

The Lasting Sustainability of AmpleHarvest.org's Impact

The question of nonprofit program sustainability asked by many foundations essentially boils down to “how will you continue to do your good work in my target area after my funding for you ends”.

For most food programs and most food waste programs, their capacity to supply food and/or end the waste of food involves their ongoing engagement while AmpleHarvest.org's solution calls for a one time only engagement (connecting a gardener to a local food pantry) which results in a permanent and self-sustaining solution. This networking is normally accomplished on a non-geographically focused nationwide basis that progresses at a nominal rate but can be significantly accelerated and hyper focused to a geographic region when funding for the region is provided.



In the decade since AmpleHarvest.org launched, about 20% of America's gardeners have learned about donating food and about 25% of the nation's pantries have become accessible to gardeners thanks to AmpleHarvest.org and this slow but steady expansion pace will continue for years to come. Funding for specific geographic regions enables AmpleHarvest.org to significantly accelerate the growth of the grower-pantry network resulting in more food getting to more hungry families many years earlier than it otherwise would have. In short, the permanent improvement in the health of a community occurs which in turn can free up resources to be applied to other local issues.

AmpleHarvest.org's work by default, is sustainable and sustained after funding ends because our efforts focus on systemic change rather than symptomatic response. Put another way, we ourselves are not getting healthy fresh food to food pantries but are rather orchestrating a permanent change of awareness and behavior of the gardeners – a change that does not go away with the funding.

Like someone donating old coats to a thrift shop, once gardeners know that they are allowed to donate fresh food to a pantry and learn where and when to donate the food by using the AmpleHarvest.org pantry registry donating becomes routine. In short, AmpleHarvest.org facilitates the communal connection between the gardener and the food pantry which is then followed by the gardener donating food for the rest of their gardening life.

Our data shows that 80% of gardeners have always wanted to share their excess harvest, but understood from the “jars, cans, boxes only – no fresh food” admonition at food drives that fresh food donations were not accepted. Furthermore, food pantries and their operating hours are generally not publically known. AmpleHarvest.org addresses both.



AmpleHarvest.org unleashes passions the gardeners have long felt but were unable to act on. Not only have gardeners wanted to donate their excess harvest, half also reported a desire to grow more explicitly for donation once they knew that they could donate the food – awareness provided by AmpleHarvest.org's public awareness work. AmpleHarvest.org does not have to urge gardeners to act – it merely has to enable them to act. Furthermore, one out of every five food pantries report gardeners returning in the non-growing season to make monetary or purchased food donations further enhancing community engagement.

This engagement between the gardener and the food pantry, once established, is permanent. Once AmpleHarvest.org is “planted” in a community, there is a viral spread of the donation opportunity among gardeners which continues to reduce the waste of food and expand the supply to the food pantry for years into the future.

When AmpleHarvest.org's funding for targeted outreach in a community ends, the food donations continue, but the expansion rate of the number of gardeners connected to the food pantries reverts to the slower nationwide trend – but it never ends.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Jay Appenli". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.