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Of interest to editors and journalists covering: Hunger in America, Gardening, Sustainable Communities and Global Warming

NEW WEBSITE ENABLES LOCAL FOOD PANTRIES TO GET FRESHLY PICKED PRODUCE FROM LOCAL BACKYARD GARDENER'S EXCESS HARVEST

Excess produce usually left to rot in gardens now being donated to neighborhood food pantries

WEST MILFORD, NJ. – May 22, 2009

The AmpleHarvest.org campaign has announced a new web site (www.AmpleHarvest.org) that enables neighborhood food pantries to be easily located by local backyard gardeners wishing to share their excess garden bounty with neighbors in need.

Local food pantries usually receive their supplies from regional food banks, government programs and neighborhood donations. They generally do not include fresh produce because of distribution and storage issues leaving food pantry clients with access only to canned vegetables and fruit.

With one out of eight American families now relying on pantries to help feed them, the pantries often have a hard time meeting the demand.

At the same time, millions of backyard gardeners across America frequently find that their vegetable and fruit gardens provide far more produce than they can possibly use or share with friends. The remainder is often either left to rot in the garden or put into the trash, which produces methane as it decomposes - a global warming gas.

Gardeners who want to share part of their harvest are often unable to find local pantries because they typically don't have yellow page listings or an Internet presence.

To address this, the web site enables food pantries to register their name, phone, address, an optional photograph of the pantry to make it easier to find, and day[s] of the week and time of the day they'll accept the gardeners produce.

Once a pantry has registered, backyard gardeners in the region can use the site to get a listing of all of the pantries within a specified distance of their home, along with detailing driving instructions to the pantry.

According to its founder, Gary Oppenheimer, "Two years ago, my own garden grew more produce than we could possibly use, and I quickly found that there are only so many cucumbers you can give to friends and still have them call you a friend. Our community garden also left a lot of produce to rot on the vines. When I searched on the Internet for pantries, the nearest one listed was 25 miles away even though my own town has five. That was when it became clear that AmpleHarvest.org was desperately needed. The initial effort is focused on getting as many pantries to register as possible before the gardeners start harvesting their produce in a few months".

AmpleHarvest.org is run on an all volunteer basis (including two outstanding web designers who donated their time and talent). There are no costs to the food pantries or the gardeners for using the site, nor is there any advertising on the site.

The AmpleHarvest.org campaign is a grassroots effort to diminish hunger in America using already existing resources without spending any public or private monies.

About AmpleHarvest.org

AmpleHarvest.org is an outgrowth of the Ample Harvest program at the West Milford Community Garden, operated by Sustainable West Milford, a 501(3)(c) organization. Due the urgency of the hunger crisis in America, AmpleHarvest.org went from initial conception to release in only two months.

For more information on the campaign, visit www.AmpleHarvest.org or call 973-409-4093.

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