

Seeds That Feed: Wasted Food Goes to the Hungry

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What happens when four 20-year-olds realize that making money leaves them feeling unfulfilled? At least four creative souls found their answers to this question by scrutinizing the needs and resources of the community, then bringing the needs and resources together with an exciting and effective new program. The needs they uncovered were hunger, poor health, and inability of some community members to physically make it to a donated food source. The resources they found were excess food left over at the conclusion of the farmer's market.



Food recipients wait in line at Hillcrest Towers.

The founding group, now known as [Seeds That Feed](#), began collecting excess food from the Fayetteville Farmer's Market and distributing it to those with food insecurity. The group delivered free, fresh produce to food pantries and community meals. Subsequently, they applied for fiscal sponsorship from OMNI which allowed them to successfully apply for grants to pay part time staff and purchase a new truck. Since one of their goals was to bring food to people who could not physically get out, they expanded their food distribution program by converting the truck into a mobile food pantry.

What were the results? Impressive. In 2015 alone they collected and redirected 11,345 pounds of fresh, locally grown produce to area food pantries, meal programs, and low-income housing communities. Recently, they added 11 new sites with a focus on senior citizens and low-income housing complexes. In addition to donated produce, they distributed 500 free recipe boxes to aid residents in preparation of unfamiliar seasonal vegetables.

When did the program begin? In 2012. In a period of 3 short years, 21,645 residents have benefited from this program. Not bad guys!

What motivates this group?: In their own words, "The roots of our efforts began first with friendship and a common urge to address the needs of our community. Simultaneously, we found ourselves unfulfilled by our day jobs and ready to pursue something in which we could find some meaning and purpose. Together, we spent many-a-night brainstorming on our porch. There we zeroed in on where we wanted to devote our time and energy - growing a healthier community."

These early members include: Alyssa Snyder, Co-Founder; Aron Shelton, Co-Founder; Margaret Thomas, Director; and Megan Lankford, UA horticulture student. Their brainstorming and research uncovered lots of food waste and lots of food insecurity. According to [End Food Waste Now](#), as much as 40% of food is wasted in the US. Moreover, according to Margaret Thomas hunger statistics at the time revealed that NWA had one of the highest rates of food insecurity rates in the country, especially among children and seniors.

How did OMNI help? Co-Founder Alyssa Snyder responded: "Let's just say we would not be where we are today without OMNI. We found OMNI to be a very

comfortable and accepting fiscal sponsor (the group operates under OMNI's nonprofit status). They gave us the freedom to pursue our ideas and projects, allowing us to go through our own learning curve. They did not want to intervene, as one previous sponsor had tried to do. Gladys, OMNI's Executive Director, was great. She met with us and helped us pull together the resources and people that we need." In addition, OMNI Media Director, Dawn Jones, joined their board.

What's on the back of the truck and in the truck? Inscription on back door: "Food security ahead: Fayetteville Farmer's Market, OMNI Center, Walmart." A generous grant from Walmart enabled the group to purchase their truck, which they retrofitted into a mobile food pantry by adding lighting, a fan, stairs, a table and storage.



What does this group most want to say to the community?: "A very, very special thanks to all of our farmers, who we have grown to love and admire. We never could have done this without you!"

What does OMNI want to say to this group?: Bless you for caring, giving and taking action!

Do you like our work?

Please help OMNI Center continue worthwhile projects like this by making a contribution. At this link, you can use either Paypal or your credit card:

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Food distribution at Hillcrest Towers

OMNI Calendar

How to add an event to the OMNI Calendar;

1. No PDFs please - text only.
2. Please include in the following order: a. What, b. Where, c. When, d. Accurate links to further information, e. Short description.
3. Email to Omni@omnicenter.org.

Jan 2nd - Audacity Training For Radio Producer Applicants, 2 - 4 pm, OMNI Center. Contact Joe Newman to apply: faycomradio@gmail.com

January 3rd - Climate Change Book Forum, 1:30, Fayetteville Library.

January 3rd - Open Mic, 7pm, OMNI Center.

January 4th - Civil Rights Round Table, 6:30 pm, OMNI Center.

January 5th - Goddess Festival Planning, 6 pm, OMNI Center.

January 9th - OMNI Leaders Diversity Training, 10 am - 5 pm, OMNI Center, call 479-935-4422 for more info.

January 13th - Citizens Climate Lobby, 7pm, OMNI Center

January 13th -Veggie Potluck, 7 pm, OMNI Center.

EVERY 2ND WEDNESDAY

Dick Bennett, Kelly and Donna Mulhollan, Gladys Tiffany, Margaret Holcombe

NWA vegetarians and vegans gather each month to share their good food and discuss the many benefits of a vegetarian life-style--to our health, to the animals welfare.

January 16th - Chess Club Tournament, 9 am - 3 pm, OMNI Center.

January 17th - Herbology Class, 2 pm, OMNI Center. 479-521-0132.

January 21st - OMNI Board Meeting, 5:30 pm, OMNI Center. January 21st - OMNI Board Meeting, 5:30 pm, OMNI Center.

Jan 23rd - Audacity Training, 2 - 4 pm, OMNI Center. Jan 23rd - Audacity Training, 2 - 4 pm, OMNI Center.

Jan 21st - Jan 27th - Justice Week.

February 6th - OMNI Annual Dinner and Celebration, 5:30 - 8:30 pm.

Rooted Vision Healing Drums - First Sundays 1-5 pm.

Weekly @ OMNI

Spanish Conversation Table - Every Wednesday, 6 pm, El Camino Real Restaurant, S. School, Fayetteville

Quaker Meetings - 9:30 am Sundays. Everyone welcome

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Every new member or donor increases our voice and visibility by one. The broader the support we have, the more impact we have on decision makers such as

businesses, legislators, and community organizations. Most importantly, grantmakers and funders evaluate the number of our supporters when deciding whether we qualify for their financial resources.

Omni Center
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