

Farms to Food Banks Program Washington Gorge Action Programs Project Description - 2009

A program designed for agricultural economic stimulus and increased food for Food Banks.

This is a collaborative project between Washington Gorge Action Programs (WGAP), Gorge Grown Food Network (GGFN), Washington State University (WSU) Extension Office in Klickitat County and the Bingen-White Salmon Horizon's community garden project, Common Grounds.

WGAP, the local Community Action Agency, is the Lead Agency and Food Distribution Center for the food banks throughout Klickitat and Skamania Counties. Local food banks are experiencing the same dramatic increase in clients as is being seen nationally. The Farms to Food Banks program will improve WGAP's ability to provide for the food needs of the community while increasing the amount of fresh produce, dairy products and meat in food boxes for food bank clients.

GGFN anticipates Farms to Food Banks will enable small farmers to increase production capacity to meet the food needs of WGAP, while providing them with a stable market for the first few crucial years in a small farm's growth.

WSU Extension Office plans to provide education/classes on nutrition, food preparation, and food preservation for food bank clients. Many clients are in need of basic information to effectively utilize all of the food in their food boxes.

Common Grounds, the local community garden, will work with food bank clients to develop their own garden plot or container garden providing instruction and mentoring. This is truly a neighbor helping neighbor effort.

The WGAP Farms to Food Banks project is multifaceted:

- It provides food for families seeking assistance through local food banks.
- It offers small, growing farms a stable market as they increase their capacity.
- It enhances families' ability to effectively use all food bank food.
- It teaches the value of growing your own food decreasing a family's food insecurity.

Ultimately, Farms to Food Banks will strengthen the overall economic base while diversifying economic development in the Gorge. It will engage, educate and improve the health and well being of our communities.

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