



2023: A Ten-Year Vision for Growing Hope

In 2023, because of Growing Hope, we envision Healthy People, Healthy Economies, and Healthy Places in Ypsilanti and beyond. By 2023, our rooting in the Ypsilanti community will have continued and deepened, as we've created a *model* *just, healthy, and sustainable* local food system that positively impacts many aspects of Ypsilanti-area community, economic, and home life. Ypsilanti has a local food system in which all of our citizens—particularly those with barriers due to class, race, culture, language, ability, and mobility—can access healthy-affordable (and whenever possible) local food, can grow and prepare their own healthy harvests, earn a living in this realm, and can realize their dreams of being an entrepreneur in our healthy food system.

Healthy food is in demand, and a norm all around us. Our young people are healthier as this local system influences and affords them opportunities from cradle to career, including job and leadership opportunities that lead them into careers in this area; our schools also model healthy food environments and school gardens are the norm. Our leadership is strong and diverse in all aspects in this sphere—business owners, elected officials, young people, community organizers, faith communities, and nonprofit leadership—and there are opportunities for connections and sharing among all who want to engage. Our Ypsilanti community is overflowing with gardens and urban farms in many traditional and new forms; Ypsilanti is a supportive and model area for this and other green economic and community development, including through policies, incentive, and support programs. Healthy food system and local farm businesses are abundant and impact the local economy and include growing-distributing-processing-selling-eating-composting, and Growing Hope has modeled and incubated many that sprout and put down roots here as well, adding permanent local jobs to the economy. Food desert is a term of the past as we've actualized ways to help people get to and grow their own healthy and local options, including through traditional and creative retail settings and at schools and other institutions. Growing Hope has demonstration and training sites, farmers markets, education programs, and enterprise spaces (for ourselves and others) throughout the community—our presence and our brand is positive and inclusive. The food system is partially what makes the Ypsilanti area a great place to live, work, go to school, and play.

Our work, however, is *never* done in a vacuum, so assume this vision is the result of Growing Hope AND many other partners and players, in public, private, and nonprofit sectors alike.

And, our impact extends well beyond Ypsilanti's borders, as our best practices are shared and other communities in Michigan and beyond are trained in them. We're known nationally as a model in both specific areas of work and our sum impact in our community. We quantify, qualify, and share our impact on our own and through research partnerships. People come to Ypsilanti from across the country to learn and train in these best practices, and many even relocate to our area become a part of this vision.