

WILLING HANDS

Feeding Hungry Neighbors



A Few Of This Year's Highlights:

- *Willing Hands delivered over 130 tons of nutritious fruit, vegetables and locally baked bread to our neighbors in need during the first three quarters of this year. That's about 74,800 pounds more than in the same period last year.*
- *Willing Hands' Nutrition Education Program expanded its popular series of taste-testings and cooking workshops.*
- *Willing Hands strengthened its Farm Project—a favorite program of our volunteers who enjoy helping us by growing & gathering farm-fresh fruits & vegetables.*
- *Willing Hands renovated a farm building in Norwich to serve as the center of our operations—a place to sort produce and park the van under cover at night.*

FALL NEWSLETTER 2009



Our recipients enjoy selecting their favorite fruits & vegetables

WILLING HANDS DELIVERS

This year, our fifth year of operations, Willing Hands is pleased to report that we are serving more people more nutritious food more efficiently than ever before. Our circle of support grows each year, both in the number of people stepping up to help and the number of people that we, in turn, are able to serve.

During the first three quarters of 2009 the average quantity of our food deliveries increased each week by nearly 2,000 pounds when compared to the same period in 2008. This enabled us to maintain a generous supply of food to our current recipients as well as to add six

more recipient groups to our delivery schedule. We are now serving 52 organizations every week.

While 95% of our food donations are fruits and vegetables, we are receiving increasing quantities of top-quality prepared food, frozen meat, eggs and milk. As food prices continue to rise, our recipients are more grateful than ever for our deliveries.

We are constantly monitoring our food supply and tweaking our pick-up and delivery schedules in order to be as efficient as possible. Our van has logged over 80,000 miles. Between pick-ups and deliveries

our drivers typically handle a ton or more of food per day.

We actively engage volunteers to help us with our Nutrition Education, Farm, and Sunday Driving Projects. The success of these pilot projects has encouraged us to expand and incorporate them as permanent programs.

Willing Hands is pleased to be hard at work, seven days a week, year round, simply doing what it takes to keep wholesome food out of the waste stream and to get that food onto the dinner plates of those most in need.

The Numbers:

# of Grocery Stores, Farms, and Bakeries That Donate Food To Willing Hands:	31
# of Social Service Organizations That Receive Food From Willing Hands At Least Once Each Week:	52
Average # of Pounds of Food Willing Hands Delivers Each Week:	6,752
Approx. # of Pounds of Fruit and Vegetables That our Volunteers Gleaned during Harvest Season 2008:	17,000



THE WILLING HANDS GARDEN

If you had come out to the Willing Hands Garden on a Tuesday morning or Thursday evening this past summer you would have found a group of volunteers cheerfully at work in the field. Through their efforts, our organic garden produced a bounty of fresh vegetables that included beans, carrots, beets, potatoes, yellow squash and zucchini for distribution to our hungry neighbors in the Upper Valley.

Like other local gardens, ours suffered from late blight and a wet summer resulting in the loss of our tomatoes and a decreased potato crop.

Even so, we produced over a ton of fresh organic vegetables.

We are most grateful to Mary Bryant and Laura Yasaitis who very competently headed up the two volunteer work teams. We thank the UU Congregation of the Upper Valley for funds to buy farm tools and supplies. We also thank Will Allen, Willing Hands board member and general manager of Cedar Circle Farm, who was present for every session to teach our volunteers organic gardening practices and inspire their efforts with his wisdom and enthusiasm.

COOKING WORKSHOPS & TASTE-TESTINGS

In an effort to teach folks how to make the best use of the food that we provide, our nutrition education committee collaborates with our recipient organizations to provide cooking workshops and taste-testings. Each session is custom designed around the preferences of the participants and the availability of cooking facilities.

Sometimes we team up to prepare a group dinner using a variety of produce from the Willing Hands van. Other

times, our volunteers and recipients prepare recipes using a single featured fruit or vegetable.

Willing Hands' volunteers also prepare "taste-testings" of large quantities of one dish and offer take-home packets to folks when they stop by to pick up their produce.

The packets include the recipe and the ingredients needed to prepare the dish at home. At a recent taste-testing at The Haven in WRJ, Willing Hands volunteer Jane



Board President Jack Lyons and Dartmouth Medical School Student Volunteers at the Willing Hands Garden

The farm garden is located on Pavillion Road in East Thetford, Vermont on land generously made available to our organization by Cedar Circle Farm. We welcome new volunteers and encourage you to contact us to join in the fun next summer.

Feedback From Our Farmers:

"It means a lot to us to have all of our hard work be followed with more hard work and a community commitment to feed our neighbors good food..."

*Cat Buxton
Cedar Circle Farm*

"Sales are sometimes variable...it makes all the difference to us that the produce that we grow will still go to an appreciative recipient. We feel strongly that what we donate should be of excellent quality..."

*Craig Putnam
Echo Hill Farm*



Bailey Brown prepared a delicious sampling of Kale, Collards and Chard sautéed in olive oil and garlic. One of the women who took a packet to prepare at home called back to say that she was thrilled to have finally found a way to get her kids to eat cooked greens!

WILLING HANDS GLEANING PROGRAM

Willing Hands' Gleaning Program has added about nine tons of locally grown apples, strawberries, lettuce, carrots, beets, beans, potatoes, rutabagas, and winter squash to the bounty of nutritious food we have handled during the past year.

These are crops that are not marketable by the grower for a variety of reasons including over-production, saturation in the marketplace or less than perfect appearance. Whatever the reason, the crops still have excellent food value.

← Willing Hands is fortunate to have many compassionate farmers in our network of food donors. These growers are particularly sensitive to the fact that good food should not go to waste. Eleven local farms donate produce to us throughout the growing season. When their surplus is particularly large they open their fields and bins to Willing Hands' volunteers for gleaning.

Our biggest gleaning event was in the fall of 2008 at Edgewater Farm where over 30 volunteers gathered to glean 11,500 pounds of root crops and winter squash! Some was loaded onto the van for immediate delivery, most was put into cold storage for delivery later in the year.

Willing Hands extends special thanks to Edgewater, Crossroad, Cedar Circle and Riverview Farms and to Poverty Lane and Whitman Brook Orchards for inviting Willing Hands in for gleaning.



Just Part of the Gleaning Team at Riverview Farm Halloween Day 2009

What Is Gleaning?

Gleaning is an age-old practice of harvesting surplus produce directly from a farmer's fields. Ancient cultures often promoted gleaning as a form of welfare by requiring that farmers not harvest to the edges of a field so as to "leave some for the poor and for strangers"



The Gleaners Jean-François Millet



P.O. Box 172
Lebanon, NH 03766
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Yes, I want to help Willing Hands reduce hunger in the Upper Valley.

Enclosed is my contribution of:

___\$30 ___\$50 ___\$100 ___\$500 ___\$1000 ___Other \$_____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

I'd like to receive email updates from Willing Hands. I understand that you'll send fewer than six per year & will not share my email address with any other organization. My email address is: _____

I'm interested in volunteering to help Willing Hands with:
 ___ The Farm Project ___ Nutrition Education ___ Sunday Driving ___ Other/Committee Work

Please contact me at this phone number: _____ or this email address: _____

COLLABORATIONS ARE KEY TO OUR SUCCESS

The Willing Hands network is filled with hard-working, compassionate, generous individuals. Their help is absolutely critical to our success. We thank:

- Every farm owner and field hand, every grocery manager and produce department employee, and every baker and chef at the organizations that donate food to Willing Hands.
- Our volunteers who plant seeds, pull weeds, glean, serve on our board of directors, teach in our nutrition education program, and drive the van on Sundays.
- Community members who respond with generosity to our annual appeal.
- Community Events such as Dance For A Dream, Giving Bowls, and West Lebanon Supply Share-The-Harvest Program that designated Willing Hands as the recipient of their proceeds.
- The foundations that recognize the importance of our mission and the efficient, innovative system we've created both to keep food from going to waste and to serve our neighbors in need.
- The folks working at food shelves, shelters, rehab programs, subsidized housing programs, senior luncheons and community dinners who help us make sure that our food goes to those who need it most.
- Our food recipients who respond to our deliveries with enthusiasm and gratitude.

Every single one of these people makes Willing Hands the success that it is. We thank you, one and all.

BEHIND THE SCENES:

Board of Directors:

Jack Lyons - President
Suzanne Serat - Vice President
Terry Lyons - Secretary
Mark Lindberg - Treasurer
Will Allen
Peter Carter
Susan Gault
Maura Naughton



Pooh Sprague and part of the Gleaning Team at Edgewater Farm

Executive Director:

Heather Bagley

Drivers: Chuck Egner,
Flora Lansburg, Mark Pennell

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