



Delivering Wholesome Food to Our Neighbors in Need

Spring 2018 News



Dear Friends,

Earlier this spring I had the chance to join 16 of our gleaners digging up overwintered carrots at Killdeer Farm. It was one of those jobs that gives manual labor a good name. Digging in the dirt, chatting with friends, enjoying a beautiful day, this was a treat made even better by the recognition that we harvested 1,490 pounds of carrots. These carrots were quickly distributed to our 60-plus recipient organizations and have since graced the tables of those in need throughout the Upper Valley. It is heartwarming to know that hundreds, if not thousands, of our community members have been able to enjoy Killdeer Farm's delicious carrots because of our volunteers.

As part of our recent strategic planning process, the Willing Hands Board of Directors re-affirmed that volunteerism is not just a means to delivering more food, but is an end in and of itself. If we are doing our job well, volunteering for Willing Hands benefits the individual, the community, and those we serve. I agree with recent studies that suggest a health benefit from volunteerism. I see the act of volunteering as a way to strengthen community and build resiliency. Willing Hands has found that our volunteers are the best and most effective ambassadors for our mission. We are committed to finding additional ways to engage volunteers in the coming months and years. I am personally very excited to share the wonderful experience of gleaning and growing crops for Willing Hands with more people. I hope to see you soon with dirty hands and a satisfied smile.

Best,

Gabe Zoerheide, Executive Director



Willing Hands strives for an Upper Valley where everyone has affordable access to the foods that make up a healthy diet.



Strategic Plan

The Willing Hands Board of Directors recently completed a Strategic Plan for the next five years. The organization is in good shape and poised to provide even greater benefits to our community. The plan gives us a roadmap to carefully and strategically increase our impact. It includes the following strategic goals:

1. Strengthen our core food recovery and distribution program by increasing not just the quantity of fresh produce recovered and delivered but also the quality.
2. Better target our programs to reduce hunger and foster healthy eating.
3. Embrace volunteers and volunteerism as a core organization value and strategically important means to accomplish our mission.
4. Obtain a new facility for Willing Hands' operations.
5. Maintain a workplace that meets nonprofit organization best practices.
6. Maintain our ongoing healthy financial position to support the organization's goals.
7. Develop and foster community partnerships as a strategy to accomplish our mission.



We are in the process of creating benchmarks for each of these goals. For instance, our goal for the next two years is to increase the total number of servings of food that we deliver from 1,021,000 to 1,200,000. We are also committed to increasing the amount of food that we deliver from January to June, historically our slow season. Over the past couple of years, we have made progress. The first quarter of 2018 saw a more than 25% increase in our average weekly distributions, compared to two years ago. This means that more Upper Valley seniors, families, and children can rely upon our partner organizations for fresh, nutritious food year-round.

Behind the scenes

Board of Directors

Peter Carter, *President*
 Carolyn Frye, *Vice President*
 Phil Lapp, *Treasurer*
 Bartlett Leber, *Secretary*
 Dr. Anne Collins
 Tim Fisher
 Rebecca Hooper Holland
 Birgit Humpert
 Johanna Mirenda
 Pooh Sprague
 Jay Van Arman

Food Delivery Staff

Chris Castles
 Ray Brewster
 Iain Wallis
 Lars Sandvik

Operations Manager

Jim McCracken

Executive Director

Gabe Zoerheide

Willing Hands Volunteer Opportunities

For more information, contact volunteer@willinghands.org or call (802) 698-0265.

Driver Assistant

Join the Willing Hands driver once or twice a month for short sections (2–4 hours) of the daily route. Assists with loading, unloading and sorting produce for our varied recipient sites. Talk with recipients and help them plan delicious and healthy ways to use the fresh produce.

Social Media, Writing and Photography

Have a way with social media? Are you on Instagram and Facebook more than you care to admit? Unfortunately,

we are not and need help telling our story. This would be an ongoing volunteer job for someone who could help generate content for our social media profile along with our traditional print and email newsletters.

Help Us at the Garage

We are looking for a couple people willing to commit to 2-hour shifts once or twice a week at the Willing Hands garage. Our staff needs help washing and cleaning the crates we use to store veggies, managing our inventory, pre-processing deliveries, and keeping operations running smoothly.

Become a Gleaner

Harvest surplus fruits and vegetables from the fields and orchards of local growers. "Gleaning" is the time-honored tradition of sharing the extra food left in a field after the harvest. Willing Hands gleaners visit local farms and orchards to collect fresh vegetables, berries, apples and produce directly from the fields. Locations include Cedar Circle Farm, Crossroads Farm, Edgewater Farm, Hill Farm, Long Wind Farm, Killdeer Farm, Maplewood Orchard, Riverview Farm, Whitman Brook Orchard and many more. Join occasionally or on a regular schedule during the season.





Food delivery to a Willing Hands recipient.

Featured Partner: **LISTEN Dinner in White River Junction**

Ray Picor has been working as the coordinator at the LISTEN Meal Site in White River Junction since they served their first meal on July 3, 2013. Monday through Saturday, volunteers from Upper Valley businesses help cook a dinner that begins promptly at 5 p.m. On Monday evenings, a second dinner site in Canaan opens its doors to another large group. Over the past calendar year, 63 different cook teams have helped put food on the table for 30,980 individual dinner servings.

Ray is adamant that any and all folks from the community are welcome to enjoy this no-cost meal and social gathering. His positivity and friendliness set an enjoyable mood from the arrival of the first attendees (often an hour before food

is served) until second servings and dessert have been polished off. Generally 70 to 120 attendees come through the doors on any given night, with an additional 15 meals going to the Upper Valley Haven during the winter for a cold weather meal program.

“I wouldn’t do anything else,” Ray says, deservedly proud of this well-attended and much loved service. He dreams of one day serving breakfast along with dinner. Each cook team is in charge of selecting their own meal. Willing Hands regularly brings lettuce and salad makings, ensuring each dinner has a healthy vegetable side. During the fall and winter, bulk deliveries of winter squash and potatoes have allowed the cook teams to directly incorporate produce from Willing Hands into the main course. Attendees are also encouraged to bring home Willing Hands carrots, apples, and other fresh produce for later use. You are all invited to take part in attending a meal, or putting together a cook team to help bring your favorite recipes to those in the community.



Volunteer Opportunity

at the Willing Hands Garden

Tuesday mornings 9-11 am or Thursday evenings 5-7 pm. We meet weekly, May–September, to do any and all tasks — plant, weed (and weed some more), fertilize, harvest, wash, and box up thousands of pounds of vegetables. We provide all necessary tools (including Cedar Circle cookie coupons). Volunteer are welcome to bring their favorite tools and their own water.

BY THE NUMBERS

In 2017, we recovered
530,491
total pounds
of food.

74,000 pounds
were gleaned
by volunteers
at local farms.

16,000 pounds
were grown
by volunteers at the
Willing Hands Garden.

On average, we deliver

4.7 tons
of fresh food
each week
for FREE to our
network of food
shelves, community
meal sites, low-income
housing communities,
and nonprofits serving
our neighbors in need.

25 local farms and
orchards donated
233,375
pounds of food.

In addition, the Coop
Food Stores donated
177,461 pounds,
Upper Valley Produce
donated **70,880**
pounds, and King
Arthur Flour donated
9,543 pounds of bread.

136 volunteers
donated
2,272 hours
in 2017.

In 14 years, over
5.25 million
pounds of food
have been recovered
by Willing Hands.



Featured Garden Volunteer: Patti Cerra

About Patti: I'm an artist by trade, living with my husband, our new rescue dog, Rumi, and cat, Nashirah, in Norwich, VT. We live next to the Appalachian Trail and about conserved land. This provides us with many trails for both hiking and skiing right out our door. During summer days we try to split our time between family and friends, hiking, sailing, canoeing, and just reveling in the beauty that we see from our deck while eating something scrumptious from the garden.



Top, Patti Cerra, right, sets out spinach starts with Cindy Swart in the Willing Hands garden. Above, planting potatoes.

How I got involved: I began volunteering for Willing Hands after taking the Master Gardener's course 5 or 6 years ago. To stay certified as a master gardener, one needs to volunteer a certain number of hours per year. I honestly forget how many because I let the certification lapse, but I'm still volunteering for WH!

A typical day of volunteering: You meet up with lovely people, have interesting and enjoyable conversations, and have the wonderful opportunity to grow gorgeous food.

My favorite part: I love the idea that we are growing organic food to feed people!

Favorite veggie to eat: Asparagus. It always has been, ever since I was young. My mother used to give me a bouquet of asparagus for my birthday every year.

Favorite veggie to grow: I love growing all vegetables. Perhaps carrots are my favorite, because it's so much fun to see what shape they've taken and how big they've grown. The variety I grow has a delicate flower-like sweetness; they are delicious!

Thank you to Patti and all of our volunteers!

Visit us online at willinghands.org



Willing Hands

(802) 698-0265

director@willinghands.org

PO Box 172

Lebanon, NH 03766

Willing Hands is a registered 501(c)3, and a network partner of Vermont Food Bank.

Yes, I want to help Willing Hands. Please contact me!

I want to:

- Volunteer in the Willing Hands garden Volunteer on a local farm as a gleaner
- Volunteer for _____ Donate food
- Make a charitable gift of \$ _____ Other: _____

Please contact me at:

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Email _____ Phone _____