Our Staff

Blue Peetz, Co-Director
Kim Gaffi, Co-Director
Jackson Sillars, Employment Program Director
Emily Dietzman, Farm Manager
Anna Robinson, Office & Outreach Coordinator
Joellen Wilhelm, Grants & Capital Campaign Coordinator
Stephanie Snyder, Kitchen Garden Project Coordinator, Americorps - ’06/’07
Pila Laronal, One Neighborhood at a Time Project Coordinator
Emily Hicks, Kitchen Garden Project Coordinator, Americorps - ’05/’06
Kelly O’Neil, Volunteer Coordinator & 2nd Year Youth Counselor, Americorps - ’05/’06
Allison McCoy, 1st Year Youth Counselor, Americorps - ’05/’06

Our Board

Helena Meyer-Knapp, President
Nita Rinehart, Vice President
Jim Grant, Treasurer
Amy Calahan, Secretary
Crystal Ashley-Du Verglas, New Board Member
Jeff Bean, Senior Board Member
Adrienne Drewe, Senior Board Member
Jim Knowles, New Board Member
Carol Prevost, Junior Board Member
Alicia Seegers-Martinelli, Returning Board Member
Chris Wickham, New Board Member
Leslie Goldstein, Outgoing Board Member
Nasue Nishida, Outgoing Board Member
Ron Pagel, Outgoing Board Member
Brian Sims, Outgoing Board Member
Cathy Williams, Outgoing Board Member

Our Mission

We're a grassroots non-profit organization located in Thurston & Mason Counties in Washington State. We dedicate ourselves to nourishing a strong community by empowering people and growing good food.

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Loving GRuB Supporters,

2006 marked the tenth-year anniversary of the GRuB Farm (formerly, the Sister Holly Garden) – a unique, beautiful space where hundreds of youth have developed as leaders while growing thousands of pounds of good food for our community. It was indeed a most fruitful year filled with huge accomplishments.

With the help of lead gifts from generous donors and regional foundations, as well as a timely loan, we secured the GRuB farm in our name. Thanks to the kindness of our farm neighbors, we expanded our farm’s production field to an additional acre. Finally, we secured a USDA Community Food Project grant to help us forge a new partnership with the Thurston County Food Bank, Left-Foot Organics, and the Gleaners Coalition; a partnership focused on a vision where all people in Thurston County have access to good food.

In this year’s End-of-Year Report, you’ll find details about these efforts along with a celebration of our 2006 youth programs and garden builds. We’d also like to acknowledge our internal work. For years now, GRuB has had a goal that someday our staff and board would truly reflect the cultural, economic, and racial diversity of our community. While diversity has been an underlying value, we struggled with finding next steps. In 2006, the staff and board embarked on our journey, by educating ourselves and others. (see page 6). Together the staff read Dismantling Racism by Joseph Barndt. Two staff members participated in a 2-day Dismantling Racism Workshop during the Community Food Security Coalition Conference, bringing back materials to share with the rest of the staff and board. In December, we partnered with our friends at The Food Project and hosted a regional training called “Building Multicultural Organizations”.

We now know that diversity is not enough. GRuB must do our work better. To become an anti-oppressive organization requires a new level of visionary leadership, one that is shared with the youth and gardeners with whom we partner. Our constituents (youth, low-income families, donors, partners) must be at the decision-making table. We must be organizing with others to fight the racism, classism, sexism, and other -isms that create and perpetuate the symptoms that GRuB’s programs are fighting i.e. poverty, hunger, malnutrition. Our staff and board are sobered and impassioned by the meaning and magnitude of this evolution. We know that investing in this work will make our community efforts more intentional, inclusive, and powerful. Will you join us? There is a place set at the table for you.

Much Love,

Blue Peetz & Kim Gaffi
Co-Directors

2006 Income
$264,521

2006 Expenses
$282,401

GRuB 2006 Report to the Community
Farming Land

Twenty-two amazing teenagers from low-income families worked at the GRuB farm in 2006, growing over 2,500 pounds of food for market, their families, and the Thurston County Food Bank. During the academic year, the crew got their hands dirty learning about over-wintering cover crops, basic soil physiology, biology, and chemistry concepts related to organic gardening.

This past spring, our youths’ high standards and hard work made it possible for us to expand our farm by over an acre! This summer the youth launched our new neighborhood marketstand just a block from the farm, thanks to the Handy Pantry. Thank you as well to the many customers and well-wishers who made the stand a valuable revenue source for GRuB’s work and a hands-on learning tool for marketing and business skills for our youth.

Youth also lent a hand at other local farms including Left Foot Organics, the WCC Food Bank Garden, and the Interbay P-Patch Community Garden in Seattle.

“GRuB will give your child a variety of experiences. It’s not just about digging around in the dirt. They learn how to problem

Farming Self

Youth worked just as hard on their own personal development as they did sweating on the farm. Crew-members engaged in team-building games throughout the fall and winter and in a day of intensive trust/team-building at the Bonney Lake Challenge Course. Through interactive workshops teens learned how to identify and eliminate ‘tolerations’ in their own lives, communicate non-violently, and build healthy relationships. Community volunteers improved our youths’ nutrition by teaching them how to cook inexpensive and nutritious lunches.

“Many people believe that a single person cannot change the world. I disagree strongly! I too believed this once, until I began working for GRuB. Because of this organization, I am assisting in altering people’s lives in my community. GRuB helps support underprivileged families in building personal raised-bed gardens. We also donate fresh produce to the food bank. I believe this experience is helping me to change and improve my local community.”

– 2006 Cultivating Youth Crewmember
**Farming Community**

“I am acquiring a variety of [skills] while working at GRuB. Not only do we farm the land, we farm ourselves and the community. I am now capable of creating a flower bouquet, cooking a complete and nutritional meal for 20 people, and I know how to grow food to support myself and my family.” — 2006 Cultivating Youth Crewmember

GRuB youth fought hunger and malnutrition in our community this year, constructing a 12-bed school garden at Lydia Hawk Elementary in Olympia and doing an annual “spruce-up” at the community garden at Evergreen Vista, a low-income apartment complex. This April, GRuB hosted a two-day regional training entitled: Leading in Food Security Training (LIFT). Youth led workshops and shared their insight and experiences with over 30 participants. In addition, they worked with the Gleaners Coalition at Helsing Junction Farm & Bentley Farms to glean fresh, locally-grown food for the Thurston County Food Bank.

From 2002 – 2006, 40% of our youth entered on track to graduate. Now, 83% have graduated from high school or earned their GED. This last year, 72% of our youth showed an improvement in self-esteem test scores.

“Since I started working with GRuB I have learned to respect people, animals, food and myself. GRuB is an important experience because it shows me how to work, grow food and talk to the community. I really enjoyed meeting new people, gaining knowledge about farming and helping people who have less than me. I have come to respect people with their work habits even if they have disabilities. [To me] GRuB is a really awesome place that I feel safe and can just be myself.”

— 2006 Cultivating Youth Crewmember
“Washington’s food insecurity and hunger rates improved somewhat last year, thanks to efforts to expand access to key anti-hunger programs such as food stamps and school meals. However, 95,000 Washington residents went hungry in 2005 despite the progress made and 272,000 were stretched so close to the edge financially that they couldn’t be sure they’d have money to put food on the table every day.”

- Hungry In Washington: 2006 Children’s Alliance

**Kitchen Garden Project**

**History**

Founded by Rich Doss in 1993, the KGP has now given over 1,900 gardens to low-income families and neighborhoods. Each garden comes with 3 beds of rich soil, a pea trellis, vegetable seeds & starts, and a growing manual.

KGP backyard gardeners grow a significant portion of their families’ vegetables, more than $500 worth a season. This leads to increased nutrition, autonomy, and self-esteem.

**This Year**

With the hard work of volunteers & GRuB teens, we built 74 free backyard gardens in Thurston & Mason counties. Our gardens fed over 300 low-income people (43% children)

- 27% of our total gardens served single mothers and 29% of our gardens served people with special needs
- 68% of our total gardens served clients who receive food stamp assistance and/or frequently utilize the food bank
- 92% of recipients reported eating more fresh vegetables each week thanks to their gardens.

- 87% reported giving food away to friends and neighbors
- 52% of recipients who also utilize the services of our local food bank, reported using the food bank less after receiving their garden

We also built 5 community gardens for local organizations serving seniors and children. Our partners included Save Our County’s Kids (SOCK), Saratoga Springs Senior Community, and the Plymouth St. Senior Community.

“We would like to express our gratitude and sincere thanks to everyone at GRuB for their awesome program and willingness to help us in growing our own raised-bed gardens! What a great idea it is to teach people in need to grow their own gardens! We were amazed at how much we could plant in just three beds!”

-- 2006 Kitchen Garden Project Recipient
It is nine o’clock and the sun is out, but the cool of the morning has not dried out quite yet. My volunteer for the day arrives as I finish loading the wood for the morning build into the truck. Each day provides me with a new volunteer to talk with and get to know.

The first stop of the day is Brady’s Nursery to pick up soil. The door chimes as I walk inside and am greeted with smiles, as they are always happy to see the GRuB truck pull in.

With the truck loaded with wood and soil, we drive about a half an hour outside of Shelton to our first build site. We pull into the driveway and are met by the glowing face of the woman we are giving the garden beds to, putting the last, fantastic, touches on clearing the area where the beds are to go. “This is so exciting,” she repeats as we unload the truck. “I am so grateful for you guys.”

As we rake over the final bed, filled with fresh soil, she explains how they are very isolated living where they do. Her child, not accustomed to the commotion of other people, smiles, cries, and goes straight into the soil with his hands and mouth. (Mushroom compost never fails to attract children of all ages, and perhaps is as flavor-rich as it is nutrient-rich!) As we pack the truck up, she hugs us, making sure we really feel her when she says, “I can’t tell you how much I appreciate this.”

Another day of good work is done, and on the drive home the volunteer raves about their excitement of having gotten the chance to partake in such an awesome activity as this. I hear from the volunteer, and feel in my own way, how good they feel after giving people these garden beds, and how wonderful and grateful all of the garden recipients were.

I thank them for their help and willingness to volunteer, and they thank me right back. Most volunteers ask how to get a job doing work like this, but I explain that it isn’t about money, and that the jobs don’t readily exist, but that the volunteer opportunities are endless. Most volunteers I see again, either joining me on a build, or helping out at the GRuB farm.
More 2006 Accomplishments...

Food Bank Growers

This past winter, GRuB organized a meeting of local garden groups, farms, & backyard gardeners to discuss the Thurston County Food Bank’s need for more fresh produce and ways we can work together as growers to help meet this need. We now have over 14 groups and individuals committed to growing fresh produce for hungry folks.

As reported in an article in The Olympian, “Farmers, backyard gardeners and groups across the county have begun planting seeds and tilling land in a unified effort to keep the Thurston County Food Bank’s shelves stocked. Farm land that would normally lie fallow and surplus vegetables that would otherwise go to waste have found a new purpose.”

Our collective includes the Kiwanis Food Bank Garden, Helsing Junction Farm, The Evergreen Organic Farm, Komachin Middle School, Olympia Community Gardens, Bentley Farms, The Gleaners Coalition, and several backyard gardeners.

Doing Good Work Better

Knowing that our work is only as strong as the folks doing it, we invested in staff training and development this last year. In addition to the Dismantling Racism trainings mentioned in this report’s cover letter, we also co-hosted a Leaders in Food System Training (LIFT) workshop with The Food Project from Boston, which focused on positive youth partnerships and organizational development.

Several staff and youth attended the “Bridging Borders” Community Food Security Coalition Conference in Vancouver, BC and two of our youth program alumni presented a workshop on the Kitchen Garden Project. Three more teens had life changing experiences at the Bioneers Conference in Marin County, hearing inspiring words from folks like Stephen Hawking, Amy Goodman, and Van Jones. Individual staff members sought out trainings & support in the areas of fundraising, financial management, sustainable agriculture, and organizational development.

In 2007, we’ll be investing in leadership and management training to help GRuB continue to fulfill its potential in the community.
We Secured The Farm!

In 2006 GRuB completed Phase I of our Capital Campaign, taking a big step toward preserving the 2 acres we've been farming for the past 10 years. This was a once in a lifetime opportunity, made possible through the generosity of the former owner, Linda Newcomb, several lead gifts, and a non-profit friendly loan from the Washington State Housing Finance Commission. This spring we'll begin fundraising for Phase II of our campaign which includes retiring our loan and breaking ground for our new Farmhouse.

In addition, we signed a 4 year lease agreement ($1 per year!) with our neighbors, Darwin and Herta Delducco. By taking on the cultivation of this land we have effectively doubled our farm production capacity. We’re now focusing on building an indoor educational facility to accommodate the needs of our growing youth programs and to move all our staff & programs to one site.

Thanks to a generous grant and amazing volunteer labor we constructed a large 30'x90’ Hoop House and a new Propagation Greenhouse which will allow us to increase our winter production. We also had a new well pump installed and laid underground main lines for an irrigation system that runs throughout the farm. November introduced a new walk-in cooler to be used in our marketing programs.

Education At The GRuB Farm

We had a great time hosting Elementary & Middle School field trips at The GRuB Farm this year. Groups from local schools had the opportunity to learn about GRuB and the work we do, take a tour of the farm, and get their hands dirty doing some real farm work!

225 elementary kids and 30 middle school students spent time at the farm this spring and fall. Our program included the active participation of students in Behavioral Health Resources’ Youth Enhancement Program (YEP). These students build self-confidence and leadership skills through meaningful agricultural work.

“I thought that your farm was awesome! I loved planting the squash. I also loved tasting the kale and plants. I think I will work at the farm when I’m 16.” – Connor, 3rd grade

“Thank you for letting us help you plant and help the hungry. I enjoyed playing games and planting. I hope I get to visit the farm again.” – Valerie, 3rd grade

Marketing & Production At The GRuB Farm

Thanks to the farm expansion, both our produce & flowers increased in quantity and diversity. We were able to provide food to area seniors for the first time through the spring Farmers Market program and the Marketstand was a hands down success in terms of positive community outreach, market expansion, and customer satisfaction.

“This fall, I began to bring my youngest son with me to pick up our weekly [CSA] box...we would not even make it out of the pick-up kiosk before he had finished a pint of raspberries, and would be onto a bunch of carrots. Driving home we would talk about growing food, who grew the food we were eating, and the beauty of eating food grown by people you know. The night we ate fresh spinach when most of the nation wouldn’t touch spinach with a 10-foot pole, illustrated for our whole family how lucky we felt to be part of GRuB.”

- 2006 Vegetable CSA Member
Our Donors (by first name, names in blue have a ongoing pledge with GRuB)

FARMERS ($1,000+)

CULTIVATORS ($300+)

GROWERS (up to $299)
Our Volunteers
(by first name, names in blue are super-volunteers with GRuB)

What Is Community Food Security?
Community food security is a condition in which all community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes community self-reliance and social justice.
- Mike Hamm and Anne Bellows
from “What is community food security” - www.foodsecurity.org

GRuB’s Community Food Security Work
In response to the growing food insecurity in our community, GRuB is working in partnership with the Thurston County Food Bank, the Gleaners Coalition, and Left Foot Organics. Over the next three years our work, through the Growing Connections Community Food Project, will increase opportunities for youth employment, increase fresh produce available to low-income families, and increase the viability of local agriculture.

This project will focus on objectives that are specific to low-income youth, low-income individuals and families, and food bank clients. Our approach is to engage low-income people as community assets in meeting their own needs as well as the needs of others in our community. During this 3-year project GRuB will:
A) build 3 community gardens and 60 backyard gardens in 3 food-insecure neighborhoods,
B) engage 60 low-income youth in nutrition education and local food security work,
C) expand the GRuB Farm's marketing through business planning and infrastructure improvements,
D) participate in the emerging Hunger-Free Thurston County coalition

What You Can Do To Support Community Food Security

We Are What We Eat - eat locally and regionally grown foods, join a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program, shop at farmers’ markets and get to know farmers in your region

Grow Your Own - start a home garden, help others start gardens, volunteer at a local farm

Feed the Hungry - volunteer at a soup kitchen or food pantry, donate to programs that both feed the hungry and help them become more self-reliant, grow fresh produce and donate to the foodbank, work with local schools to improve meal programs

Advocate and Educate - join an organization working on food system issues, learn about the food system through newsletters, books, and websites, talk to your friends and co-workers about food and agriculture issues

Check-out these organizations where you can take the steps to: eat, join, shop, home garden, volunteer, donate, grow, work, learn, talk:

GRuB: www.goodgrub.org
Gleaners Coalition: www.gleanerscoalition.org
Left Foot Organics: www.leftfootorganics.org
Thurston County Food Bank: www.thurstoncountyfoodbank.org
Community Food Security Coalition: www.foodsecurity.org
Farm to School: www.farmtoschool.org
State Food Policy Councils: www.statefoodpolicy.org

*Adapted from the Community Food Security Coalition