



Delivering Wholesome Food to Our Neighbors in Need

Fall 2019 News



Director's Letter: Food Waste & Climate Change

Dear Friends,

Willing Hands has three parts to our mission: reducing hunger, fostering healthy eating, and reducing food waste. I have noticed that many of our volunteers and supporters are driven by an almost visceral reaction to food waste. A recent food donor mentioned to me, repeatedly, that she “abhors” waste. Wasting food offends our Yankee frugality in a deep way. Reducing food waste has a number of meaningful benefits including reducing landfill waste, saving money and protecting scarce resources. Willing Hands’ work gives me hope for the future. Like many, I am worried about the startling signs of climate change including warmer oceans, worse hurricanes, more 100-year floods, and glaciers melting at unheard of rates. Food production and food waste are often-overlooked drivers of climate change. In the New York Times Bestseller *Drawdown: The Most Comprehensive Plan Ever Proposed to Reverse Global Warming*, reducing food waste is ranked as the solution with the third-largest potential to reduce greenhouse gas emissions globally.



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

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Installing our sign.

Summer in Our New Home

This spring Willing Hands purchased and moved into a new office and storage facility at 198 Church Street in Norwich, VT. Some of the highlights from this summer include:



Visitors at our open house.



Marion Cross students helping to start the new garden.



Ready to start a day of deliveries.



Northwood nutrition class at the garden.



Planning for the future of the new space.



Volunteer Donn Cann mowing the grass.



Gleaning blueberries at Hill Farm. (Not at our new space, but still a highlight!)



◀ *Director's Letter, continued from page 1*

Willing Hands, by recovering, growing, gleaning and then distributing over 500,000 pounds of food a year, is making a significant difference in our shared responsibility to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Our early estimates indicate that our organization reduces greenhouse gas emissions by a very substantial amount through our work reducing food waste. Over the next year, we are undertaking a project to better quantify this “net carbon budget” (the amount of greenhouse gases we emit versus the amount we prevent through food recovery). With the recent purchase of our facility at 198 Church Street, we are looking for ways to improve our organization’s sustainability and efficiency and to reduce our fossil fuel consumption. As we grapple with the very real effects of climate change, it is important to better understand how we can improve our own carbon footprint. Willing Hands is an organization that makes a meaningful difference in the lives of many, but we are still committed to doing more.

Best,

Gabe Zoerheide, Executive Director

An introduction from Sydney McIntire, AmeriCorps VISTA

Hi all! My name is Sydney McIntire, and I am so excited to be the first AmeriCorps VISTA Member to serve at Willing Hands. Being a VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) member means that I will serve full time for one year to help build capacity at Willing Hands. While here, I will help expand programming to involve more youths, focusing specifically on food insecurity, nutrition, and growing food in gardens. In my first month, I have spent time researching programs that exist in the area and have facilitated a few nutrition and cooking classes at Marion Cross Elementary School in Norwich using vegetables grown in their "Giving Garden."



I am originally from Bradford, VT and graduated from Oxbow High School in 2015. This spring, I completed a degree in Community and International Development with a concentration in Nutrition and Food Sciences at the University of Vermont. I decided to defer a fellowship to graduate school for one year in order to accept this VISTA position near my hometown. Serving at Willing Hands feels like a perfect fit and a great way to use my degree to give back to the community that has given so much to me.

I look forward to hopefully meeting and working with many of you!

All the best,
Sydney McIntire

Behind the scenes Meet Our Staff & Board



Food Delivery Staff



Office Staff

Board of Directors

Peter Carter, *President*
Carolyn Frye, *Vice President*
Phil Lapp, *Treasurer*
Bartlett Leber, *Secretary*
Dr. Anne F. Collins
Tim Fisher
Becky Hooper Holland
Birgit Humpert
Johanna Mirenda
Leslie Rimmer
Rob Schultz

Volunteer Leaders

Bartlett Leber, **Jo Mirenda**,
Mike Hall, **Betsy Eaton**
and Shawn Grenier (Cedar
Circle Farmer), *Willing Hands*
Garden at Cedar Circle
Carolyn and Milt Frye,
Gleaning and Sunday Driving
Birgit Humpert,
Nutrition Education

Food Delivery Staff

Luke Joanis
Lars Sandvik
Ray Brewster
Iain Wallis
Jared Friedland
Chris Brady

Office Staff

Gabe Zoerheide,
Executive Director
Sara Cavin,
Program Coordinator
Chris Castles,
Operations Manager
Jim McCracken,
Gleaning & Garden
Coordinator
Johanna Doren,
Admin Coordinator
Sydney McIntire,
AmeriCorps VISTA Member

Sydney, second from left,
with apple gleaning crew.





Volunteer Spotlight: Skip & Marilyn Sturman

Skip and Marilyn have lived in the Upper Valley since 1978; Skip worked at Dartmouth College for 27 years, and Marilyn for about 23 years. While serving on the United Way's Grant Review Committee in 2010, Skip noticed "wholehearted and enthusiastic support" for Willing Hands. After learning that one of his friends worked in the Willing Hands Garden at Cedar Circle Farm in Thetford, Skip got involved as a recent retiree and has continued to offer his time in the garden, planting, weeding, picking produce, pounding in stakes, fertilizing, etc. all to grow food for Willing Hands. His favorite veggie? "Peppers, hands down. Not only are they tasty but they are easy to pick and hard to mess up while picking! Peppers are the gift that just keeps on giving in the Willing Hands Garden for those of us who, shall we say, aren't Master gardeners."



Top, Skip and Marilyn. Above, Skip in the garden.

When asked why he volunteers, Skip explained: "I like almost everything about this form of volunteering, especially seeing the fruits (or vegetables) of our labor, trucked away each week to provide fresh produce to supplement the diets of low-income recipients up and down the Connecticut River Valley. While the work is physically demanding, it is enormously satisfying. It is a welcome relief to volunteer and see tangible results on a weekly basis. As for unexpected takeaways, the camaraderie, humor, and good nature of my fellow volunteers is priceless."

Marilyn started volunteering once we had settled into the new facility space in Norwich this year. Why did she want to share her time with Willing Hands? "I like being active and am pleased to have a chance to give back to the Upper Valley community that I love. Willing Hands' purpose meets my own personal interest in local, healthy eating, and I hope that in some small way, I am helping others receive the benefits of our local produce."

Her attention to detail and her warm and friendly personality have been a wonderful addition to the office and we always enjoy Wednesday mornings when she is here! She has taken on many administrative tasks, helping us maintain financial records, put together mailings, updated Willing Hands contact lists, volunteer databases and more. Whatever tasks are tossed her way, Marilyn takes them on with a professional and capable hand.

Skip and Marilyn enjoy the outdoors, traveling, and spending time with their grandchildren! We are so pleased for their support.

Thank you both for all you do, and thank you to all of our volunteers for your time and energy!

By the Numbers Willing Hands closed the books on the 2018-2019 fiscal year on June 30, 2019.

510,528
total pounds of
food recovered,
grown, and
gleaned

Estimated
value of food
delivered:
\$1,007,906

367
total
volunteers

3,029
volunteer
hours

308
volunteer
events