GROWING HOPE

2021 ANNUAL REPORT

Dear Growing Hope Friends,

2021 was a year of growth and expansion for this organization. We have you, our community partners, our program participants, our market vendors, our donors, our kitchen makers, and our farmers market shoppers to thank! You are an essential part of the vibrant local food community that Growing Hope supports and that supports Growing Hope.

We are grateful for you and for the opportunity to learn and grow and work with you in this important movement that centers food sovereignty and food justice at its core.

With gratitude,
Cynthia VanRenterghem
Executive Director

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To Growing Hope's Family and Friends,

I remain grateful for your ongoing support of Growing Hope. Your partnership in fighting for food justice and an equitable local food system is integral to Growing Hope's continued work and programming. I am proud of our accomplishments in 2021, and I look forward to our continued growth in 2022 and beyond. Thank you for being a part of Growing Hope.

With thanks,

Sincerely,
Sarah Wixson
Board President

2021

We laid the foundation for renewal, approaching each program area with a mindset of intentional growth and sustainability for the future.

Here are some of the year's highlights:

Developing Our Roots to Expand Our Reach

In March, we completed our incubator kitchen expansion, creating a better equipped kitchen space to support local food entrepreneurs.

The Ypsi Area Online Market continued to offer a safe and convenient option throughout 2021 and we were able to bring back the in-person Tuesday Downtown Market and Saturday Depot Town Market.

The Teen Leadership Program welcomed more teens than in years prior, and we made our Youth Programs Manager role into a full time position to build upon our programming in schools.

We realized a decade-long dream of solarizing the urban farm, thereby reducing our carbon footprint and our electrical bills into the future.

Most notably, we completed a successful campaign which raised funds to retire both of our mortgages and build an operating and maintenance reserve for the first time in the history of the organization.

2021 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Our Farm & Gardens and Youth & Schools programs take place on the Growing Hope Urban Farm

On Our Farm

Our urban farm is a community based garden education site in Ypsilanti. We offer educational programs for gardeners of all levels, volunteers, and youth of all ages. Our produce is grown to sell at our farmers markets and to donate to our program participants, our community produce cart, and local food pantries.

Farm Manager, Charlotte, harvested these radishes on the farm for the Community Produce Cart

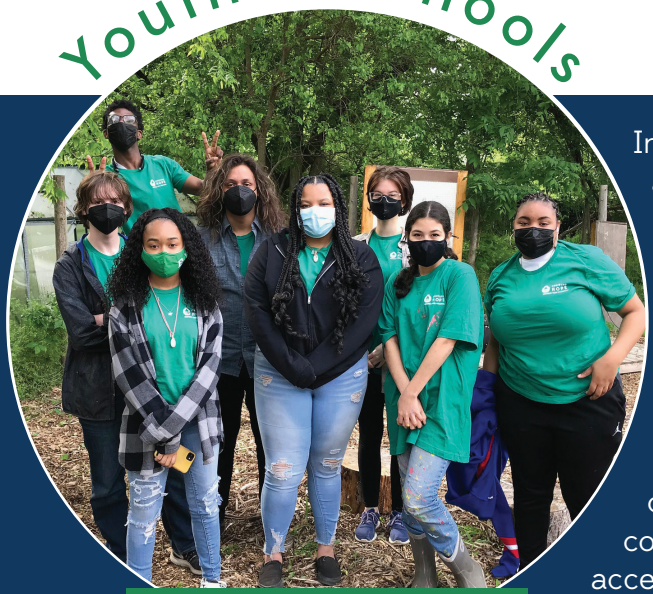
Farm & Gardens

$10,400 worth of produce from our farm was donated to food pantries and distributed through our free Community Produce Cart and farm shares for our Teen Leadership Program participants.

9,000 vegetable seedlings were given to area gardeners for home and community gardens.

1,700 seed packets were donated to home gardeners, community gardens, and food pantries.

Youth & Schools



Teen Program staff stand in the Children's Garden at the farm

In addition to expanding our Summer Teen Program, we brought on a full time Youth Programs Manager to increase programming in schools and field trips at the marketplace and on the farm.

During the summer, Teens weeded, harvested and worked on farm infrastructure projects, as well as sold produce at our farmers markets.

During the school year, they studied companion plants, seed spacing, and crop planning to design a section of the farm they call the 'Oasis Garden' and created educational materials for community members to learn about Growing Hope and ways to access and maximize fresh produce

16
teens participated in our paid 8 week Summer Teen Program.

8
teens participated in our paid After School Program.

Youth Program Manager, Esha, with a field trip group on the farm

2021 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Our Farmers Markets and Food Entrepreneurship programs are based out of the Ypsilanti Farmers MarketPlace

At Our Marketplace

Our Ypsilanti Farmers MarketPlace is a hub for local food activity. The Marketplace hosts the Growing Hope Incubator Kitchen, the Downtown Ypsilanti Farmers Market, and is a distribution center for the Ypsi Area Online Market.

Farmers Markets

Our Downtown outdoor market returned in 2021 (after being on hiatus for 2020) and we continued the Saturday Depot Town market and the Ypsi Area Online Market.

$365,000 of local foods and goods were sold through the Ypsi Area Online Market and Ypsi Farmers Markets.

23% of all market sales used food assistance.

70 local farmers and food producers sold their products through the Ypsilanti Farmers Markets and Ypsi Area Online Market.

3,969 orders were placed through the online market.

A market patron peruses produce at the Saturday Depot Town farmers market

Food Entrepreneurship

The newly expanded Growing Hope Incubator Kitchen adds 800 square feet of prep and storage space, as well as a walk-in cooler and freezer, and additional commercial equipment. Together, the kitchen and online market are a low cost, low barrier, one-stop-shop for Ypsilanti area farmers and small scale food producers to grow their businesses, connect with their peers, and - eventually - outgrow our space.

21
local businesses utlized the incubator kitchen.

68
students took part in cooking demonstrations at the incubator kitchen during a field trip.

Incubator Kitchen Manager, Bee

Beara Bakes was able to blossom in the newly expanded kitchen

Volunteer of the Year: Linda Conzelmann

Linda put in an impressive 80 hours at the farm and online market, and we would like to honor her time and dedication as our Volunteer of the Year! Linda shared why she volunteers with Growing Hope:

"I enthusiastically support the mission of Growing Hope and the creative ways it is carried out from the farmers markets and online market, the teen internships, the school field trips, the community garden box program, the incubator kitchen, the urban farm and more. A few years ago, I began looking to volunteer with a community organization helping to address local food insecurity. Happily, I found Growing Hope and have volunteered at both the online market and at the farm. I enjoy working with the other volunteers and team members, and I always learn something new. I can't say enough about the good that is happening at Growing Hope. The name pretty much says it all!"

SUSTAINABILITY CAMPAIGN

In 2021, we successfully launched and fully funded the Growing Hope Sustainability Campaign, a fundraising campaign to retire the mortgages on both our properties and create an operating and maintenance reserve. Due to the generosity of a group of donors, we achieved our goal in record time and paid off both mortgages by the end of the year.

Being financially free from our mortgages fundamentally changes our long-term outlook. We can seek new opportunities to foster transformative change in our local food system that we could only dream about in the past.

Our sincerest thanks to our generous Sustainability Campaign donors:

Patti Aaron
Susan and Ritch Allison
LizAnn and Gerry Anderson
Jamie and Cheryl Buhr
Stephanie and Larry Doll
Rosie Jowitt and Matthew VanBesien
Nate and Elissa Lowry
Dave and Louise Lutton
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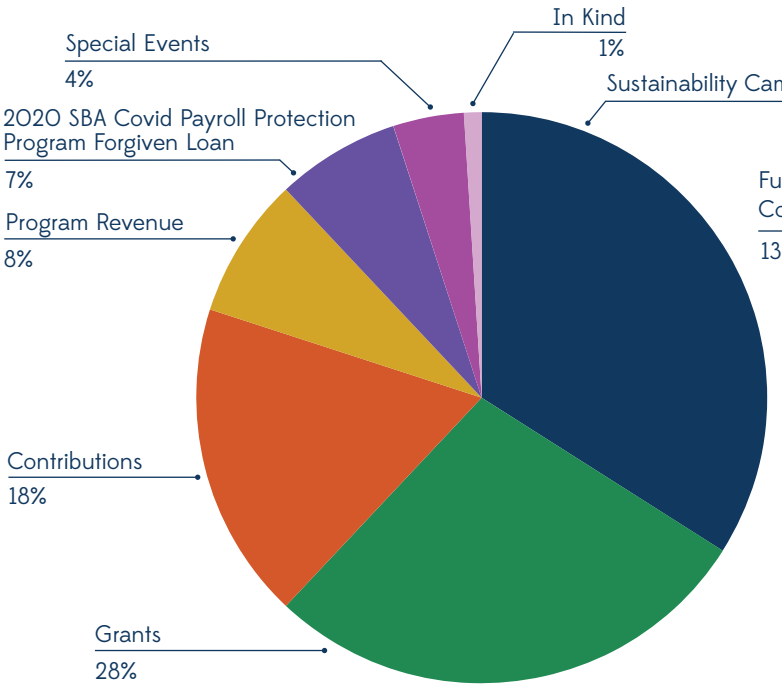
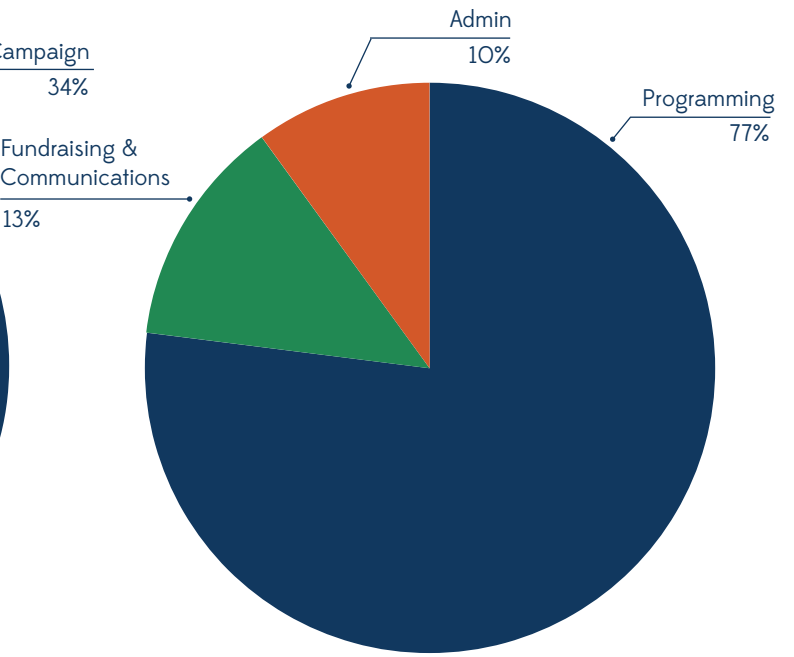
FINANCIAL DATA

2021 REVENUE SOURCES



Total Revenue: $1,475,000

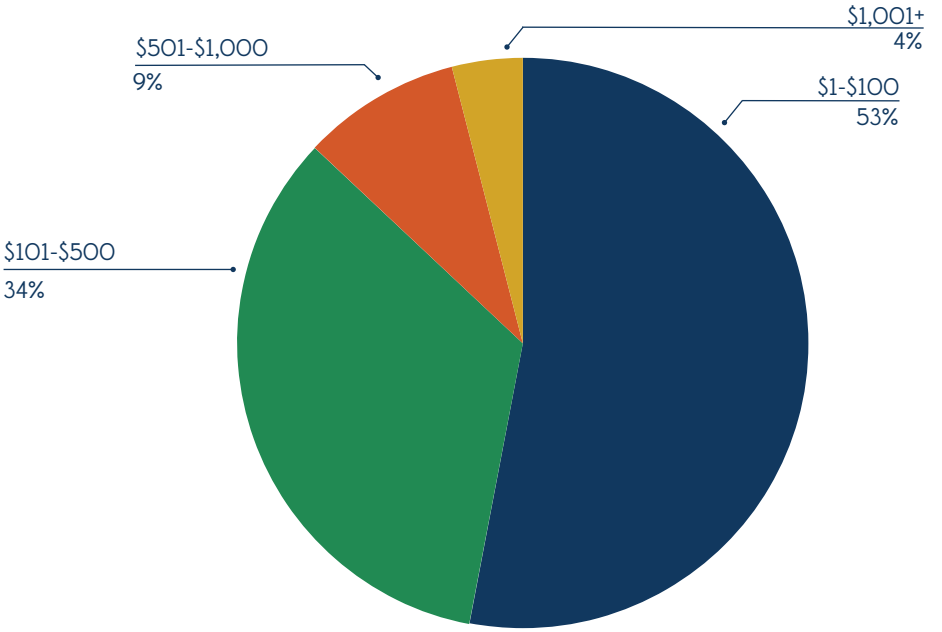
2021 EXPENSES



Total Expenses: $832,000

Every Donation Makes a Difference

A Breakdown of the Individual Donations we Received in 2021



PARTNERSHIP & SUPPORT

It takes a community to impact a community. As an independent 501(c)(3) organization, we could not do what we do without the generous support of numerous individuals, foundations, and corporations.

We owe tremendous thanks to the following foundations and corporate and individual donors who have made financial commitments to Growing Hope:

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- Ann Arbor Thrift Shop
- Arbor Trust Wealth Advisors
- Bank of Ann Arbor
- Beara Bakes
- Brown Chapel AME Church
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- TRUE Community Credit Union
- Unity Vibration Kombucha
- Washtenaw County OCD
- Whole Foods Market
- Worker Bee Jewelry
- Ypsilanti Community Schools
- Zingerman's

FOUNDATION SUPPORTERS

- Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation
- Carls Foundation
- Community Foundation of Southeast Michigan
- DTE Energy Foundation
- James A. & Faith Knight Foundation
- Jenkins Foundation
- Key Bank Foundation
- Michigan Health Endowment Fund
- Ralph Wilson Foundation
- The Good Coin Foundation
- Towsley Foundation
- United Way of Washtenaw County
- United Way for Southeast Michigan

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If we made a mistake or you would like to be listed differently, please email Liz at elizabeth@growinghope.net.

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