



## Note from the Co-Directors

Excuse the brevity of our report this year, it by no means captures how BIG 2008 was for GRuB. Like the youth and families we serve, we are looking for ways to trim our budget without affecting the standard of the opportunities we provide. Behind the updates below are countless stories of better food and better futures. Folks connecting with the simplest of experiences (growing, eating, cooking, and giving away food) and coming away with not-so-simple life changes (high school graduation, compassionate family communication, a renewed sense of neighborliness).

If 2008 was a foundation-building year for GRuB (it was, come see the new farmhouse!), we believe the next couple will be movement-building. Where there is great need (4,000 new families visited our local food bank last year) and real inspiration (vegetables growing on the White House lawn!), there is such opportunity. While GRuB can't build a garden for every family in need, we can inspire & support all of you to connect with the growing movement of people fed up with hunger, tired of rising childhood diabetes, and ready for a community where everyone has access to good food. Look out 2009!

Sincerely,

Kim Gaffi & Blue Peetz  
Co-Directors

## Cultivating Youth Employment Program

This past year, 31 low-income teens engaged in GRuB's Cultivating Youth Employment Program. Working on our farm, our crew led the production and harvest of over 11,000 pounds of produce. Over 50% was directed to our crew members & their families and the Thurston County Food Bank. The rest went to our neighborhood Marketstand and vegetable CSA program. These youth-involved marketing programs brought in over \$14,000!

Crew members were also responsible for engaging with our community on projects that make quality food more accessible for all people. They installed community gardens at Evergreen Vista (a low-income apartment complex) and in the community of Rochester. The crew lead volunteers on the farm, assisted in community fundraising work, and engaged in fieldwork at the Kiwanis Food Bank Garden, the Circle Hawk Food Bank Garden, Helsing Junction Farm, and Left-Foot Organics – all members of our Food Bank Growers network.

GRuB employs low-income teens living at 130% of the federal poverty level or below. This past summer, 85% of newly hired youth were experiencing low food security based on a USDA survey. Furthermore, only 35% of our new crew members entered our program on-track to graduate from high school. From 2001 through 2007, of the youth who completed a full year with GRuB, only 46% entered our program on-track to graduate from High School. Today, 89% have either earned their HS diploma and/or GED.

*"GRuB gives me the chance to grow mentally, physically, and emotionally. GRuB also gives me the chance to open up to others and be all I can be. GRuB has opened my eyes and shown me what I am capable of doing and they push me to different heights." - 2008/2009 Crew member*

## Kitchen Garden Project

In 2008 we constructed 100 raised-bed gardens in the backyards of low-income families and individuals throughout Mason & Thurston Counties. The gardens provided healthy food for over 325 people, 50% of which were children! Seventeen percent of the gardeners were single mothers and over 20% of the gardens benefited folks with special needs. Over 50 volunteers, the Cultivating Youth crew, and two spring interns worked hard building gardens throughout the spring.

Of the 100 backyard gardens, 14 were built at community institutions. Locations included: Bread & Roses House of Hospitality - a transitional housing facility for women, CIELO Project - an advocate for the self-sufficiency and empowerment of the Latino and other underprivileged communities, Evergreen Vista - a HUD-subsidized apartment complex, Rogers Center - Sound to Harbor Head Start/ECEAP, Touchstone Group Home - for youth transitioning from incarceration, Tumwater Apartments - low-income senior housing, and Rochester Group Home for the disabled. These gardens are building community while creating on-going recreation & wellness opportunities for low-income people and improving their access to fresh food.

*"My daughter and I...spent quality time together outside planting, weeding, watering, sometimes eating dirt. We got outside so much more than we would have before the garden...we talked with the neighbors and built a little community. You are giving people gardens, but what you are really giving them is healthier life and diet choices, food assistance, a sense of community... Brilliant!" -2008 KGP Gardener*

# Cultivating Youth Education Program

In 2008, 718 local students visited the GRuB Farm for one-time or sequential field trips where they engaged in basic farm work and team-building activities. In particular, we partnered with Marshall Middle School's Autism Program, as well as Reeves Middle School's HOPE Program – serving predominantly low-income students who struggle in traditional school settings. We engaged students from Preschool through 8th Grade in their classrooms, in school gardens, in the community, and at the farm more frequently than ever before.

In the winter and spring, we worked with Komachin Middle School to transform their under-utilized school garden into an active, organized food bank producer. This was part of a larger community effort to provide more quality, locally grown vegetables for the Thurston County Food Bank. We empowered Komachin students to develop a growing plan for their garden, garden-based activity lessons, and a summer maintenance plan.

*"It's hard to sit still and do the same thing over and over again in school. That's why I love coming to the GRuB farm. We get to eat and play games and learn and do things with our bodies."*

– Reeves Middle School student

## The GRuB Farm

Thanks to everyone who gave of their precious time, their hard-earned money, and their bountiful energy to help carry us through an incredible (and incredibly busy) 2008. The GRuB Farm grew a record-breaking 11,000 pounds of fresh produce on our small urban farmland. Thanks are due to our amazing youth crew, our many dedicated volunteers, our student visitors from area schools, and college interns from South Puget Sound Community College and The Evergreen State College. We also want to thank our Cultivating CSA members, Ambassador Bouquet and Compost Businesses, and summer Marketstand patrons for supporting our programs, offering powerful job skill and leadership opportunities, and for stepping up to help your community despite the economic climate.

## Hunger-Free Thurston County

GRuB is part of a small coalition of community groups called Hunger-Free Thurston County that is working to develop a long-term strategic plan for ending hunger & malnutrition in our community. In 2008, HFTC completed a series of community listening sessions and we are now bringing in more community groups to address issues raised during the needs assessment. Recent additions include representatives from Sustainable South Sound's Urban Agriculture Project, Lincoln Elementary's Garden Project, and All Together Farming, a new food security non-profit serving Tenino in rural South Thurston County. HFTC is sharing resources this next year by aligning various & previously separate gardening workshops so that low-income gardeners will have increased access and can connect with other gardeners in their own neighborhoods. HFTC is also lending logistical support to All Together Farming as they organize their rural community to grow food for themselves.

## More 2008 Accomplishments

Thanks to funds raised as part of our successful "Taking Root" Capital Campaign, our new Farmhouse was completed in 2008! Our beautiful new facility provides adequate indoor classroom space for participants in our drop-out prevention, job training, and mentoring programs. It also allows our full staff to work under one roof and brings more unity to our overall social change work.

In 2008, we began an exciting partnership with Lewis County Mentoring Project. We will mentor them in developing a youth employment program based on work we have done for 11+ years, one that meets the unique needs of their community; hence we are calling this part of our work "pollination". In 2006, LCMP brought together community leaders to address the county's most pressing challenges. After researching various models, GRuB was asked to work with them to develop a program focused on at-risk teens. Our partnership will provide them with strategies for recruiting, effective youth development, and program curriculum & evaluation.

*"It is absolutely wonderful to see the work GRuB does: not only helping people eat better for less money through the kitchen gardens, but especially GRuB's commitment to educating our young people about the joys of gardening, learning a business, and growing your own vegetables. In these days of rising costs of food and stresses and pressures from life, one way to offset both is to grow your own food. Working with the earth is very rewarding; it is really getting back to our roots! Gardening is truly a health giving (both physically and mentally), rewarding activity that helps us become more self-sufficient." – GRuB Volunteer*

## Donors & Volunteers

The work that GRuB does in our community would not be possible without the support of hundreds of individual donors, volunteers, and grantors that partner with us each year. As our organization grows, our list of supporters grows exponentially. We find that it's no longer possible to publish this list as part of our annual report while still keeping our printing costs down and we can't think of a better problem to have! Instead, we'll be posting our supporter list on our website and/or would be happy to email a copy to you upon request.

## Financial Health

2008 Income: \$467,437  
2008 Expenses: \$459,145

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