

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 3.9 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 harvesting, tree care, and using fruit through our web site www.villageharvest.org and toll free telephone (888) FRUIT 411.

Context

- Second Harvest of Silicon Valley is providing food assistance to 1 in 6 people in the local community, 500,000 people every month. The majority 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 unused and to waste in local backyards to provide for everyone in our community who needs extra food.

Mission and Programs

Our mission is to bring together neighbors and community organizations to provide food for people in need, 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.

These harvests provide not only healthy fruit for people in need, but also unique educational experiences in food, agriculture, nature, and the environment for all ages.

- **Homeowner Education.** VH provides “how to” information and referrals on fruit tree care, harvesting, and where to donate 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 2024 Village Harvest picked and donated 165,000 pounds of fresh fruit to food banks from home gardens and small orchards, 440,000 servings of healthy food benefitting tens of thousands in the community. Since our inception in 2001 volunteers have harvested 3.9 million pounds of fruit.

- In 2024 Village Harvest served 210 homes and orchards with the power of 1,375 volunteers who contributed 6,000 hours harvesting and distributing fresh fruit for those in need. As many as 15,000 individuals have contributed since our founding.
- Village Harvest operates year-round, with 10 to 20 harvests every month.
- Harvested fruit is donated to 10 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 part-time staff members, and a team of 35 volunteer harvest leaders and organizers.
- As many as 1,200 volunteers contribute as much as 12,000 hours of service each year. Our volunteers range from school children to seniors, from athletes to 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 currently operating in 3 counties of the San Francisco Bay Area including Santa Clara, San Mateo, and Santa Cruz Counties.
- To support our growth and scale, 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.
- Village Harvest is funded by private contributions from individual donors, foundation grants, and corporate volunteer service and matching gift programs.

For the Community:

- Website www.villageharvest.org offers information on fruit tree care, harvesting, using fruit, and recipes.
- The site also contains a directory of Community Fruit Drop Off Locations to help tree owners who pick and donate their own fruit, and a national Harvesting and Gleaning Organizations Directory.
- 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
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