

2010–2011 | GRATITUDE REPORT

EDUCATE. INSPIRE. EMPOWER.



Join us in Gratitude

In 2010-2011 we are grateful for an abundance of new friends and partners, our increase in community impact, and numerous accomplishments that position us for a bright future ahead. We'd like to share some special moments with you that represent your giving, partnership and continued support of Growing Hope. We offer our annual report as a portrait of gratitude and hope. Please join us in celebrating the health, opportunity, and community that is flourishing in the Ypsilanti community and beyond.

From Our Executive Director

Friends,

I inevitably always want to start with the phrase, "My, how we've grown!" For Growing Hope, that phrase would again be accurate in 2010 and 2011, but I'd like to focus this welcome a bit differently. Instead of the focus on growth, I'd like to reflect on our continued and growing evolution. A great friend and mentor of mine likes to remind me that in some ways making good, sustainable change is more about evolution than revolution. What I take from her words of wisdom is that revolution suggests a complete countering to what is —a having to start over—but that evolution builds on where we've come from, what we've tried before, and what we've borrowed to become better in every way.

Much has evolved in 2010 and 2011 at Growing Hope, as we've made significant progress in both developing the Growing Hope Center into our permanent home and in evolving our community impact and work. The Growing Hope Center development made big strides forward thanks to a dedicated volunteer and staff planning team, many hands-on volunteers putting in countless hours, and donors who stepped up to the plate to help us accelerate a long renovation that began before our economy took a major downturn.

The physical transformation over the past two years included the installation of our pervious paver plaza (filled with 12,000 pounds of blue-green recycled glass), geothermal system, parking lot, traffic light, rain garden, new sidewalk, fence, paint, trim, stairs, tiling, insulation, and so much more more that brought 922 West Michigan Avenue back to life again. The hard work over these past two years was challenging at times, but without many of you and our amazing volunteer project manager, Nicole Chardoul, the Growing Hope Center wouldn't be the beautiful place it has become. Your efforts and support helped to keep my confidence high and evolved this place into a permanent resource for the community, which made it worth every second and moment of my life.

I'd like to thank, in addition to our board members, Claudia Scioly, Penny Schreiber, Chris DeRingreo and Decky Alexander for their work with our capital campaign.

Not only did our developing Center make major strides, but our work also took big evolutionary steps, helping create a healthier policy environment for citizens, neighborhoods, and communities to grow and access good food. While we began impacting policy in 2009 through supporting the legalization of backyard chickens in Ypsilanti, we most notably grew that investment in 2010 and 2011, by supporting the passage of the Michigan Cottage Food Law. We helped to organize, testify, and educate on this bill that opened up opportunities for food entrepreneurs to get started with creating certain products legally in their home kitchen. We were pleased to host Governor Jennifer Granholm at the Growing Hope Center to sign the bill into law in July of 2010. Following that, the Governor appointed me to the Michigan Food Policy Council, where I've served since, working to bring opportunities for healthy food access to all citizens at a statewide level.

Through all of these initiatives and impact, our programs have continued to evolve, mature, and thrive and I am so pleased that we've been able to add a team of permanent staff to help lead the day-to-day work of the organization. They share, along with our Americorps*VISTA staff, Board of Directors, volunteers, and community partners, in carrying out our mission to help people improve your lives and communities through gardening & healthy food access. Whether through developing an educational space in our future Center, helping community members realize their entrepreneurial dreams, training community garden leaders, or inspiring young people with healthy habits for life, these are what it takes on the ground, and in the ground, to help our community grow hope.

Growing Hope will continue in our constant evolution, and our move—hopefully next year—into the Growing Hope Center will open even more doors of possibility and impact. I appreciate your continued support of and partnership with us as we continue to evolve and impact health and community where we live and beyond.

In gratitude,

Amanda Maria Edmonds Executive Director



The Growing Hope Center

Building Our Home

The generosity of the community is transforming the Growing Hope Center into a truly unique place. In 2010 & 2011, more strides were made in helping this formerly blighted property reach its potential as a demonstration and training site for urban farming, sustainable gardening, and green building design.

Located just a few blocks from the heart of downtown Ypsilanti on West Michigan Avenue, the grounds hold our demonstration urban farm, four-seasons hoophouse, and the 1930's house that will hold our offices and classroom space.

Support for the Center has come from a tremendous variety of donors and volunteers. Students and faculty from Washtenaw Community College's Residential Construction Program and engineering students from the University of Michigan BLUELab Group provided invaluable physical labor and technical expertise. Our site planning team—Nicole Chardoul of Resource Recycling Systems, Landscape Architect Amanda Szot, and Architect Bob Edmondscontinued to volunteer their professional expertise and time in moving us through the renovation. A capital campaign fundraising team has led the leveraging of financial support. Numerous business and foundations donated in-kind and cash assistance. In addition, hundreds of volunteers contributed their time, resources, and labor toward developing the Center. We feel privileged to have the support of such dedicated and committed partners, and that this campaign has left us with little debt beyond the mortgage for the property itself. It really does take a village.

We're grateful because in 2010:

- Our year-round hoophouse produced 2,246 pounds of fresh food that was distributed to the community through market sales or donated to area nonprofits
- More than 200 volunteers provided 8,000 hours of labor either working in the hoophouse or on renovation projects for the farm
- Two 1,350-gallon rain collecting cisterns and a pump system were installed that now allow us to capture rainwater from the hoophouse
- A highly efficient geothermal system was installed to heat and cool the house

We're grateful because in 2011, there was even more progress:

- A parking lot was paved, 270 feet of sidewalk was rebuilt, two solar powered parking lot lights were installed
- A patio was constructed with pervious pavers and 12,000 lbs. of recycled, crushed, and tumbled blue and green glass
- We completed a full electrical upgrade on the property
- We reglazed all of our historic windows, added storm windows for extra installation, and installed glass block windows in the basement
- The bathroom and front entryway were retiled with reclaimed tile from the Ann Arbor ReUse Center; An eco-friendly product, Marmoleum, was used to redo the kitchen floor; Reclaimed materials were used throughout the site
- A staircase was built on the back of the building, a new roof was installed, and volunteers painted the entire exterior & interior
- We planted all of the street trees and site trees as well as a rain garden with 400 plants native to Michigan.

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The Growing Hope Center:

our urban farm

Call it a little farm or a big garden, growing food on between 1/8 and 1/4 an acre at the Growing Hope Center is some of the most visible, tangible work that we do. Our urban farm has multiple functions in our organization and in the community: demonstrating and documenting the growth of healthy food on a small scale, highlighting raised bed gardening, producing food to be sold at our Downtown Ypsilanti Farmers Market and around the community, demonstration of season extension techniques, and gardening for donation harvest.

In 2010 and 2011, our farm continued to grow and develop, strengthening our role as a place for demonstration and inspiration. We continue to hold tours, classes, volunteer workdays, and other events on the farm, and value the ability it brings us to share our work with others.

- 5,760 packets of seeds and seedlings were donated to us by seed companies
- 85 Seed Starting Squad volunteers started a total of 8,144 seedlings for us to plant, share, and sell
- 2,361 lbs of food were grown and harvested from our urban farm, 1,015 lbs of which was donated to neighbors in need through Food Gatherers and SOS Community Services
- Volunteers on Growing Hope's urban farm contributed 628 volunteer hours
- Over 1,000 visitors came to the site to learn about urban agriculture, green design, community redevelopment, and gardening





growing gardens

Growing Gardens is a membership program that enables individuals and groups in Washtenaw County to gain support and engage in gardening and healthy food access. An annual membership has a sliding scale fee, with member benefits including free seedlings & seed packets, a quarterly newsletter, and access to Growing Hope's tools and educational resources. Low and no-income Growing Gardens households can apply to receive raised beds, growing assistance, and nutrition education through our Raised Bed Vegetable Garden Program. Members that participate in our Seed Starting Squad are provided with the knowledge and resources to raise healthy seedlings, some of which are used in Growing Hope programs. Our Garden Leadership Training equips community members from across the region with the skills to organize and lead community, school, and faith-based gardens. And, workshops throughout the year provide skills and knowledge to get growing, cooking, and preserving healthy food.



KAT DICKENSON, Resident Services Coordinator at Lake Shore Apartments, first met Growing Hope through the Ypsilanti Jaycees and says she's been "hooked" ever since. Kat recently brought a large community garden space

to her apartment complex in an effort to, as she says, "up the 'committed community ante'." A two-time alumni of Growing Hope's Garden Leadership Training course, Kat especially appreciates how "Growing Hope helps the community feed themselves for themselves by themselves." Kat's key role at Lake Shores is allowing her to share what she's learned with her friends and neighbors. As Kat says, "I can now feed myself for a lifetime because of Growing Hope, and teach people how to do the same."



PAM ROBERTS is a raised Bed Garden participant who shares Kat's passion for increased self-reliance through gardening. Pam learned about Growing Hope when a volunteer visited her son's classroom for a demonstration. She signed up for the Raised Bed Vegetable Garden Program, and soon felt compelled to become involved with Growing Hope as a volunteer. Besides tending her own garden, Pam helped harvest produce on Tuesday mornings for our Downtown Ypsilanti Farmers Market. For Pam, volunteering is a great way to support Growing Hope while continuing to develop gardening skills. "I have always wanted to volunteer to increase my knowledge of gardening," Pam explains. "This year everything fell in place for me to do so. I wanted to get hands on experience to help with my own garden at home." Through the Raised Bed Garden Vegetable Program, Pam added that "Growing Hope directly affected my life and that of my family by teaching me the ropes of gardening."







We're grateful because in 2010:

- We worked with another 38 low and no-income families in the Ypsilanti area to help them install raised bed veggie gardens to affordably grow food at home
- Through our Growing Gardens membership, 92 households and 14 group gardens received support
- We distributed more than 750 packets of seeds, mostly to low-income families to help them grow healthy food for themselves
- Our Garden Leadership Training prepared more than 100 people and 24 group gardens to organize, recruit, and grow thriving community, school, and faithbased gardens
- 80 households of all income levels grew over 6,000 seedlings for Growing Hope to plant, sell, and donate

- We added yet another 36 households to our Raised Bed Vegetable Garden Program—more and more low- and no-income families grow for themselves each year
- Growing Gardens membership doubled in size—over 180 individuals and 24 groups received support in 2011
- Over forty people participated in our seven-week, intensive Garden Leadership Training Program, leading to development of new and expanding community, school, and faith-based gardens throughout the SE Michigan region
- We expanded our community workshops to include canning & other food preservation, nutrition on a budget, and season extension topics



Growing Hope provides school and youth garden-based nutrition programming that involves classroom, after-school, and summer educational opportunities. During the summer, teen interns act as peer educators for younger students, while also gaining job and leadership skills through our employment program. In 2011, sixty-six percent of 231 youth that Growing Hope worked with came from low-income households that participate in at least one form of food assistance.

youth & schools

Growing Hope's youth programs empower young people to make healthy choices.



As a veteran teacher in Ypsilanti middle schools, CONNIE SHELTON has witnessed first hand the effect Growing Hope can have on children's health. Through our Seed2Plate after-school program, Growing Hope teaches life skills, respect for the

earth and environment, and a strong work ethic.

Connie finds that with young people, "Investing a small amount of time and energy and being consistent translates into huge gains." She appreciates how the program connects equally well with kids from diverse backgrounds. According to Connie, "All learn with and from each other. Students learn the essentials of team work and kids learn how to feed themselves."



BRIAN MONTAGNE values Growing Hope's mission of healthy food access and nutrition education. Brian began working with Growing Hope in 2009 through Michigan Works by assisting with the construction of the adobe oven, helping to install raised beds

for other families, and supporting the Downtown Ypsilanti Farmers Market. His connection deepened when he signed up his own family in our Raised Bed Vegetable Garden program and installed gardens for his mom and siblings, an empowering act that the whole family took pride in. From his time with Growing Hope, Brian has noticed that he is,

"Eating much healthier and appreciating what goes into produce, as well as, getting constant exercise and making new relationships. It is nice to see the same friendly faces day after day who appreciate the work I'm doing," Brian said. "I love the people and the work, seeing the impact on the community; especially people's enthusiasm at the market and on the raised bed builds."





During a field trip to the Growing
Hope Urban Farm, students sampled
some of the vegetables they had helped
plant. While harvesting spinach from
the hoophouse, students began eating it.
One student said, "It's like candy—
I just keep going back for more!"



We're grateful because in 2010:

- Our Seed2Plate after-school program engaged a total of 70 Ypsilanti middle-schoolers through cooking, nutrition and gardening lessons
- Four Summer Youth Interns were employed and developed leadership skills as peer nutrition educators, while learning to grow food at our demonstration farm
- Our garden-based summer camp in partnership with the New West Willow Neighborhood Association brought 59 youth, ages 4–12 years, into the garden to learn. 95% of kids said that they eat more vegetables after being in the program

- Our Seed2Plate after-school program engaged a total of 56 Ypsilanti middle-schoolers through cooking, nutrition and gardening lessons
- Many students toured the Growing Hope Center and received free vegetable seedlings to plant at home
- Our youth interns were back another season, developing lasting relationships and increasing their skills
- Our garden-based summer camp in partnership with West Willow Neighborhood Association brought 87 youth, ages 4–12 years, into the garden to learn.
- We gave healthy classroom cooking demonstrations with 82 students from the Ypsilanti Public School District



Founded by Growing Hope, with the support of several community partners, in 2006, the Downtown Ypsilanti Farmers Market continues to grow and thrive. Every season the market brings in new vendors and reaches new customers, many of whom are low income and cherish the weekly access to healthy, affordable foods. In 2010 and 2011 we saw the same trajectory of growth we had in previous seasons, and continued to break records.

Downtown Ypsilanti Farmers Market

Providing access to healthy, quality, affordable produce



A highlight of the market in 2010 was the advocacy for and passage of the Michigan Cottage Food Law, allowing small entrepreneurs throughout Michigan to get their start in food businesses without the limitations we so often see in particular among low-income entrepreneurs. We assisted in organizing and advocating for this bill, educating the community and legislators about the benefits. Under it, smallscale producers of baked goods, jams and jellies, and a few other products could produce and sell directly to customers legally, without needing access to a commercial kitchen. While these aren't always the healthiest of the food selections at the market, the ability of a market vendor to expand his or her product line is often key to viability. Once the Cottage Food Law went into effect in July 2010 (after being passed unanimously), we saw an immediate positive impact in our market, and heard stories across the state of businesses starting or expanding as a result. After its passage, we fielded many questions and taught multiple workshops about how entrepreneurs could take advantage of the new law and comply with its requirements.

Then, in 2011, the market got another major boost with funding from the MEDC and Michigan Municipal League, allowing us to expand our support for our vendors through publishing a vendor directory, starting a table/tent rental service, producing professional signs for most booths, offering business classes for current and potential vendors, and several other activities.

"Growing Hope has been a big help to the whole community. They have a lot of great volunteers. I appreciate all they have done for me and my sales (at DYFM)."

STEVE KARPO, KARPO FARMS

"Growing Hope Market is very helpful to me. They advertise, keep records that help to keep us informed on different items: weather, market numbers. Their market has been profitable for me. Thank you, Growing Hope."

MARYANN BLASZAK, BLASZAK, BLASZAK GREENHOUSE

We're grateful because in 2010:

- SNAP (formerly known as food stamp) sales grew 54% over 2009! \$21,406 in sales were purchased with food stamps and other lowincome, and non-cash programs represented 22% of total market sales
- There were 60 vendors at the market this yearshowing that a market is a business and jobsgenerator
- 14,500 customers visited the market in a 25week season
- Customers spent \$96,000 total at our market
- We successfully advocated for the passing of the Cottage Food Law removing barriers for entrepreneurs; Governor Granholm signed the bill into law at the Growing Hope Center in July 2010

- There were 17,492 customer visits to the market this season-- that's just over 26 weeks for four hours, one afternoon a week
- Nearly 28% of market sales were using food assistance programs-- up 6% over 2010
- Fair Food Network's Double Up Food Bucks program offered extra dollars to shop with to SNAP recipients—who were able to spend \$9926 on healthy Michigan produce as a result of this program!
- Our market vendor directory was distributed to area restaurants and businesses, helping forge new relationships for further business
- We offered 11 workshops on business planning, cottage food law, social media, and more to our vendors and community

- DYFM is Good for Ypsi—Customer Survey indicated 73% of people would be "More likely to tell other people good things about Ypsilanti" as a result of coming to the market
- DYFM is Good for Downtown Businesses—"Customer Survey indicated that 51% of people said that as a result of coming to the market, they would be "more likely to visit other downtown Ypsi businesses or institutions" and 55% have a more positive view of downtown Ypsi."



Volunteers are at the core of how Growing Hope carries out its mission, and are involved at every level of the organization. And while Growing Hope and the community gains immensely from volunteers' service, volunteerism also provides many with job skills, professional networking, and the chance to build friendships. It gives people a meaningful way to be engaged in community.

volunteerism



This year, our talented Board grew in size, adding dedicated and knowledgeable people like CHRISTOPHER MICHALAK, a locavore drawn to the cause of increasing awareness of and access

to healthy, homegrown foods. For Christopher, volunteering helps fulfill his sense of duty to give back to his community and the surrounding area. He likes the impact of improvements in the food habits, culture, and understanding of the community provides. "It's a simple mission, to me, and the outcomes are measurable, effective, and it's a rewarding use of my time. I see my efforts matter," said Christopher. Like other Board members, he also finds great satisfaction in being hands-on with projects, like painting, sanding, and cementing. For Christopher, "Being physically involved at the center makes me emotionally invested in the outcome and success of the Board and community."



LISA BASHERT first met Growing Hope when the Perry Learning Garden was first being constructed in 1999/2000. An organic gardener and community organizer for many years, Lisa recalls that she was

immediately intrigued and excited about Growing Hope. Lisa has been involved with Project Grow in Ann Arbor and says she was eager, "To explore how community building could take place through gardens."

When a neighbor asked her to get involved by serving on the Board, Lisa said, she immediately said yes.

We're grateful because in 2011:

- We enjoyed a 48% increase in the number of volunteers and a 24% increase in volunteer hours over 2009
- Approximately 415 unique volunteers completed just over 2,700 hours of service
- Americorps*VISTA members contributed an additional 15,000 hours of full-time volunteer service
- 429 volunteers contributed 4,703 volunteer hours



Her expertise in beekeeping has brought a honeybee hive to the Growing Hope Center through her leadership of the Ypsi Food Co-op's Ypsi Honey Project. When asked about future commitments to Growing Hope, Lisa said, "I want to remain involved with Growing Hope in as many ways as possible until I become a permanent resident of Highland Cemetery."

Growing Hope strives each year to better engage and involve our community in the work that we do. While our staff may be small, our organization's impact reaches many corners of Washtenaw County that cross socioeconomic and ethnic barriers, tapping into communities of faith, schools, and fellow community organizations.

outreach

In 2010 and 2011, our outreach efforts included refining our branding with a revised logo and website.

Growing Hope partnered with several community organizations as well as many volunteers to have events including our annual fundraising gala, Hope's Harvest, and our local garden and food system tour, Tour de Fresh. In addition to these, we also participated in 50 local events, conferences, and gatherings, including the Ann Arbor Green Fair, Michigan Organic Food and Farming Association conference, and Washtenaw County's Local Food Summit.



We're grateful because in 2010:

- Tour de Fresh welcomed 150 participants. 21% reported it was their first visit to Ypsilanti
- We partnered with the Ypsilanti Food Co-op and Transition Ypsi to start a sustainability film and community potluck series
- Clifford, the big red truck farm-- an educational garden on wheels-- made his debut at the WCC Earth Fair

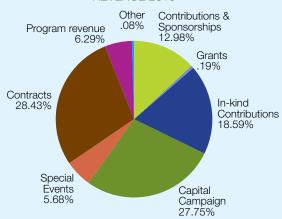
- Over 230 people participated in the sustainability film and community potluck series held in partnership with the Ypsilanti Food Co-op, Transition Ypsi, and later on, the Ypsilanti Public Library
- There was an increase in our social media following by 1,500 people on Facebook and 290 on Twitter
- We presented to 95 organizations, businesses, and classes and reached over 1,000 people through direct outreach
- We stayed connected to our home in Ypsilantiyou saw us in the parades, at the Heritage Fest, and all around the town

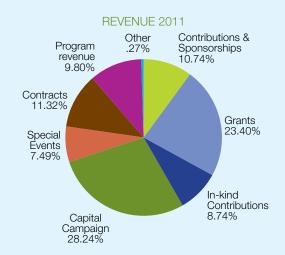
2010-2011 FINANCIALS

REVENUE	2010	2011
Contributions & Sponsorships	\$49,778	\$57,323
Grants	\$750	\$124,899
In-kind Contributions	\$71,275	\$46,671
Capital Campaign	\$106,404	\$150,771
Special Events	\$21,769	\$39,975
Contracts	\$108,988	\$60,413
Program revenue	\$24103	\$52,337
Other	\$318	\$1424
Total Revenue	\$383,385	\$533,816

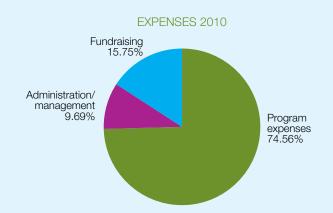


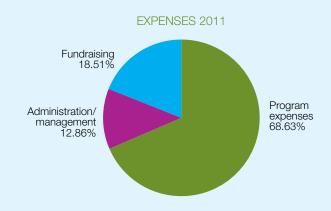
REVENUE 2010





EXPENSES	2010	2011
Program expenses	\$177,934	\$297,896
Administration/management	\$23,123	\$55,834
Fundraising	\$37,604	\$80,312
Total Expense	\$238,661	\$434,042





Thank you to our contributors* in 2010 and 2011. Without the financial, sponsorship and in-kind support from this broader community, we could not exist.

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Mabelle Kirk
Madelyn Shelden and

Madelyn Sheldon and Brad Vieau

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Old House Gardens Olde Town Auctions Omari Rush

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The Earle

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WholeHeart Group

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Ypsi Cycle Ypsi Studio

Ypsilanti Area Visitors & Convention

Bureau Ypsilanti DDA

Ypsilanti Food Cooperative Ypsilanti Garden Club Ypsilanti Kiwanis Club Ypsilanti Public Schools Ypsilanti Senior Center

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About Growing Hope

As a charitable 501c3 organization, Growing Hope's mission is to help people improve their lives and communities through gardening and healthy food access.



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