

# Rolling Harvest Food Rescue Executive Director's Report 2016



*Connecting local farmers with neighbors in need*

**Mission Statement:** *"Our goal is to increase access to donated fresh produce and other healthy foods to area hunger-relief sites that serve the at-risk, food-insecure population by providing local farmers and food producers with free, effective delivery and distribution."*

Dear Friends, Partners and Supporters:

I want to thank you so much for your ongoing generosity and support of Rolling Harvest Food Rescue. There is so much to share about our growth and progress in 2016. We reflect on another extraordinary harvest season, now into our seventh year, with a 32% increase over 2015 in pounds of food donated! Now more than 60 hunger-relief sites and 20,200 people each month are receiving healthy, delicious produce and organic protein. As of the close of 2016, **a total of 1.4 MILLION pounds** of locally grown food has been delivered. That's **more than 4 million additional servings** on the plates of area children, seniors and families in need. This is in large part thanks to the commitment of so many new and existing farms and growers donating regularly to us - and thanks to YOUR support. Let's move towards providing nutrition over calories. We really are turning food pantries into Farmers Markets, and that's our take on Food Justice!

***"This is the kind of food my doctor keeps telling me to eat, but no way can I afford it. Thanks so much."*** - Food pantry client

None of the work we do is possible without the efforts of our dedicated corps of more than 100 incredible volunteers, who help with gleaning, driving, delivering and daily operations.

Food rescue work means responding quickly to farmers' needs and is often last-minute, based on weather and other unforeseen circumstances. This demands great flexibility and commitment, all of which our volunteers bring daily throughout the harvest season.



Volunteer gleaners John and Ariel



Volunteers make it all happen!

More than 33 local farms and producers now partner with us. We continue to be in awe of their generosity and commitment to community and hunger relief. They generously share their surplus and wonderfully irregular produce with us to distribute to wherever the need is greatest. These farms also invite us to pick in their fields. 2016 saw an increase in weekly gleaning/harvesting volunteer and corporate/community group opportunities that provided many more thousands of pounds of glorious produce to distribute at its peak. Rolling Harvest volunteers braved heat and cold and storms to harvest for the food pantries,

shelters, community kitchens, low-income senior centers and children's shelters we provide for. Some of our partner farmers are so motivated by the work we are doing, and the satisfaction that none of the fruits of their labor are going to waste, that they are now growing extra produce for us to distribute to neighbors in need! Amazing!

We are forging new partnerships with several area schools, creating "teen glean teams", connecting youth with nature and supporting community-service values. Gravity Hill Organic Farm has been an essential partner, providing resources for us way beyond the organic produce it donated. We gratefully acknowledge their commitment to the work we do; we appreciate them hosting our walk-in cooler and for the many times they have hosted our organization's functions and meetings. And we applaud the vision of the Carversville Farm Foundation. This game-changing resource for local farmers and local food-insecure families grows organic fruits, vegetables, eggs and protein for donation.



Rolling Harvest recently completed the fourth year of spearheading United Way of Bucks County's Produce Purchase Project, as part of their BKO campaign to Knock Out Hunger. Our generous, community-minded farmers and growers once again came through with thousands of additional pounds of desirable, in-demand fruits and vegetables for this valuable

program.





And we want to express our continued deep gratitude to Applegate for their support and commitment to make sure that their perfectly great food with minor packaging defects helps people in need and stays out of landfills! In our partnership with the Bucks County Opportunity Council's Food and Nutrition Network, 180,000 pounds of Applegate Natural and Organic Meats, valued at more than \$2,000,000 were added to weekly deliveries in 2016!

One of the more rewarding aspects of our operation is that we are able to be more responsive, and flexible enough to immediately serve new hunger-relief sites that reach out to us for help. An unexpected benefit has also emerged for all of the pantry directors who come to our food distributions:

a real sense of connection and community support takes place, providing an invaluable weekly opportunity to talk and share best practices! And to better identify under-served areas, we continue to strengthen our collaborative relationships with local social service organizations like Mercer Street Friends Food Bank and Homefront NJ, the Bucks County Opportunity Council, Bucks County Housing Group, Bucks County Foodshed Alliance, Philabundance, Greater Philadelphia Coalition Against Hunger, United Way, YWCA social service programs and the Hunger Nutrition Coalition.



One of our weekly distributions

*"I put your veggies in with our spaghetti dinner, and couldn't believe my kids ate it all up!" - Food pantry client*



Rolling Harvest Nutrition Outreach

Rolling Harvest Food Rescue held frequent Free Farm Markets at various food pantries in Bucks, Mercer and Hunterdon County this year. Our Nutrition Educators and nutrition volunteer staff are available - free of charge - to work individually with food pantries, shelter directors and client families, allowing us to expand our healthy impact more significantly. Participants enjoy cooking demos, tastings and receive healthy, low-cost recipes in English and

Spanish. As a result, we have seen a greater level of enthusiasm for all that we bring, and have seen many recipients now incorporate this great produce into their

daily diets! Kale, Swiss chard, and kohlrabi. Yum!

*"As farmers, it is very rewarding to know that our work is being shared and distributed so widely. Thank you Rolling Harvest!"*

- New Jersey Farmer

Rolling Harvest was honored to be recognized this year as the recipient of the United Way of Bucks County's "United in Health and Wellness Impact Award". And we were thrilled to be a finalist for the Good-Doers Award presented by the Bucks County Intelligencer and Courier-Times, and for the Bucks Happening List for Charitable Organizations.



Of course, the work we do would not be possible without the generous support from so many caring, community-minded private donors who continue to support our core mission and are helping us grow. In 2016, we were so appreciative to receive generous support from so many caring individuals and Grants from The Patricia Kind Family Foundation, The Sprocket Foundation, Foundations Community Partnership, United Way of Bucks County, Applegate/Hormel Foundation, Wells Fargo Foundation, Leo and Peggy Pierce Family Foundation, Clif Bar

Family Foundation, TD Bank Foundation, Bucks County Commissioners, Citizens Bank Foundation, Doylestown Presbyterian Church Mission Committee and New Britain Baptist Church. All of you have helped so much in moving us forward and creating a sustainable way to alleviate hunger and food-inequality. This funding has proven to be essential in covering daily operating costs including food deliveries, outreach programs, and gleaning events, in addition to ensuring the sustainability of our mission. There is never a charge to either the farmers or the hunger-relief sites for the services we provide, so donations are essential.

We have great partners in the community--thanks to Local Wisdom, a local digital design company, we were able to bring you a new, interactive website this year to make it easier to partner and volunteer. And imagine our joy when former Phillies baseball legend Jimmy Rollins decided to gift us the brand-new Chevy Silverado pick-up truck he won as part of his Roberto Clemente Humanitarian Award in recognition for all that his Rollins Family Foundation has done to address food-insecurity in the region! We also offer a huge shout-out to our Bucks County Commissioners for donating the use of their County cooler and freezer warehouse after we met with them to bring them up-to-date on all the collaborative work being done-this



Our "Jimmy" truck

is a real game-changer that now enables so much more nutrient-dense food to be donated and distributed!

***"It is through committed partnerships like this that we are able to keep the community healthier."- Food Pantry Director***

Rolling Harvest remains passionate advocates for hunger relief, food justice, food equality and food recovery. We frequently present at conferences and workshops throughout the region to raise awareness of food waste and the new face of hunger, and to enable other regions to duplicate our model. With the continued cuts in benefits to families on food stamps, the lingering economic hardships from the recession, and uncertainty under a new administration, Rolling Harvest must do even more to fill the gap in nutrition and access for all. Food pantries are already stretched to their limits. They are still seeing increases in the number of families coming for help. We all know that well-nourished children learn better, and well-nourished workers are much more productive and have greater opportunities. Everyone deserves the chance to benefit from the abundance around us, especially the most vulnerable among us who struggle every day to make hard economic choices between food, rent, medicine, education and other basic necessities.

***"Volunteering with Rolling Harvest is good for the soul and the body. It's an opportunity to meet others who share your sensitivity for those in need."***  
- Volunteer

We are also becoming increasingly aware of the part we are playing in good environmental stewardship by diverting wholesome food from landfills to feed people. Tossed food makes up 20% of our landfills, which in turn produces 18% of all methane gas pollutants in the United States.

With your help and support, we will continue to source and distribute fresh, healthy, locally grown food that provides our neighbors in need with much better food choices. There is so much surplus available in our area and all of us at Rolling Harvest Food Rescue are committed to continuing to connect farmers to families in need.

Looking forward to the 2017 growing season!





Kids love our veggies, too




Thanks a bushel,

Cathy Snyder

Founder and Executive Director, Rolling Harvest Food Rescue

[www.RollingHarvest.org](http://www.RollingHarvest.org)

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**Please show our farm partners in New Jersey and Pennsylvania some love!**  
**Shop at their markets and thank them for all they do and give!**

**New Jersey Farmers**

Blue Moon Acres  
Brick Farm Market

**Bucks County Farms**

Aro Hill Farm  
Barefoot Gardens

**Healthy Food Donors**

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**Rolling Harvest Food Rescue is grateful**  
**for such generous support from:**

|                                      |                                |
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| Susan Abramson                       | Local Wisdom Digital Design    |
| Gregory Aloia                        | Jane and Larry Magne           |
| Applegate/Hormel Charitable Trust    | Lani and Tom Macaniff          |
| Lee Artur                            | Mahmoud Family                 |
| Bette Baer                           | Ann Mahoney                    |
| Balitsaris Family Trust              | Heather Martin                 |
| Ryan Becker                          | Melissa Matarese               |
| Marie Bell Memorial Fund             | Becki Maxson                   |
| Roxanne Betesh                       | Amanda and Declan McCarthy     |
| Kate Bianchini                       | Caroline and Joel McKeever     |
| Dyan Nelson Blass                    | Mesa Lifestyle                 |
| Blue Moon Acres                      | Barbara and Steve Moriarty     |
| Serge Borichevsky                    | Stephanie Moss                 |
| Quinn Borkey                         | Dorothy Mullen                 |
| Jen Braxton                          | New Britain Baptist Church     |
| Bucks County Commissioners           | Maria Nicolo and David Earling |
| Bucks County Community College       | Sally O'Connor                 |
| Bucks County Taste                   | Ben Ohrenstein                 |
| Cynthia Butler                       | Michael Olenick                |
| Ruth and Hans Cahnmann Memorial Fund | Boyd Oliver                    |
| Carversville Farm Foundation         | Steven Pacenka                 |
| Diana Cercone                        | Bonnie Pariser                 |
| Citizens Bank Foundation             | Peyton Penny                   |
| Kathryn Clabby                       | David and Leslie Perlsweig     |
| Clif Bar Family Foundation           | Josh and Natalie Perlsweig     |
| Patrick Collins                      | Phillies Charities             |
| Norman Coryell                       | Bethany Pickard                |

Sandra Cristofori  
Ed Cusack  
Amy and Tony D'Orazio  
Rajiv Dave  
Gail Donner  
Doylestown Presbyterian Church  
Barbara Eklund  
David Ellen  
Ina Ellen  
Ruth Ellis and David Schwartz  
Elnaggar Family  
Sue and Bruce Endy  
Fedorko Family  
Charles and Elaine Fettig  
Veronica Fielding  
Joy and Marc Finkel  
Deb and Nick Fisher  
Foundations Community Partnership  
Franklin Family  
Gail Friedman  
Tom Forlenza  
Diana Garibaldi  
Darlene Gibson  
Ellen Gibson  
Judy Gleason  
Lynne Goldman  
Mary Goldschmidt  
Gayle Goodman and Jim Searing  
Gravity Hill Organic Farm  
Greenstraw Smoothies  
Kristin Gurdin  
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Jane and Simon Hallett  
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Robert T. Hanley Foundation  
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Icarus Web Design and Development  
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The Patricia Kind Family Foundation

Leo and Peggy Pierce Foundation  
PREIT  
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Steven Riedel  
Sharon Rigby  
Robin Rifkin  
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation  
Matching Funds  
Rollins Family Foundation  
Carol Ann Romano  
Thomas Romano  
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Hara Salkovitz  
James Sanchez  
Vicki Sarnoff  
Kathleen Saunders  
Michael Shevack  
John and Wendy Schlosser  
Susan and Charles Scholer  
Lisa and Jon Seliger  
Claire and Steven Seliger  
Alan Sherif  
Ben Snyder-Kamen  
Sarah Snyder-Kamen  
JoAnn and David Snyder  
Lynne Snyder  
The Sprocket Foundation  
Maria Stabeno  
Van Starner  
Kevin Strouse  
Norma and Roger Strouse  
Toby Taylor  
TD Bank Foundation  
Tohickon Garden Club  
Sara and Sean Torpey  
Kelly Ann Troy  
Albury Tunnell  
United Way of Bucks County  
Ashley Vesay  
Anthony Vidmar  
Elizabeth Vroom  
Waldman Family Trust  
Falecia Wasicko  
Cherie Weller  
Wells Fargo Foundation  
Lisa White  
Jay Wholley  
Albert Will  
Bertha Witt Rubin Cohen  
Foundation  
CL Wolfe



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Edie and Joe Kwasnoski

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