

LOCAL FOOD RELIEF FUND

April 2020 - January 2021 Report



groundwork

CENTER FOR RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

Groundwork's Local Food Relief Fund

On March 26, 2020, the staff of the Groundwork Center gathered together to determine how Groundwork could best support our northwest lower Michigan community through the COVID-19 pandemic, and, just 11 days later, with the support of our board, advisory council, and many community partners, the Local Food Relief Fund was launched. Groundwork's Local Food Relief Fund brings financial resources to the intersection of local farmers and families in need by providing local food pantries with funds to purchase locally grown foods. The Local Food Relief Fund strives to create long-lasting change in our community's ability to provide high-quality, nutritionally dense foods for vulnerable individuals while also building the local food economy.



Emergency food providers received
100% of the Local Food Relief Funds



Emergency food providers used Local Food Relief
Funds to purchase food from local farms

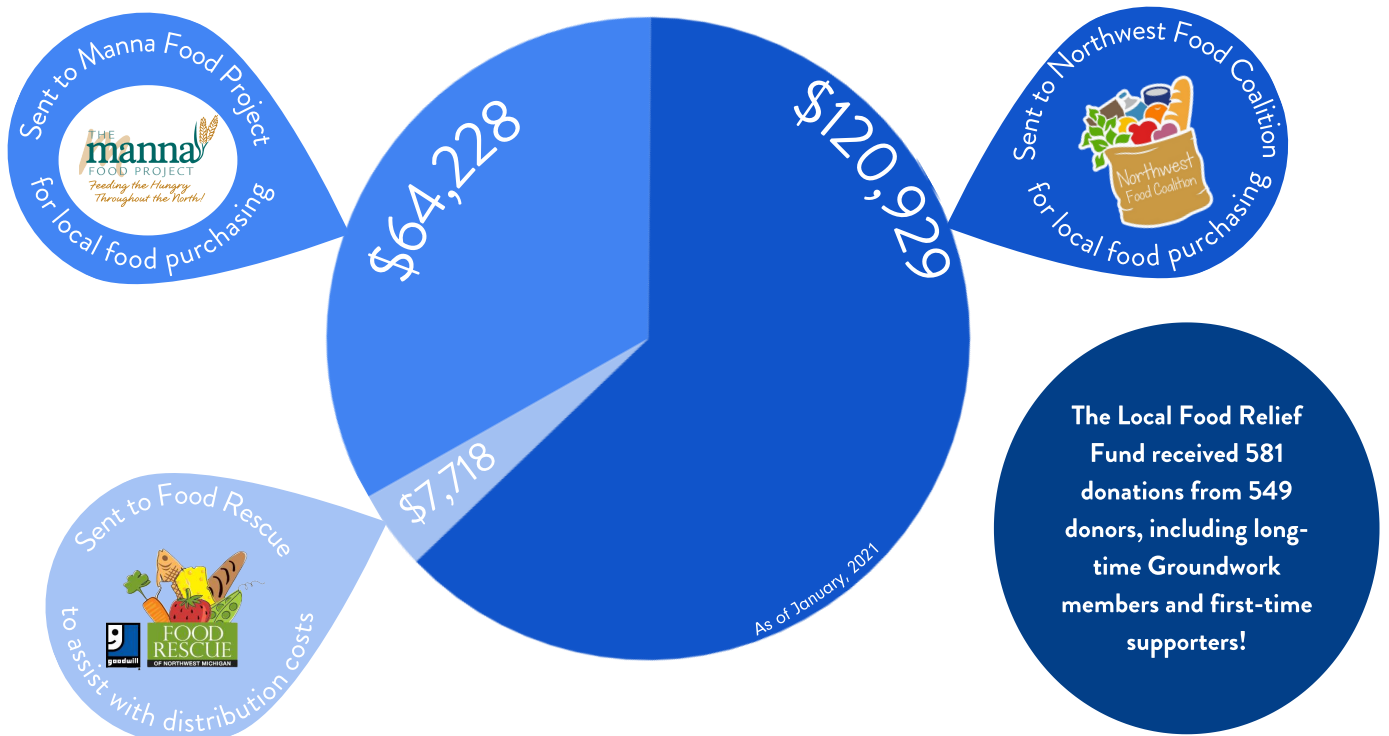


Families in need received
delicious, local food

THANKS TO GENEROUS COMMUNITY SUPPORT

\$192,875

WAS RAISED FOR LOCAL FARMS AND FAMILIES



On the cover: Kafui Okai Adjei, manager of Ziibimijwang Farm in Carp Lake, MI, carries a box of radishes. Ziibimijwang Farm was among the first farms Groundwork contacted to assess the value of launching the Local Food Relief Fund. Thanks to feedback from farms like Ziibimijwang, Groundwork was able to tailor the Local Food Relief Fund around farmer input. KK, as Kafui is commonly called, has spent over 30 years farming and managing farms in Ghana and across northwest-lower Michigan.

As a result of the Local Food Relief Fund,

Manna Food Project
increased local food
purchasing by

43%

The Northwest Food
Coalition increased
local food purchasing by

298%

These increases were built upon past local food purchasing by Manna Food Project and the Northwest Food Coalition.

As of January, 2021



"These certainly have been challenging times, but through the generosity of our community, it has been a most rewarding and impactful effort."

-Kim Baker, Executive Director at Manna Food Project



"The Northwest Food Coalition has gone places we never would've gone without Groundwork."

-Val Stone, Food Coalition Coordinator at Northwest Food Coalition



"Groundwork has provided that critical link in order for us to meet the needs at the time they need to be met."

-Taylor Moore, Manager at Goodwill Northern Michigan's Food Rescue

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit Michigan in March of 2020, Groundwork staff immediately turned to partners at the Northwest Food Coalition, Manna Food Project, and Goodwill Northern Michigan's Food Rescue to assess the community's need and ways in which we might be able to combat the coming economic and public health crisis. Groundwork and partners quickly realized that the pandemic would increase demand at food pantries just as national supply chains faltered. Our region's largest pantries reported soaring prices, purchase limits, and a lack of availability for staple products they depend on to stock their shelves. With nearly two decades of history in advocating for local farmers, Groundwork also recognized the impact the pandemic would have on our region's thriving local food economy.



Chard from Huddleson Farms being distributed at Manna Food Project

Rosebud Bear Schneider - Ziibimijwang Farm



While northwest lower Michigan is fortunate to have a robust community of small, diverse family farms, many depend on direct-to-consumer markets and restaurant sales to support their businesses. With restaurants closed for in-person dining and farmers markets struggling to pivot from in-person sales, Groundwork turned to our long-standing farm partners and inquired as to how we might best assist them in stabilizing their businesses in light of an exceptionally uncertain future. After conferring with our emergency food partners and our farming community, in April 2020, Groundwork launched the Local Food Relief Fund (LFRF), a pandemic response initiative that brought financial resources to the intersection of local farmers and families in need.

Over the course of the last ten months, the Northwest Food Coalition spent nearly \$100,000 and purchased close to 70,000 pounds of healthy, locally grown food to be distributed to its members. The staff of the Manna Food Project purchased 50,170 pounds of healthy, locally grown food from farms over the course of 2020. Together, the Northwest Food Coalition and Manna Food Project provided over 95,000 total pounds of locally grown food (see types of food on pg. 4) to their more than 100 member pantries, meal sites and community mental health centers.



Cabbage from Second Springs Farm on a Food Rescue Truck



Robert MacKenzie, Matt McGuiness, Jessyca Stoepker, and Eric Foster
- Manna Food Project

One farmer showcased the need in light of COVID-19 related shutdowns: "80% of Loma Farm's revenue historically has been from restaurant sales. We stand to be hit very hard by COVID-19 if restaurants remain closed into the summer months. Finding new outlets to sell our produce, including Groundwork's Local Food Relief Fund, is going to be necessary for us to weather this crisis." Groundwork set out to crowdfund \$30,000 to go directly towards the costs of purchasing food from local farmers, and passed through 100% of these funds to three emergency food provider partners. We met our goal in just 24 hours and ultimately raised over \$190,000 for the purchase and distribution of locally grown food in 2020.

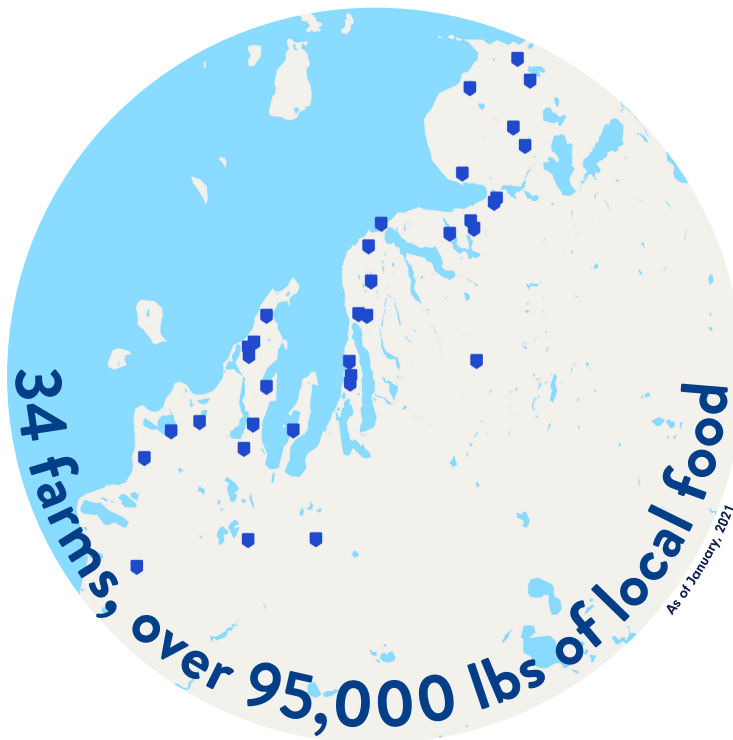
The Local Food Relief Fund allowed emergency food providers to purchase food at market price!



Spinach from Peaceful Valley Farm



Tomatoes from Bear Creek Organic Farm



A box of local produce at Manna Food Project



Asparagus from Norconk Farm

\$1.43 was the average price per pound of local food purchased with the Local Food Relief Fund

Jane Lively,
The Lively Farm

"Growing our collective ability to solve problems to food access and equity in the food system is huge – let's propel this forward and continue it into the future."

David Coveyou,
Coveyou Scenic Farm

"With our restaurant and Farmers Market produce sales likely significantly reduced this year, we can refocus our production to grow large quantities of produce for the many people in need right now...and all certified organic!"

Chelsea Huddleston,
Huddleston Farm

"This partnership meant that we had the opportunity to over-plant, make mistakes, and learn our land without jeopardizing the financial stability of our farm... Selling to food pantries made our first year farming profitable!"

Haley Breniser,
Undertoe Farm

"This funding not only aligns with our farm's mission of getting food in the hands of those who truly need it, but it is also a logical step in a healthy and just food system."

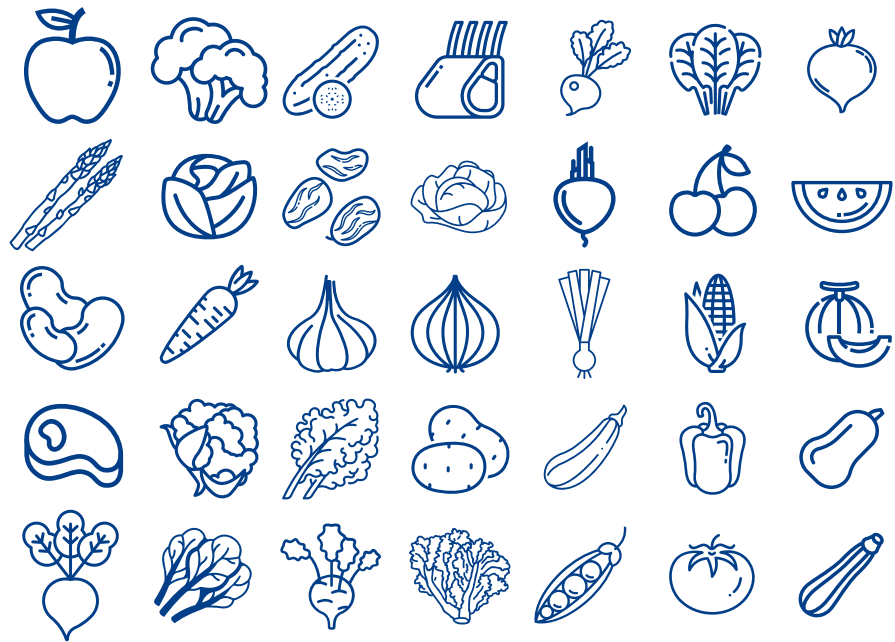
**LOCAL
FOODS**

from

**LOCAL
FARMS**

for

**LOCAL
FAMILIES**



RIPPLE EFFECTS

- New markets have become accessible for local farmers
- Increased community engagement and awareness of food insecurity in northwest Michigan
- Deepened relationships and understanding between farmers and emergency food providers
- Increased community awareness of emergency food system and its strengths and challenges
- More enthusiasm for healthy produce among food pantry administrators, volunteers, and neighbors in need

Reflecting

The COVID-19 pandemic certainly shifted our work plans and priorities in ways we never would have predicted. This crisis allowed Groundwork to solidify our support for food access initiatives in our region. We learned the importance of relationships and brought together community members, local farmers and emergency food providers in a way that met both the existing food insecurity in our region as well as the new challenges brought about by the pandemic. As our community shifts from a crisis response to a longer term vision for food security in northwest Michigan, Groundwork will remain at the intersection of all of these parts of the food system and continue to uplift the creativity, persistence and skills of our farmers and emergency food providers.

Jessyca Stoecker - Manna Food Project



Bailey Samp from Lakeview Hill Farm delivers tomatoes to Food Rescue

and Looking Forward

With partnering emergency food providers across the 10-county region, Groundwork will assess: equity in the distribution of purchased goods while ensuring the sourcing of culturally appropriate products; the farming community's capacity to grow fresh produce, eggs, dairy, and proteins; farmers' preferred means of meeting the market demand. Groundwork will also work with key partners to: determine a total for the next crowdfunding effort; identify infrastructure needs of our partners' capacity to store and deliver healthy food, create action plans, and provide infrastructure stipends; measure and enhance the economic impact of purchases made.

This report was designed by Casey Haggerty. Casey spent two years as Groundwork's FoodCorps AmeriCorps service member before signing on as a contractor. In the summer of 2020, she worked part-time on Ziibimijwang Farm where she helped harvest crops that were purchased with Local Food Relief Funds. Casey believes that everyone deserves access to nutritious, delicious, and local food and will tell anyone who listens that farmers are superstars. She loves all vegetables and enjoys spending time with her horse, Soleil, and beloved cat, Mimi. If you'd like to contact Casey about designing a report for you, you may reach her at caseyw.haggerty@gmail.com.

Thank you

to our partners and donors for making the Local Food Relief Fund a success and supporting our region's farmers and families.

\$5,000+ Consumers Energy - The Esperance Family Foundation - Nancy Gallagher - Bob and Kathleen Garvey - Marcie Meditch - John Murphey - James and sujo Offield - Kean Oh - Petoskey-Harbor Springs Area Community Foundation - Denis and Martha Pierce - Lynnette Rhodes - Michael and Christina Seymour

\$1,000 - \$4,999 Keith and Carol Adler - Lois Bahle and Larry Mawby - John and Rebecca Bercini - Jennie Berkson and David Edelstein - John and Polly Cheney - Cheryl Bartz - Don and Marylou Coe - Community Foundation Gardner Mahalo Fund - Lynne DeMoor and Bill Wilson - Bryce and Paula Dreeszen - Jeffrey and Karen Ford - Green Brick Foundation - Edward Gergosian - David and Deborah Holloway - Honor Bank - Meghan McDermott and Robert McNulty - Jenifer Murray - Karl Pearson - Dilys Tosteson Garcia - Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Grand Traverse - Mary Van Valin - Gini and Wendy von Courter - Kent and Nancy Walton - Cathy Zepelin

\$500 - \$999 Jerry Beasley and Fleda Brown - Dennis and Carole Becker - Maura Brennan and Dan O'Neil - Charles and Nancy Brickman - Charlevoix County Community Foundation - Dean and Diane Conners - Richard and Mollie DaBell - Paul and Christine Deyo - Cynthia Donahey and Art Schoolmaster - John and Virginia Erb - Craig Sharp and Michele Ferencchick - Doug Fuller and Martha Lancaster - Douglas Gage - Oran Hesterman and Lucinda Kurtz - Cheryl Hutchinson - Jeff Layman - Alisyn Malek - MBank - Bill Milliken - Rob and Vee Mossburg - Alan Newton - Oryana Community Co-Op - Todd and Kathy Petersen - Michael Roberts - Ruth Conklin Gallery - Paul and Maureen Smyth - Wendy Wieland - Janet Wolf - James and Colleen Zlydaszyk

\$1 - \$499 Georgia Abbott - Kimberly Albright and Michael Dow - Meagan Alvarado - Parker Ameal - Paula Anderson - Addell Anderson - Cynthia Anderson and Evan Smith - Gary and Mimi Appel - Jan Atallo - Valerie Atkin - Khalil and Jenni Attie - Steve and Jackie Baase - Jennifer Babcock - Robert and Nancy Baglan - Sandy Baker - Judy and Don Barkel - Katherine Bassett - Patricia Bauer - Jerry Beasley and Fleda Brown - Becky Beauchamp - Wendy Becker - Owen Beckley - Doug and Ilene Beers - Michael Behrmann - Jim Belcher - Aaron Bennett and Julie Metty Bennett - Mary Biagini - Holly Bird - Sue Bissell - John Black and Darcy Howe - Ruth Bloomer and Fred Shipman - Onlee Bowden - Sara Boys and Doug Roberts - Stephen and Ruth Brede - Michael and Deborah Brenton - Linda Brick - Jen Brown - Jim and Danielle Bruckbauer - Carole Brumm - Amelia Bueche and Lebeau Potgieter - Camilla Buehler - Michele Burian - Mary Byl - Kathy Calcutt - Highly Cannaco - Jim Carleton - Glen and Pam Carpenter - Gregory and Becky Carpenter - Richard Catts - Glen and Rebecca Chown - Julie and Bill Clark - Richard and Jill Claybour - Timothy and Mary Clulo - Elizabeth Collins - Nancy Cotcamp - Deanna Couture - Gary Cozette and Joe Lada - Tori Craig - Joan D'Argo - Renee Daggars - Bonnie Dankert - Rose David - Joe DeFors and Janis Rygwelski - Maureen Delaney-Lehman - Betty Demers and Marty Jablonski - Laura Dendel - Michael and Connie DePolo - Sandi DeSanti - Matthew Desmond - Michael and Teckla Dettmer - Laurence DeWitt - Kathryn Dindia - Bette Donahue - Chris and Paige Dow - Helen Dowling - Elissa Driker - Rebecca Driker-Ohren - Coleen Durbin-Matrone - Barbara Duvall - Karen Edgley - Trina Edwards - W. 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