WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION
Kitsap County

# KITSAP HARVEST 2021

## BY THE NUMBERS

**Food collection**:

- Urban Gleans (103 gleans) 10,840
- Grow A Row 3,647
- Farm 809
- Other 3,245
- Foodbank Recovery / Grocery Rescue 87,331
- TOTAL 105,872

**Food Distribution**:

- Distributed a total of 105,872 lbs. (55,483 lbs. fresh food)
- Distributed fresh produce to 33 organizations consistently, served a total of 64 sites at least one time.
- Served approximately 3,000 individuals

**Volunteers**:

- 1,108.55 hours
- Two driving teams for distribution
- 3-6 dedicated sorting volunteers on Thursday's
- 5 Dedicated produce pickups from Grow-A-Row project
- 4 Dedicated Glean Leads

## ISSUE

Equitable access to fresh nutritious foods and healthy activity is a public health concern as fresh food access is directly tied to a myriad of health problems including diabetes, increased rates of obesity and other diet related diseases. When produce is made readily available, families, individuals and seniors benefit by making it a part of their meals and health plan.

According to the Emergency Food Assistance Program Closeout Report: State Fiscal Year 2019, "Client demographics by age group have changed dramatically over the past decade. Specifically, the percentage of senior clients has increased from 12.59% to 20.3% over the past decade. The percentage of children has decreased from 39.16% to 32.37% and, adults of state consistent at around 48%." There is a continued trend of seeing increases in new senior clients primarily as baby boomers continue to leave the workforce and find themselves on a fixed income. That growing senior population along with the increasing need for equitable services for all, necessitates us to provide more resources and food access options. The driving focus is reducing barriers to access by meeting people where they are at. That means looking at transportation, scheduling, and the qualifying of services as often experienced by people in need.

## RESPONSE

In 2016, a work group determined that gleaning was the easiest and least expensive way to increase access to fresh food, address food waste, and better support community health locally. Gleaning initiatives are a powerful and successful strategy at increasing consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables and improving eating habits. Kitsap Harvest aims to create a sustainable and community-based system of moving local produce that may otherwise go to waste, providing it to low income and low access areas across Kitsap County. We target communities that suffer, on average, more disparity in resource acquisition. Direct service to these sites, or most used resource hubs, helps bridge the gap in food access. Beside directly serving these sites, we work with organizations who have similar shared goals of helping people acquire needed resources such as health services, childcare, youth services, veteran services, and immigrant resources. We can alleviate barriers by meeting people where they are at, bridging the gap, and delivering food that last mile.

**kitsap.wsu.edu**

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## QUOTES

"Produce is expensive, many of us cannot afford to buy them, so to be able to have it for free helps us save money and helps us with our prescribed medical diets since a lot of us have Diabetes and Heart Disease. When the donations are dropped off to our building, it has become a way for us to socialize and see each other which has otherwise been hard to do during COVID. These donations have been so beneficial!"

*- Resident at Madrona Manor (Senior Housing)*

**"In addition to the positive comments from clients about the food, distribution days became a social event. Residents at the apartment complexes took it upon themselves to organize the food 'Farmer's Market Style' creating attractive displays of the produce. While not a stated project outcome, building community around food during the pandemic serves as an important reminder of the need for connection around the table."**

***- Paisley Gallagher, Kitsap Harvest***

## IMPACTS

Our partnership with the Central Kitsap Foodbank in 2020 was insightful and has led us to concentrate on developing consistent deliveries to low income/ low access sites, with a senior focus, providing the main essentials for healthy meals. In 2021, the program was able to provide consistent bi-monthly direct deliveries via our mobile truck to 12 low-income family or senior sites. In addition, 21 more sites received produce donations less frequently. Our services provided approximately 3,000 individuals access to fresh foods.

The program recovered 105,872 pounds of food from food bank rescue sites, gardens, farms, farmers market donations and grocery stores. In addition to those outlets, Kitsap Harvest launched a "Grow A Row" pilot program to increase community grown produce. Setting up donation stations throughout our communities not only reduces home gardener food waste but also makes it easier for home gardeners to donate.

Finally, with assistance from local funders and community partners the program was able to create a dedicated aggregation and distribution space at the Kitsap Harvest warehouse. The warehouse has provided the ability for a dedicated sorting and distribution schedule, where boxes are created every Monday and Thursday for delivery.  Additionally, the space has allowed the program to successfully build a system of volunteers to support the increase of access to foods across the county. Volunteer roles included sorting and packing volunteers, two sets of route drivers, and many volunteers picking food up via gleaning, Farmers Market collection, or Donation Station.

Funders as well as our many partnerships, have been instrumental in providing the resources and resiliency for our program work. Our funders and partners understand the importance of this work, and we are so incredibly grateful for them in helping provide fresh food access to our community.

Paisley Gallagher, Food Access
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