



rise
summer camp

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Grow – Glean – Give

2018 Annual Report

In the Garden State and across the nation, there is no reason why anyone should go hungry.

Each year America's Grow-a-Row donates 1.5 million pounds, or 6 million servings, of free fresh produce to our neighbors in need. We extend a heartfelt thank you to all of our supporters for being a part of the solution to the hunger crisis in New Jersey and beyond.



2018 Annual Report

America's Grow-a-Row saw another year of continued sustainable growth in 2018 in all areas of our thriving 501(c)(3) organization. As a dynamic grassroots organization, America's Grow-a-Row impacts the entire state of New Jersey and beyond by addressing the complex problems of hunger and food insecurity through an approach that integrates the efforts of an extensive network of volunteers; the growing, gleaning, and distribution of free fresh produce; and the implementation of a comprehensive hunger and nutrition education program. **We have donated over 9.25 million pounds, or 37 million servings, of free fresh produce since our inception in 2002.**



In 2018, America's Grow-a-Row impacted 65,000 individuals. As the Garden State's leading service agency dedicated to growing, gleaning, and giving fresh fruits and vegetables to those struggling with food insecurity in New Jersey and beyond, America's Grow-a-Row:

- Donated over 1,498,000 pounds, nearly 6 million servings, of farm fresh produce to those in need through multiple channels, including large regional hunger relief partners and smaller local food banks and food pantries.
- Engaged and educated 8,400 volunteers who assisted in the planting, harvesting, and delivering of produce.
- Hosted 335 planting and harvesting events.
- Held 197 Free Farm MarketsSM in underserved communities that lack access to fresh affordable produce, in Camden, East Orange, Hunterdon County, Jersey City, Morristown, and Newark in New Jersey, and Bethlehem and Philadelphia in Pennsylvania.
- Hosted 798 children from low-income areas at our farm for Grow-a-Row Kids Farm Days, when youth spend the day harvesting fresh fruits and vegetables to take home, learning about healthy eating, and preparing a healthy snack.
- Educated 1,400 youth in both low- and high-income classroom settings, and 2,150 youth on the farm about agriculture, hunger, and healthy eating.
- Hosted 1,082 recipient volunteers, providing opportunities for our clients to visit our farm to harvest produce for other communities in need.

Farming

Weather conditions played a significant role in the growing and harvest season in 2018, which was the wettest year in the Garden State on record. From May through November, Hunterdon County received nearly 12 inches of rain above average, including twice the normal amount of rain in August alone. Because of excessive rainfall, America's Grow-a-Row's harvest season ended several weeks early, meaning that our Free Farm Markets wrapped up mid-end of October, rather than mid-November. In spite of the climate conditions, America's Grow-a-Row was able to exceed many of our initial goals, including overall produce distribution; number of Free Farm Markets; number of planting and harvesting events; and number of recipient volunteers.



Growth for our Future

Each year since our beginning in 2002, America's Grow-a-Row has expanded services to help more of our neighbors in need. Steps taken in 2018 to help ensure operational sustainability and program growth include:

- Completed renovation of our main barn and headquarters to provide program space for education and events, including upgrading the existing kitchen into the Farm-to-Fork Juniors' Kitchen with age-appropriate cooking facilities for youth visitors.
- Began construction of a new building to house equipment and to consolidate produce storage and distribution activities, improving safety and efficiency.
- Purchased a third farm property, a 40-acre site directly across from our headquarters that allows us to expand production, rotate crops, and maintain additional acreage adjacent to our primary farm.
- Established a partnership with the Mid-Atlantic Regional Cooperative, a regional produce distribution system for Feeding America that serves 23 food banks in 11 states from New England to Virginia.

In 2018, we bought our third farm property, a 40-acre site directly across from our Pittstown headquarters that allows us to expand production, rotate crops, and maintain additional acreage adjacent to our primary farm. We also completed renovation of our education center and teaching kitchen and began construction of a 5,000-square-foot distribution center.





A look inside the newly renovated Farm-to-Fork Juniors' Kitchen at America's Grow-a-Row's main barn in Pittstown.



America's Grow-a-Row's Pittstown farm: a field of summer kale with the new storage facility under construction in the background.

5-Year Strategic Plan

In 2018, America's Grow-a-Row developed a 5-Year Strategic Plan (2019-2023) outlining the process to broaden our local and regional impact.

The goal of our Farming Strategy over the next five years is to increase the amount of fresh fruits and vegetables that we grow, glean, and give by 3%-5% annually. To achieve this, we will use sustainable farming practices to be good stewards of the land, environment, and soil, which will result in maximizing crop production while being as efficient as possible.

The goal of our Programming Strategy is to touch more than 100,000 lives annually by 2023 through Fresh Produce Initiative services: increasing access to fresh fruits and vegetables, improving knowledge about the benefits of consuming fresh produce for healthy living, and engaging the community to increase food security for our neighbors in need.



Steve Adubato, host of Caucus New Jersey, invited Chip Paillex, President & Founder of America's Grow-a-Row, to participate in a panel discussion focused on food and basic needs insecurity. The panel, featuring three former Russ Berrie Making a Difference Award honorees, discussed the positive impact they are making in underserved communities.



The goal of our Development and Communications Strategy over the next five years is to support the sustained implementation and incremental growth of America's Grow-a-Row in a three-fold fashion:

- Grow the annual fund campaign, increase major donor support, and expand Corporate Social Responsibility engagement, while maintaining our strong corporate and private foundation grant funding.
- Achieve our capital campaign goal of relieving the organization of mortgages on our three farms.
- Expand communications and outreach opportunities to engage the community and inspire generosity in the fight to improve food security.

Our Impact and Collaborations

America's Grow-a-Row owns and operates three farms totaling 328 acres in Hunterdon County, New Jersey and we serve New Jersey, New York City, Philadelphia and eastern Pennsylvania, and, through the Mid-Atlantic Regional Cooperative, the greater northeast region from Maine to Virginia.

Agencies We Serve

Community FoodBank of New Jersey
 City Harvest
 Philabundance
 Mid-Atlantic Regional Cooperative
 Farmers Against Hunger
 Community Soup Kitchen and
 Outreach Center in Morristown
 Food Bank Network of Somerset County
 Franklin Food Bank
 Flemington Area Food Pantry
 Cathedral Kitchen in Camden
...and other local hunger relief agencies

"The Mid Atlantic Regional Cooperative is a network of Feeding America food banks who collectively source and distribute produce from Virginia to Maine. America's Grow-a-Row is a key partner for our food banks in getting nutritious fruits and veggies to people in need. Our operations complement each other: America's Grow-a-Row can focus on the farming, while the MARC enables distribution of much of that produce to communities throughout our region. We are grateful to have a partner in the field who is fighting hunger literally from the ground up. America's Grow-a-Row's produce is making a huge positive impact for our food banks and I look forward to our organizations growing together."

– **James DeMarsh, Director,**
Mid-Atlantic Regional Cooperative

A representative from Philabundance, one of our hunger relief partners, says:

"The majority of people we serve are senior citizens and children, who may not know where their next meal is coming from. To have access to fresh and beautiful produce is vital to our clients' health and well-being."



Free Farm MarketsSM

America's Grow-a-Row hosts Free Farm MarketsSM in underserved neighborhoods that lack access to fresh, affordable produce. Markets are conducted in partnership with local agencies, churches, and community groups in Camden, East Orange, Hunterdon County, Jersey City, Morristown, and Newark in New Jersey, and Bethlehem and Philadelphia in Pennsylvania. At Free Farm MarketsSM, we offer a variety of seasonal fruits and vegetables at no cost to local residents, and share simple, delicious recipes for preparing produce in order to encourage healthy eating habits.



Education

America's Grow-a-Row visits schools and community groups in under-resourced areas to teach about healthy eating. Students learn about the importance of eating fruits and vegetables for strong minds and bodies, and how to prepare a healthy meal with fresh produce. We send ingredients home with the children so that they can introduce the meal and lessons from the classroom into their homes.



America's Grow-a-Row visits schools and community groups in under-resourced areas to offer healthy eating lessons. When we asked the youth why they like cooking with us, their replies included:

"I like the lesson in the beginning and prepping food." – Rebekah

"I learn how I can help Mom cook."
– Jonathan

"I learned new skills, how to cook, and new recipes." – Alexa

"It's fun, I cook new things and it's yummy food!" – Henry

Grow-a-Row Kids Farm Days

America's Grow-a-Row hosts children from underserved communities at our farm during the summer months for a day of learning, farming and fun. At Grow-a-Row Kids Farm Days, children learn about farming and healthy eating, harvest fruits and vegetables to take home, and prepare a snack with fresh produce. Our on-the-farm curriculum includes lessons that introduce children to farming practices and the importance of agriculture in the Garden State, and that farmers provide a year-round variety of healthy choices. This hands-on learning experience helps forge the connection between farm, plate, and a healthy body.



Volunteers



“Bank of America is honored to partner with America’s Grow-a-Row to provide fresh, healthy produce to people struggling with food insecurity throughout New Jersey. Through our Neighborhood Builders program, Bank of America continues to invest in organizations that improve economic mobility and financial independence in our communities.”

**– Robert Doherty, Bank of America
New Jersey Market President**

“This organization is near and dear to my heart and personal life journey because even from the beginning of my life, as a baby, I was hungry. Over time, I learned to reach out to organizations like America’s Grow-a-Row to help me with my own survival. I know from firsthand experience that there are not enough healthy options at food pantries. Life sometimes doesn’t even give you any lemons to start off with; sometimes you have to grow them to begin making lemonade! After my long journey out of hunger and poverty, I know that it is my duty to help pay it forward and pay it back to organizations that were there for me.

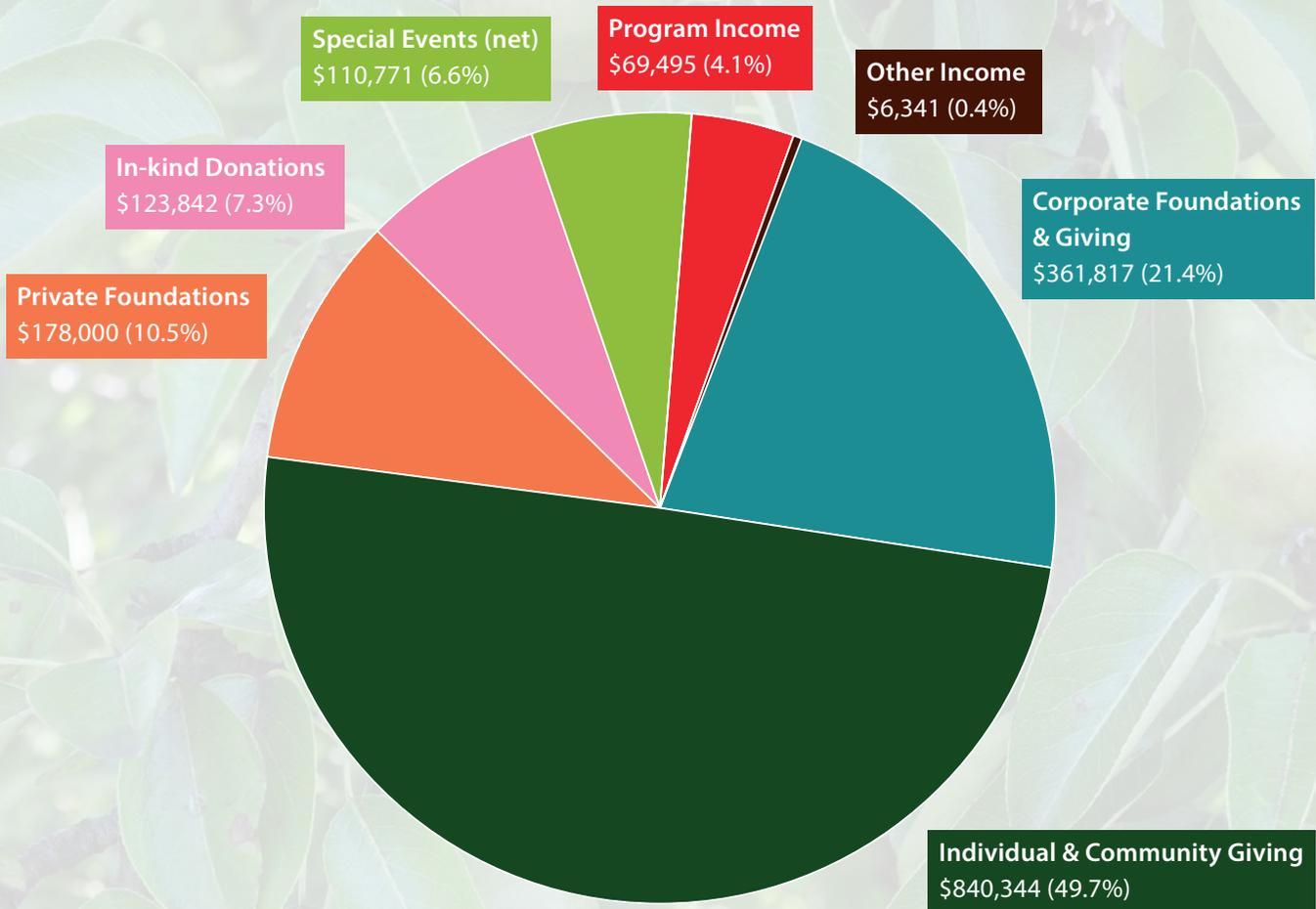
My ambition to contribute has helped to cultivate multiple relationships. While volunteering I have met some amazing friends at the farm. Some of those people I assist outside of the farm to help them get back on their feet. America’s Grow-a-Row has not only served as a platform for me to fulfill my personal passion of volunteerism and paying it forward but has also enabled me to pay it back and help get others involved in the process!”



*Katie Sapio, recipient and volunteer,
in the fields at our Pittstown farm.*

2018 Total Revenue

(Operating and Capital)



At the completion of our 2018 audit, it has been determined that 86% of our total expenses were programming-related.

Statement of Financial Position

December 31, 2018 and 2017

ASSETS	2018	2017
<i>Current assets</i>		
Cash	\$576,461	\$689,439
Certificate of deposit	\$151,383	\$150,953
Grants and pledges receivable	\$83,389	\$223,256
Prepaid expenses and other assets	\$39,410	\$25,433
Land, property and equipment, net	\$3,760,473	\$2,875,688
Intangible assets, net	\$283	\$333
TOTAL ASSETS	\$4,611,399	\$3,965,102
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	2018	2017
<i>Liabilities</i>		
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$25,690	\$19,363
Credit cards payable	\$1,477	\$523
Accrued payroll and payroll taxes	\$13,938	\$13,627
Deferred revenue and refundable advances		\$6,000
Long-term debt	\$1,840,914	\$1,337,644
TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$1,882,019	\$1,377,157
<i>Net assets</i>		
Without donor restrictions	\$2,166,704	\$1,909,240
With donor restrictions	\$562,676	\$678,705
TOTAL NET ASSETS	\$ 2,729,380	\$ 2,587,945
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	\$ 4,611,399	\$ 3,965,102

Statement of Activities

Year Ended December 31, 2018

	Without donor restrictions	With donor restrictions	Total
<i>Support and revenue</i>			
Contributions	\$825,485	\$514,676	\$1,340,161
Donated produce, net of costs	\$100,394		\$100,394
Special events, net	\$110,771		\$110,771
Contribution - mortgage forgiveness	\$40,000		\$40,000
Program income	\$69,495		\$69,495
Donated services and materials	\$23,448		\$23,448
Other income	\$4,131		\$4,131
Interest income	\$2,210		\$2,210
	\$1,175,934	\$514,676	\$1,690,610
Net assets released from restrictions	\$630,705	(\$630,705)	
TOTAL SUPPORT AND REVENUE	\$1,806,639	(\$116,029)	\$1,690,610
<i>Expenses</i>			
Program services	\$1,338,673		\$1,338,673
Management and general	\$43,345		\$43,345
Fundraising	\$167,157		\$167,157
Total expenses	\$1,549,175		\$1,549,175
Change in net assets	\$257,464	(\$116,029)	\$141,435
Net assets – beginning of year	\$1,909,240	\$678,705	\$2,587,945
NET ASSETS – END OF YEAR	\$2,166,704	\$562,676	\$2,729,380

Mission Statement

America's Grow-a-Row's mission is to positively impact as many lives as possible through a volunteer effort of planting, picking, rescuing, and delivering free fresh produce.

At America's Grow-a-Row, we:

- Provide fresh produce to those in need
- Educate people of all generations about hunger and ways to help
 - Introduce our youth to farming and healthy eating
- Cultivate in tomorrow's leaders the habit of giving back to the community
 - Contribute to the sustainability of agriculture

Board of Trustees

Juliana Drinane, Chair

Gregory Johnson, Vice Chair

Ron Kazel, Treasurer

Tim Barckholtz, Secretary

Phil Beekman

Robin Hoppe

Chip Paillex

Fabian Rojas

Jerry Walker



Chip Paillex, as President & Founder of America's Grow-a-Row, has been recognized as a CNN Hero and a Ford Motor Company Go Further Everyday Hero.

These programs spotlight individuals who help our communities, our neighbors, and our world.





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