



GAINING GROUND

# Gratitude Report



#### OUR VISION

We envision a future where everyone has equitable access to healthy, sustainably grown produce.

#### OUR MISSION

To provide free, sustainably grown, fresh organic produce to people experiencing food insecurity. We do this with the helping hands of a diverse community of volunteers who work and learn with us on our farm.

# Thank you!



October 2022

Dear Friends,

As I reflect on the last year, I've found myself feeling deeply grateful for the expansive Gaining Ground community, and the ways in which we are all bound together in our commitment to addressing food insecurity through local regenerative agriculture.

There's no way to gloss over the reality that the past few years have been hard. Very hard. Each one of us has been affected in some way by national and global issues that are out of our control. And yet, by working together we've been able to accomplish extraordinary things and make a meaningful difference in the lives of many.

Our donors and volunteers made it possible for Gaining Ground to expand our distribution by adding new partners, such as Daniel's Table in Framingham and additional HeadStart preschool locations in Lowell and Dracut. Generous funders provided capital for us to build another hoop house on the farm, enabling us to increase our harvests year over year and providing additional opportunities for us to expand our winter farming initiative. Homeowners near the farm happily invited us to tap their maple trees, providing more than 40 gallons of maple syrup to our partners and Food for Families clients. Children across the Boston region—and across the country—read books and collected pledges to fund our seed budget. And volunteers on and off the farm helped us with planting, weeding, harvesting, food delivery, carpentry, landscaping maintenance, and just about everything else!

As you look through this report of our activities in 2021, I hope you will see the many ways in which your generous contributions have made an impact. We hope that you will join us out at the farm to share the joy and wonder of being in the garden. Gaining Ground's entire staff and board share our deepest gratitude for your support, and are grateful to count you as a member of our community.

Thank you!

Best regards,

Jennifer Johnson

Executive Director

# A Community's Impact

Here are just a few examples of what your generosity and support made possible in 2021.

DONATED  
**98,116**  
POUNDS OF PRODUCE

Despite record heat in June and the wettest July the state has ever seen, your financial and volunteer support helped get tons of fresh, delicious fruits and vegetables to people experiencing food insecurity.



PROVIDED  
**392,000**  
INDIVIDUAL SERVINGS OF  
FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

Because of you, the farm helped 1,200 households meet their nutritional needs each week of the growing season.

## READ FOR SEEDS IN 2021

Gaining Ground's annual Read for Seeds read-a-thon provides funding for our total seed cost each year. In 2021, students from Belmont Day School, Raymond J. Fisher Middle School in Los Gatos, California, Concord's Thoreau Elementary School, and Tenacre Country Day School in Wellesley read their hearts out and collected pledges for each page they read.



**\$10,328**

Read for Seeds fundraising total—covering 69 percent of our seed budget.



**1,800,000**

Number of seeds purchased.



**98,116 pounds**

Total food donated through the combined efforts of our farmers, volunteers, healthy soil, structures and tools, and these essential seeds.

“I can’t tell you how much satisfaction we feel after each meal with fresh vegetables from the program. I have no words to express to you how helpful this program has been. You have resolved a big problem for us. Thank you and the entire staff and volunteers from the program.”— ANONYMOUS, FOOD FOR FAMILIES GUEST

RAISED  
**\$725,000**  
FOR HUNGER RELIEF

During a period of critical need, your gifts made the farm’s work to grow and give away fresh, nutritious produce possible.



VOLUNTEERED  
**4,800**  
TOTAL HOURS

2,195 of you came from 54 local towns to contribute your time, effort, and generous spirit, helping our farmers grow urgently needed food.

PRIORITIZED NUTRITION  
**52**  
POWERHOUSE CROPS



You made it possible for us to grow and give away a wide variety of fruits and vegetables rich in vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients that are strongly associated with reduced chronic disease risk.



POWER OF YOUTH  
**42%**  
OF OUR VOLUNTEERS WERE  
CHILDREN OR YOUTH

Young people—including our high school Farm Team—helped with everything on the farm from planting to weeding to harvesting.

#### DID YOU KNOW

You can be one of our most impactful volunteers by joining our Community Farm Team. This dedicated crew receives extra training from our farmers and works with greater independence on harvest, cultivation, and soil health projects. To learn more, email [office@gainingground.org](mailto:office@gainingground.org) or call 978-610-6086.



# Making a Difference

**Longer growing seasons, healthier soil,  
and food where it's needed most.**

Growing up, it was a crime in our family to throw any food scraps into the garbage. My mother was always looking over our shoulders to make sure every bit went into the compost bin. After hauling the scraps into the woods, she would meticulously feed the pile with worms and turn the earthy matter until it became what she called her “black gold.” When her garden produced the most fresh, wholesome, home-grown crops, she attributed it all to her diligent composting and care for the soil.

Many years later, I now help run the Gilson Family Foundation, which my aunt and uncle started. While our mission of “Care, Cure, and Education” is broad, we focus on smaller, local organizations that have a large impact. Upon learning about Gaining Ground and its holistic approach to farming for hunger relief, I immediately knew this was an organization I wanted to support. Over the past few years I have had the privilege of volunteering on the farm, and discovering the hard work that goes into making this small organization so impactful.

During COVID, the mission of the foundation turned heavily toward supporting organizations battling food insecurity. For many families, obtaining food—particularly healthy and nourishing food—has become so difficult. We direct our support at Gaining Ground to the burgeoning winter farming initiative and to

continuing to build the health of the farm’s soil by doubling the amount of compost the farm uses in a season. As a New England native, I know how short our growing season is and that food insecurity is not seasonal. From my youth, I also know that healthy soil is the foundation of productive, sustainable agriculture, and that “black gold” is the bedrock.

We are honored to support an organization that has been so impressive with its ability to grow the most bountiful produce and distribute it to the places where it is most needed.

**MICHELLE SCHMIDT**  
**THE GILSON FAMILY FOUNDATION**



**“We are honored to support an organization that has been so impressive with its ability to grow the most bountiful produce and distribute it to the places where it is most needed.”**

**MICHELLE SCHMIDT, THE GILSON FAMILY FOUNDATION**

“Food is something we all need,  
and it is the language that we all speak.”

JENNA RUMBLE, TOAST, INC. WORKPLACE VOLUNTEER GROUP

# Including Everyone at the Table

**Volunteer impact beyond the farm.**

When we arrive at the farm for our volunteer sessions, our group from Toast—a Boston-based tech company helping restaurants manage the front- and back-ends of their businesses—is always welcomed with immense appreciation. We feel, however, that it should be the other way around. The farmers have such fervor for their projects and for their craft. We come to volunteer our time and effort, but we have much more fulfilling experiences beyond that.

At Toast, we take a holistic approach to supporting restaurants and their passion to deliver quality food experiences to their communities, fostering every facet of their work from farm to table. Gaining Ground, and the principles the farm embodies, aligns beautifully with our own values of inclusion and empathy.

Every volunteer project has a ripple effect. When planting the butternut squash, the farmers remind us of how many pounds the field will yield for nearby food-insecure communities.

When weeding carrot beds, we're told how our precise and thorough work will allow the carrots to flourish to full size and, in turn, provide the most food for people without access to enough to eat.

In all of the farmwork, there is constant emphasis on the necessity of thoughtfulness and care in order to share the best and most earth-conscious produce that every community deserves. Food is something we all need, and it is the language that we all speak. We are grateful to partner with Gaining Ground in the mission to include everyone at the table.

**JENNA RUMBLE**  
TOAST, INC. WORKPLACE VOLUNTEER GROUP



# Statement of Financial Position

As of December 31, 2021 (Unaudited)

	TOTAL
<b>Assets</b>	
<b>Current Assets</b>	
Bank Accounts	912,275.33
Accounts Receivable	332,000.00
Other Current Assets	15,176.29
Total Current Assets	\$1,259,451.62
Fixed Assets	653,520.07
Other Assets	0.00
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$1,912,971.69</b>
<b>Liabilities and Equity</b>	
<b>Liabilities</b>	
Current Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	4,800.58
Credit Cards	2,284.93
Other Current Liabilities	4,418.00
Total Current Liabilities	\$11,503.51
Long-Term Liabilities	0.00
Total Liabilities	\$11,503.51
Equity	1,901,468.18
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY</b>	<b>\$1,912,971.69</b>

*Please note that this is our unaudited Statement of Financial Position. You will be able to access our fully audited 2021 financial statements as well as the complete lists of our 2021 donors and volunteers on our website at [www.gainingground.org/our-story/gratitude-reports-and-financial-statements/](http://www.gainingground.org/our-story/gratitude-reports-and-financial-statements/)*

MAP KEY



GAINING GROUND



TOWN WITH MEAL PROGRAM  
OR FOOD PANTRY

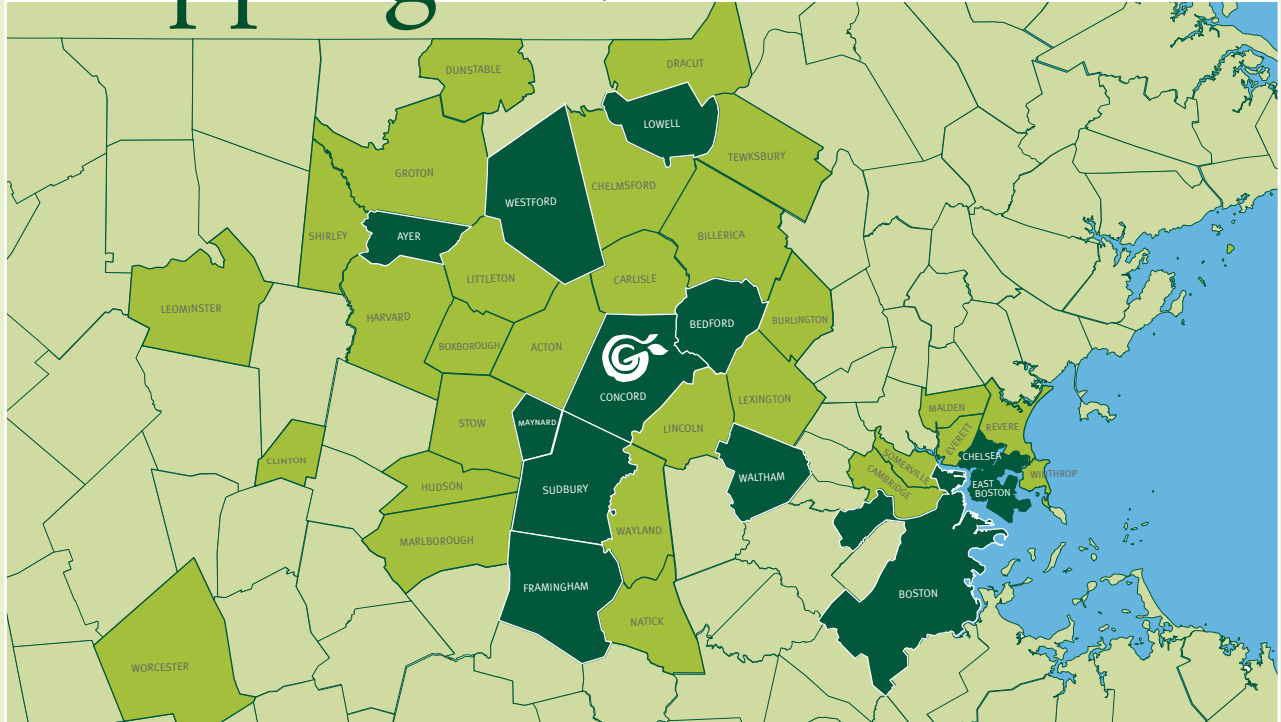


TOWN SERVED BY MEAL PROGRAM  
OR FOOD PANTRY

**The 18 meal programs and food pantries we partner with serve clients from more than 40 Massachusetts towns throughout Greater Boston, Lowell, and the Metrowest area.**



# Mapping Our Reach



PARTNER LOCATION	PARTNER(S)	TOWN(S) SERVED
AYER/DEVENS	Loaves and Fishes	Ayer, Devens, Dunstable, Groton, Harvard, Littleton, and Shirley
BEDFORD	Bedford Food Bank	Bedford, Carlisle, Concord, Billerica, Burlington, Lowell and more
BOSTON	Pine Street Inn Rosie's Place Bridge Boston Charter School	Boston Boston Boston
FRAMINGHAM	Bethany Hill Place Daniel's Table	Framingham Framingham
EAST BOSTON	East Boston Community Soup Kitchen Eastie Farm	East Boston, Boston, Cambridge, Chelsea, Everett, Malden, Revere, Somerville, Waltham, and Winthrop East Boston
CHELSEA	Salvation Army	Chelsea
CONCORD	Food for Families	Concord and Carlisle
CONCORD/MAYNARD	Open Table	Acton, Bedford, Billerica, Boxborough, Carlisle, Chelmsford, Concord, Framingham, Hudson, Lexington, Lincoln, Littleton, Lowell, Marlborough, Maynard, Natick, Stow, Sudbury, Waltham, Wayland, Westford
LOWELL	Head Start House of Hope Lowell Transitional Living Center	Lowell, Billerica, Chelmsford, Dracut, Tewksbury, and Westford Lowell Lowell
SUDBURY	Sudbury Food Pantry	Sudbury, Acton, Clinton, Concord, Framingham, Hudson, Leominster, Marlborough, Maynard, Natick, Stow, Waltham, Wayland, Worcester, and more
WALTHAM	Watch City Market/Healthy Waltham	Waltham
WESTFORD	Westford Council on Aging	Westford

# You Make It All Happen

Your generous support helps us get fresh produce to the people who need it most—and there are so many ways you can make a difference!



Above: The 2021 Graining Ground staff from left to right: Jennifer Johnson, Rae Axner, Chrissie Edgeworth, Anna Kelchlin, Erin Espinosa, Kim Schmidt, Allison Goodwin, Ava Lublin, Christine Savage. Not pictured: Avery Indermaur.

## Share our stories

Stories are powerful—and they are one of the best ways we can inspire new folks to join our incredible community. Tell your friends about the work you do as a volunteer in our fields, share our social media posts that show how much food your support enables us to grow, or forward along our newsletters to someone you think might care just as much about hunger relief and sustainable food systems as you do.

## Come for a tour

We are definitely biased, but we believe that the best way to learn about our no-till practices and hunger-relief work is to set foot in our fields and watch the farmers and volunteers in action. Come pay us a visit—you can get all of your questions answered and learn about opportunities to get more involved.

## Grow your impact with us

Everyone can help fight food insecurity in our community. Whether you volunteer or donate, you contribute to a healthier shared future. Show your support today.

For more information about how to get more involved visit us at <https://gainingground.org/support-us/> or email us at [office@gainingground.org](mailto:office@gainingground.org) or call 978-610-6086.

## 2022 Staff and Board of Directors

### Board officers

Polly Vanasse, *President*  
Karen Perkins, *Vice President*  
Amy Capofreddi, *Treasurer*  
Jen Flint, *Secretary*

### Board members

Catherine (Katie) Bekel  
Christa Collins  
Sigmund Correa  
Shilpi Tanden Desai  
Laurie Engdahl  
Sam Hiersteiner  
Lauren McKown  
Sue Mildrum  
Ashley Perssico  
Yvette Philip  
Kristen Van Damm  
Gary Vilchick  
Lisanne Wheeler

### Emeritus members

Joe Rigali, *Emeritus*  
Lucy Rosborough, *Emeritus*

### Staff

Rae Axner, *Assistant Grower*  
Kari Bender, *Assistant Grower*  
Chrissie Edgeworth,  
*Assistant Grower*  
Erin Espinosa, *Assistant Farm  
Manager*  
Allison Goodwin, *Program  
Manager*  
Avery Indermaur, *Field Crew  
Member*  
Jennifer Johnson, *Executive  
Director*  
Anna Kelchlin, *Farm Manager*  
Sarah Lichtman, *Field Crew  
Member*  
Ava Lublin, *Field Crew  
Member*  
Geoff Nelson, *Groundskeeper*  
Christine Savage,  
*Communications Manager*

### Gaining Ground Gratitude Report 2021

Edited by Jen Flint.  
Layout by Studio-e Design.  
Photography by Tony Rinaldo LLC  
and Christine Savage.



# Our Values

## **INTEGRITY—we remain true to our mission.**

We grow high-quality, fresh produce in a sustainable manner, respect and honor all individuals, provide meaningful experiences for volunteers, and maximize the generous support of our donors.

## **EQUITY—we donate everything we grow.**

We believe that healthy food is a human right. We provide our produce for free to eliminate barriers to access and maximize our impact on food insecurity.

## **INCLUSION—we welcome everyone.**

We welcome staff, board members, volunteers, partners, and donors with diverse perspectives and lived experiences.

## **INSPIRATION—we nurture joy and wonder in our fields.**

We cultivate an environment of discovery, belonging, and meaning.

## **CONTINUOUS LEARNING—we learn from others and share our knowledge.**

We embrace learning, acknowledge the contributions of other cultures and individuals to our farming practices, and always look for ways to improve our operations. We readily share what we've learned and strive to lead by example.

## **SUSTAINABILITY—we are good stewards of the land.**

We are committed to modeling sustainable agricultural practices that prioritize thoughtful use of water resources; the health of our soil, crops, and species that pollinate our crops; and the well-being of people who eat our food and all who work in our fields.

## **Gaining Ground Contacts**

- 978.610.6086
- office@gainingground.org
- gainingground.org
- facebook.com/GGConcord
- instagram.com/gaininggroundconcord



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