

AmpleHarvest.org^(SM)

"Sharing your garden bounty with Neighbors in Need"

"And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corner of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest; thou shalt leave them for the poor and the stranger"
Leviticus 23:22

The Problem: America has 50+ million food insecure people... people who are either hungry or people who are at real risk of being hungry.

If 50+ million is just another number to you, look at the map at the right. 50+ million is equal to the combined populations of 23 of our 50 states. According to recently released USDA statistics, one out of every four children under six now lives in a food insecure home.



The Opportunity: At the same time, 40+ million Americans grow food in home gardens... often growing far more than they can use, preserve or give to friends. The rest is often left to rot in gardens. This food, when thrown away, creates a pound of methane per pound of food – a global warming gas twenty times worse than CO².

Our entire food system farms, factories, stores, restaurants and kitchens waste food; about a pound/person a day or 100 billion pounds a year. The illustration on the right represents the food lost by a family of four in a month. This statistic does not include the food lost in backyard gardens around the country, which up to now has been ignored.

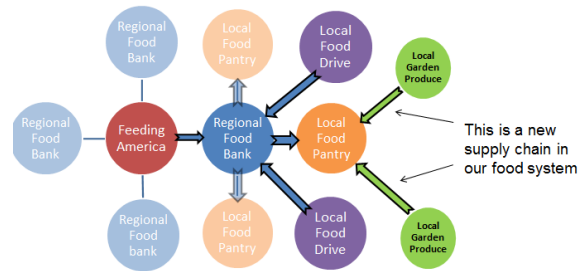


The impact of America's food insecurity coupled with the lost produce has our neediest people seeking the cheapest calories they can get - often processed or fast food laden with fats, salts and sugars. This is making America both an obese and malnourished nation at the same time.



The Challenge: These people often rely on local food pantries to help feed their families. Food and money comes from government and private sources through

national organizations (such as Feeding America) as well as more than 200 regional food banks and is then distributed on a monthly or bi-monthly basis to America's 33,500+ local food pantries. Even food donated by the community during food drives is typically routed to the regional food banks and only later delivered to food pantries. These delivery cycles preclude the delivery of fresh food limiting the pantries to canned and processed produce. If locally grown produce however could be delivered directly to the neighborhood food pantry, it would bypass the routing problem and immediately provide a free source of fresh produce to the people who most need it.



The Solution: In May 2009, we introduced the AmpleHarvest.org Campaign - a national non-profit registry of food pantries enabling millions of home gardeners to easily find a local food pantry eager to accept their excess garden produce. This opened the door for fresh food to displace canned produce, for broadening the variety of food available at the pantries, for introducing fresh food to

children, for keeping produce out of landfills, and for enabling people to diminish hunger, malnutrition and systemic poverty in their own community without spending a dime by simply reaching into their backyards instead of their back pockets.

The Thought Process: In the building of AmpleHarvest.org, a number of Jewish concepts contributed to the design of the site.

1. People should be helping their neighbors. (Tzedakah)
2. The excess food from our gardens should be set aside for the needy in our community. (*Leviticus*)
3. The food pantries are encouraged to arrange for the donation of locally grown produce a few hours before the clients come in to prevent the possible humiliation that would result from one neighbor donating food while another was there to receive some. (Maimonides)
4. Excess food should not be thrown into trash dumps as it contributes to the waste-stream and methane (CO²) emissions. (Tikkun Olam)
5. Local gardeners eager to donate food usually don't know where to take it and local food pantries eager to receive the food don't know how to reach growers. AmpleHarvest.org enables 40+ million home gardeners to easily find a local food pantry eager to accept it. (Shidduch)
6. And while not explicitly stated in AmpleHarvest.org, common growing techniques including crop rotation lend themselves towards the idea of letting the land rest periodically and letting any remaining crops be available to the needy. (Shmita)



Not everyone in America has land or even a back yard for growing food, and not everyone has a green thumb. For those with no “land,” they can grow herbs in kitchen windows, tomatoes in containers on their decks, patios and roofs. For many, community gardens become their remote backyard. For those without a trace of green in their thumbs, AmpleHarvest.org has iPhone and Android apps enabling shoppers to purchase store bought items for the pantries, buying exactly what the pantries say they most need.

Making it work: The AmpleHarvest.org Campaign is a new solution to diminishing hunger and improving the environment in America. **We do not grow, make or move food but we do make it possible for those who do to share their excess with local food pantries across America.** Additionally, the design built into the AmpleHarvest.org Campaign takes advantage of “just in time” inventory logic used in business to assure that food pantries won’t need additional storage or refrigeration, donors and recipients (who may well be neighbors) won’t cross paths and that the food donated will be fresher than the same food available at local supermarkets. It’s Google for pantries.

The Bigger Picture:

Food insecurity along with the ready availability of cheap calories in many communities has created the apparent contradiction that millions of Americans are both well fed and malnourished simultaneously. People eating potato chips instead of potatoes and fruit drinks instead of whole fruit has contributed to our epidemic of obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure and other health issues. Getting fresh produce into food pantries is an important step towards helping people, especially our children, learn that apples don’t normally come pre-sliced in cellophane, peas normally come in pods and not cans, and carrots are normally crunchy and can be fun to eat. **Our solution to hunger and malnutrition is in your back yard.** Here are some thoughts for making our solution, yours too:

1. Understand that one out of six Americans doesn’t have enough food for their families. Many are recent victims of our economy who are “middle class white collar” people who for the first time need the assistance of their community. It is important to know that being hungry, while unfortunate, is nothing to be ashamed of or to pity. Indeed, it is likely some of your friends live in food insecure homes.
2. Understand that growing food is part of our heritage as Jews and that it’s a mitzvah to grow food. It could be a farm, a backyard garden or just herbs in a flower pot. For even young children, simply planting the leftover horseradish root from the Passover Seder table in a flower pot will grow more horseradish for their Seder a year later!

"Within one hour of registering Community Resource Center on the AmpleHarvest.org website I received a call from a local family of four with 10 orange trees."

- Community Resource Center Food Pantry, CA

"AmpleHarvest.org has been a huge benefit to our partner agencies and has really helped getting fresh fruits to those in need."

- Feeding America of San Diego, CA

"We have been trying to find a good way to communicate to gardeners which food shelves they can donate to. I think ampleharvest.org is the missing link we have been looking for."

- Second Harvest Heartland, MN

".. [our food bank] has sent your website and produce offer out to us....I do have to say 'Hot Diggity!!'"

- LIFE Food Pantry, Loveland OH

3. Understand that sharing, especially excess food, is the right thing to do. By way of example, many years ago, EVERYTHING went in the trash blighting America. Now much of that goes into recycling. Similarly, excess food can also be “recovered”... from a restaurant in take home containers to be offered to someone on the street, from the supermarket in “dented” cans for a local food drive, or from your backyard garden to be donated to a local food pantry (see www.AmpleHarvest.org). Food should never be wasted, especially when people in the community are hungry. Follow our mantra of “No Food Left Behind”.
4. Help gardeners in your own community learn about the opportunity to donate from their garden by distributing the flyer at AmpleHarvest.org/gardenshop. Ask local garden shops/nurseries and community bulletin boards to post it in conspicuous locations.
5. If you belong to a community garden, urge other members to donate their excess – especially if they leave for a summer vacation. Ditto for farmers markets.
6. Tell your friends nationwide (by email, Facebook, twitter, texting) about hunger and about the AmpleHarvest.org solution. The more people know about their opportunity to diminish hunger, the less hunger there will be and the healthier the country will become.
7. Urge CSA members to donate the excess/unwanted allocation when the farmer provides more than they can use. See AmpleHarvest.org/csa to learn more.
8. Help us help more of the needy in your community get fresh locally grown produce by finding a local food pantry in your own neighborhood or one affiliated with a synagogue, church, mosque, JCC, YMCA, etc. Give the flyer at AmpleHarvest.org/pantry to the pantry manager. More than 4,100 food pantries nationwide are on AmpleHarvest.org today. Our goal is 10,000 in 3 years.
9. Reach out to members of the press and media as well as your favorite bloggers to urge them to write/report on the AmpleHarvest.org Campaign. A complete press kit is available at AmpleHarvest.org/press
10. Lastly, help diminish hunger in your community by asking your rabbi, educator or other lay leader to spend a Shabbat talking about it. They can visit AmpleHarvest.org/jewish to get ideas.

The AmpleHarvest.org Campaign envisions an America where millions of gardeners eliminate malnutrition and hunger in their own community.

Resources:

Learn more about AmpleHarvest.org at www.AmpleHarvest.org/faq

Learn more about Hunger in America at www.AmpleHarvest.org/hunger

TV/radio/print/online coverage is available at www.AmpleHarvest.org/news

Ideas to help your community are available at www.AmpleHarvest.org/waystohelp

Flier for your synagogue newsletter at www.AmpleHarvest.org/synagogue

This brochure is available at www.ampleharvest.org/JewishConcepts

Personal or foundation donations can be made at www.AmpleHarvest.org/donate

Special note: If you write about AmpleHarvest.org, please use the proper name “AmpleHarvest.org” or “the AmpleHarvest.org Campaign” and not “Ample Harvest”. Correct use of the name is very important to help us make the campaign a continued success. Thanks.