

March 2016

# 2015 NH Gleans Annual Report

## Introduction

NH Gleans is a network of organizations working to increase the availability of fresh and local produce that is distributed to and through NH food pantries, soup kitchens, community suppers and schools. To do this, NH Gleans harvests produce from local farms and farmers markets that would otherwise have not been harvested or sold and distributes the food to organizations that can use it. Established in 2013 with a generous gift through the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation's You Have Our Trust fund, NH Gleans employs gleaning coordinators across the state to work with farms and organizations during the growing season. Thanks to their hard work and dedication, over 204,000 pounds of fresh produce has been gleaned and distributed over the last three years to the people in New Hampshire who most need it.



NH Gleans works to increase availability of fresh and local produce that is distributed to and through NH food pantries, soup kitchens, community suppers, and schools.

## Highlights

Gleaning Region	Lead Organization	Pounds Gleaned
Belknap	Belknap County Conservation District	2,475
Cheshire	The Community Kitchen, Inc.	52,472
Hillsborough	Hillsborough County Conservation District	27,000
Merrimack	Merrimack County Conservation District	13,252
North Country	Taproot Farm & Environmental Education Center	1,544
Seacoast	NH Farm to School, Seacoast Eat Local, NOFA NH	11,963

### The Community Kitchen in Keene

This year marked the third season of the gleaning program at Keene's Community Kitchen, Inc. The charitable gardening work in the local community expanded significantly this year, which prompted the hiring of a seasonal Garden Harvest Coordinator to help support these projects. The Community Kitchen continued to do community outreach and education around food and hunger such as cooking/food preservation workshops and Community Coalition's Feast on This Film Festival. The Gleaning Coordinator sought new ideas for improving the program by working with a graduate student from Antioch University New England on a program evaluation

## RECIPIENTS OF NH GLEANS DONATIONS

A Common Table	Henniker Food Pantry	Kitchen)
All Saints Church	Hopkinton Food Pantry	Seacoast Community Action
Andover Food Pantry	Immaculate Conception of Penacook	Seacoast Family Food Pantry
Boscawen Congregational Church	Immaculate Heart of Mary (Concord)	Seacoast Mental Health Consumer Alliance, Inc
Centerpoint Church	Interfaith Food Pantry	Seymour Osman Community Center
CERV (Christian Emergency Response Volunteers)	Jaffrey Food Pantry	SHARE Outreach (Milford)
Christ the King Parish	Kearsarve Valley Community Action Programs	South Sutton Trinity Bible
COA Chapin Senior Center	KLS Community Food Pantry	Southern New Hampshire Services
Concord Area Community Action Program	Loudon Food Pantry	St Vincent de Paul (Keene)
Concord Head Start	Nashua Soup Kitchen	St. Paul's Episcopal Church
Cornucopia Food Pantry	New Durham Food Pantry	St. Thomas More Food Pantry
Danbury Food Pantry	New Hampshire Food Bank (Belknap)	St. Vincent de Paul Society Food Pantry (Exeter)
Dover CAP	New Hampshire Food Bank (Hillsborough)	Strafford Community Action Partnership (Dover)
Dover Food Pantry	New Life (Assembly of God) Food Pantry	Strafford Community Action Partnership (Farmington)
Dublin Community School	Newmarket Community Church Food Pantry	Strafford Community Action Partnership (Milton)
Emergency Food Pantry - Operation Blessing, Inc.	Northfield-Tilton Food Pantry	The Community Kitchen
Epping Bible Baptist Church Food Pantry	Nottingham Food Pantry	The Salvation Army Soup Kitchen and Food Pantry
Exeter Congregational Church Food Pantry	Peterborough Food Pantry	The Seacoast Family Food Pantry
First Congregational Church (Concord)	Phoenix House	Twin Rivers Interfaith Food Pantry
Francestown Community Supper	Raymond CAC	United Church of Penacook
Fremont Food Pantry	Raymond Community Action	Vineyard Church Food Pantry
Friendly Kitchen	River Center	Waysmeet Center - Cornucopia
Friends of Forgotten Children	Salem CAC	Wilton Open Cupboard Food Pantry
Greater Wakefield Food Pantry	Salvation Army Food Pantry (Concord)	Windham Senior Center
Greenfield CCC Food Pantry	Salvation Army McKenna House	
Greenfield Commons	Sanbornton Congregational Church	
Hancock Community Supper	Sandown Community Food Pantry	
	Seabrook Community Table (Soup	

project, as well as by attending various workshops and meetings on food systems and gleaning.

A total of 52,4712 pounds of fresh local produce was collected through the gleaning program in 2015.

The sources of the produce included 15 commercial farms (2 of which were not operating for public production this year), 7 charitable giving gardens (producing exclusively for charitable donation), the Keene Farmer's Market, and a wide variety of home and community gardens. A full 35% of the produce collected in 2015 was grown with the original purpose of being donated to charity.

### **Merrimack County Conservation District**

Merrimack County Conservation District (MCCD) concluded its 2015 gleaning season having distributed

13,252.48 pounds of food to pantries, soup kitchens, homeless shelters, and school children. Twenty-one farms donated to the program, allowing MCCD to reach 22 service agencies and schools throughout Merrimack County. MCCD provided gleaning outreach materials at its SNAP/EBT booth at Concord and Penacook summer farmers' markets. Additionally, a basket was provided at both markets for vendors and/or customers to donate food items. When bringing donated food to pantries, MCCD would often leave recipes featuring at least one of the food items provided to the pantry. To reach out to more volunteers, MCCD created an account at Volunteer NH, a website that organizations can utilize to post upcoming volunteer opportunities.





Merrimack gleaning coordinator, Alyssa Lemmermann, with students from Colby-Sawyer's Feed the Freezer at Spring Ledge Farm.

MCCD also partnered with Colby-Sawyer College. Two different groups of students on separate occasions helped MCCD to harvest food. The first was a group of students from the Applied Sustainable Farming class, accompanied by their professor, who helped clear over 700 pounds of kale, Swiss chard, and scallions. The professor has been a longtime supporter of NH Gleans and makes a point of getting his students involved in hands-on projects throughout the semester. The second group of students was from Colby-Sawyer's Feed the Freezer group. This is an extra-curricular campus club that works with their school's kitchen to salvage leftover food to bring to food pantries. They helped MCCD pick over 300 pounds of carrots at a nearby farm and brought it to New London's food pantry.

### Stories

Every gleaning season brings special stories and new developments. One of the season's stories

begins with a chance encounter in a convenience store. The Gleaning Coordinator was standing in line when a gentleman standing behind her noticed The Community Kitchen logo on her sweatshirt. A conversation ensued, as the man was interested in finding a community engagement activity for his two middle school aged grandchildren over the summer. As a result, this gentleman and his two grandchildren spent at least two mornings a week volunteering at The Community Kitchen throughout the summer, one in the warehouse, and one harvesting produce at Cheshire County Fairgrounds Farm. The fact that gleanings were taking place on regular Tuesday mornings also attracted several other folks looking for community engagement activities for their children, so on several occasions, gleaning became a social activity for up to five middle-school aged children. The Gleaning Coordinator has taken note and plans to "sell" the gleaning program in the community as an excellent family activity, especially for middle school aged kids.

To further extend the utilization of the fresh produce provided, MCCD loaned Andover Elementary/Middle



It was so nice to see the smiles on the children's faces when they were told to take enough apples so they could have one every day. When everyone had a sweet potato, squash, and pumpkin in their Thanksgiving basket, we were asked by many clients, "Is this really all for me and my family?" As the number of needy families increase, donations such as yours helps us provide for all those who come to our door, so again, I thank you!

- Janet Perusse, Coordinator, I.C.C. Food Pantry

School (AEMS )a flash-freeze unit. After a short training, staff were able to freeze produce in a matter of minutes, ensuring incorporation of local foods in school meals beyond the growing season. Blueberries were the easiest to freeze, however, food items like swiss chard have to be blanched prior to freezing. AEMS principal reported in March that they were still enjoying the blueberries brought to them over the summer! Joanne Jones, Andover Elementary Middle School Kitchen Director, also expressed her enthusiasm for the gleaned produce. "I just wanted to express my appreciation for your generosity in bringing our school the wonderful fresh produce this year," said Jones. "We flash froze the blueberries and kale, the kale we incorporated in soups, and the blueberries we are still enjoying in yogurt parfaits and smoothies. I have never seen so many apples as we were given, it almost took over the kitchen! But I heard many people say that they had never tasted apples as good as they were... local and fresh, very nice! Many thanks."

### Program Successes

	2013	2014	2015
Number of Volunteers:	94	136	<b>169</b>
Number of Farms:	58	64	<b>89</b>
Number of Recipient Organizations:	36	36	<b>59</b>
Total Pounds Gleaned:	28,864	65,094	<b>109,685</b>

### 2016 Program Goals

- Glean at least 132,000 pounds of food
- Increase connections to schools and summer meal programs
- Launch NH Gleans website
- Train NH farmers market managers to set up their own gleaning/food donation programs

### Why NH Gleans

From the Hunger in America 2014 Study:

- More than 10% of New Hampshire residents don't know where their next meal is coming from.
- More than 10 million pounds of food is distributed through the NH Food Bank which serves almost 400 food pantries and soup kitchens in the state.
- Many of these food pantries are only open once a week or once a month.
- 57% of clients who access food pantries have an income below the poverty level.
- 68% of these clients have to choose between food and paying their utility bills.

*Housed at the Sustainability Institute at the University of New Hampshire, NH Farm to School is a statewide program working to connect New Hampshire farms and schools.*

*Such sustainable food system work is a key component of the Sustainability Institute. Sustainability is a core value of UNH, shaping its culture, informing behavior, and guiding its work. As a nationally recognized leader, UNH draws on the Sustainability Institute to act as convener, cultivator and champion of sustainability on campus, in the state and region, and around the world. Learn more at [www.nhfarmtoschool.org](http://www.nhfarmtoschool.org) and [www.sustainableunh.unh.edu](http://www.sustainableunh.unh.edu)*