Press Fact Sheet

Village Harvest is a volunteer organization in the San Francisco Bay Area that harvests abundant fruit from homes and small orchards, then passes it along to local food agencies to feed people in need. Since our founding in 2001 volunteers have harvested over 2 million pounds of healthy, local, sustainable fruit through the power of community sharing and action.

The organization is now one of the oldest and largest organizations of this type in the world. In addition to our nationally recognized Community Fruit Harvesting program, we provide information and education on fruit tree care, harvesting, and using fruit through our web site villageharvest.org and toll free telephone (888) FRUIT 411.

Context

- Second Harvest Food Bank of Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties provides food assistance to 1 in 10 people in the local community, 250,000 people every month. Most are families with children and seniors.
- Village Harvest estimates there are tens of millions of pounds of fresh fruit going unused and to waste just in Santa Clara County backyards, and millions more throughout the greater San Francisco Bay Area.
- A backyard fruit tree usually produces far more fruit than a household can use themselves, and there is enough going to waste from local backyards to provide for our local community's hungry.

Mission and Programs

Our mission is to bring together neighbors and community organizations to provide food for the hungry, preserve our agricultural heritage and skills, and promote sustainable use of urban resources. We do this through the following programs:

- Community Fruit Harvesting. VH organizes volunteer harvesting teams to pick fruit from local backyards and small orchards, distributed to community food organizations. We also assist neighborhoods to organize their own fruit harvests. Our teams give priority to seniors and others who are physically unable to pick their own fruit.
- Homeowner Education. VH provides information and referrals at no charge on fruit tree care, harvesting, and where to take their excess fruit to benefit the community.
- Preserving. Volunteers provide education and information training sessions, tastings, and recipes on using home-grown fruit to create jams and other preserved foods.

Results

- In 2016 Village Harvest volunteers picked 230,000 lbs. of fresh fruit from 630 homes and small orchards, more than 600,000 servings of healthy food for tens of thousands in the community.
- Since our inception in 2001 volunteers have harvested a total of over 2.3 million pounds of fruit.
- Village Harvest operates year round, with 15 to 20 harvests every month.
- Harvested fruit is donated to 15 food agencies in the South Bay and Peninsula.

Organization:

- Village Harvest is a nonprofit IRS 501(c)(3) charitable organization started in 2001 as a joint project of the Master Gardeners and the Foundation for Global Community in Palo Alto.
- The organization is now led by Executive Director Craig Diserens, has four staff members, and a team of 35 volunteer harvest leaders and organizers.
- Over 1,000 volunteers contribute about 12,000 hours of service each year. Our volunteers range from school children to seniors, from athletes to developmentally disabled. We host groups from community service organizations, high tech companies, church groups of all faiths, schools, and gardening groups.
- Headquartered in San Jose, but with volunteer Community Teams operating in 4 counties of the San Francisco Bay Area including Santa Clara, San Mateo, Santa Cruz, and San Benito Counties.
- To support our growth, we apply Silicon Valley technology and business skills with software and a "virtual organization" that enable us to manage the thousands of homes and volunteers that participate over a large geographic area.
- Funded by private contributions from individual donors, foundation grants, and corporate volunteer service and matching gift programs.

For the Community:

- Website **villageharvest.org** offers information on fruit tree care, harvesting, using fruit, and recipes.
- The site also contains a map and list of Community Fruit Drop Off Locations to help tree owners who pick and donate their own fruit.
- Tree owners can offer their extra fruit to benefit others by signing up on the web site. Those without Internet access can call toll-free number (888) FRUIT 411 (888-378-4841). A tree owner can keep what they need, and the rest will be donated to local food agencies.
- Individuals and groups may find events and sign up to volunteer through villageharvest.org .

For Further Information:

Village Harvest
P.O. Box 9231, San Jose, CA 95157
(888) FRUIT 411 (888 378-4841)
villageharvest.org
info@villageharvest.org

Last updated: 1/1/2017