omaha in 2017. This month, Memphis joined the network.

Giving Grove co-founder Kevin Birzer, CEO of Tortoise and Giving Grove Board Chair, noted that the entrepreneurial spirit and generosity found in Kansas City allowed Giving Grove to thrive, and that the Board is eager to share the model with other cities facing high rates of food insecurity.

**"We are so grateful to the Kansas City community for nurturing Giving Grove and helping us build an organization that is changing the narrative around hunger," Birzer said.** "Today, we are delighted to partner with Memphis Tilth to share what we've learned and bring the Giving Grove model to another community facing food insecurity."

Giving Grove's expansion plans include launching affiliates in 16 more U.S. cities by 2025. At full implementation, Giving Grove orchards will reach 15% of all food insecure Americans. The typical Giving Grove orchard will produce more than 10,570 servings of holistically-grown, free, healthy foods each year. With a 50-60+ year lifespan, each orchard will produce over its lifetime more than 232,000 servings of food for people in need while sequestering carbon, reducing stormwater runoff, and providing urban tree canopy.

**"I've seen the power of fruit trees inspiring kindness and community across Kansas City," said Sly James, former mayor of Kansas City.** "This proven solution is about to drive transformational change across America, empowering neighborhoods to create sustainable food systems directly in their community. This is urban ag at its finest."

Giving Grove is a winner of the Mid-America Regional Council's Sustainable Success Award for its work to transform the region into "America's Green Region."

**"The Giving Grove is one of our community's most impactful nonprofits," said Tom Jacobs, director of environmental programs for the Mid-America Regional Council.** "Their work exemplifies one of the key tenants of MARC's Regional Infrastructure Framework: establishing solutions which integrate human and social benefits while simultaneously providing ecosystem benefits like clean air and water."

#####

Giving Grove's vision is thousands of little orchards in food insecure urban neighborhoods across the nation, creating a system of local food production that feeds people for decades. Learn more at [www.givinggrove.org](http://www.givinggrove.org).