



Gaining Ground, Inc.

PO Box 374 Concord MA 01742 0374

Incorporation Year: 1990

<http://www.gainingground.org/>

Organization Contact: office@gainingground.org Amy Capofreddi

Food, Agriculture & Nutrition Food Banks, Food Pantries

CEO/Executive Director: Mr. Joe Rigali

Board Chair: Mr. Joe Rigali GW&Wade,LLC



Current

Mission Statement: Gaining Ground grows organic produce for hunger relief with help from volunteers of all ages and abilities, who work and learn in our gardens.

Needs Statement: 1. Constituent Relationship Management system. Gaining Ground welcomes over 2,000 volunteers each year and reaches out to over 3,000 supporters with our newsletter and appeals. We are currently using different management tools for tracking volunteer, donor and supporter data that don't play well together. We are currently researching options we can use to implement a solution.

2. \$10,000 - \$20,000 Farm Apprenticeship Program

In addition to educating volunteers about organic farming and hunger relief, our farm offers a unique learning environment for young farmers. In 2015, we launched a Farm Apprenticeship program that offers an intensive six-month learning program on the operations of a small-scale, organic, sustainable farm that uses over 2,000 community volunteers each season. Our apprentice program prepares less experienced farmers to have a stronger working knowledge of organic agriculture, and practiced people skills working with community volunteers, so that they may serve future projects that aim to improve human health and environmental quality through organic practices. The program is going very well in its first year and we would like to continue to offer it next year. Total program cost is approximately \$30,000 (compensation for apprentices and farm coordinators).

3. \$9,000 Produce Cooler

Gaining Ground has successfully raised funds to build a barn on the farm to provide storage for farm equipment and add work space for volunteers and staff. As part of this project, we would like to install a walk-in produce cooler in the barn. The cooler would help us harvest produce at its peak and supply it more evenly across the different emergency food programs we supply and over the season. Initial quotes of an approximately 8' x 8' or 8' x 10' cooler vary between \$7,500 - \$8,000, not including delivery, installation and shelving costs.

4. \$7,500 Maple Sugaring Program

In late winter, Gaining Ground taps maple trees throughout Concord and Carlisle. Volunteers visit the farm to learn informally about the process of boiling sap down to maple syrup. This is a high value product that is enthusiastically welcomed by the food programs we supply each year. The approximately six-week program (very weather dependent) is another way that we seek to make the most of the land and resources we have available to further our mission – growing organic produce for hunger relief with community volunteers. In the past few years we have offered a one-day open house to attract more people to the program – a low-key event with hot cider and maple-inspired treats. The cost of the program represents 80% of the Farm Coordinator salary for six weeks, annual equipment repairs and supplies, and transportation.

Impact Statement: 2014 Accomplishments

1. Food distribution: In 2014, Gaining Ground launched a new food distribution program to help us reach more urban families. In collaboration with Project Bread and Community Teamwork in Lowell, we began offering a weekly free farmers' market for families with children at a Lowell Head Start center. The program helps low-income families with young children gain access to the nutritious fresh produce essential to healthy development. During the 16-week program we set up a weekly, free farmers' market and introduced the produce and farming to the children. Families receive a variety of produce each week, sufficient for a small family. Project Bread provided food preparation demonstrations with a chef and nutritional information.
2. Volunteer involvement: We had a record number of volunteers visit the farm in 2014. Approximately 2,200 volunteers participated in farm operations from April through October. Volunteers included numerous school groups, disabled adults, faith organizations, corporate groups, families and individuals. Sugaring activities expanded volunteer opportunities into January and February.
3. Food Production: In 2014, we achieved a record harvest, more than double our harvest in 2012. We supplied 57,000 pounds of top-quality, highly nutritious, organically-grown vegetables, fruit and herbs, as well as 30 gallons of maple syrup to emergency food programs. Produce we harvest before noon is delivered to food programs to be distributed that same day.
4. Capital improvements: We completed construction on a high tunnel – similar to a greenhouse – that covers field crops and creates a micro-climate that improves growing conditions earlier and later in the season. Tomatoes flourished under the high tunnel this season and the fall crop of spinach was harvested into December. This protected field space will help us extend our growing season through the fall and give our spring plantings an earlier start. We installed a permanent deer fence around the farm to minimize crop loss due to wildlife. We installed a new irrigation system off our new well so we will have year-round access to water.
5. Capacity Building: In 2013, the Board and the staff recognized the need to add structure and staff to remain successful and expand our reach. At that time, Gaining Ground operated with only two year-round staff positions – a Farm Coordinator and an Office Administrator. Critical program functions relied on the volunteer Board of Directors and seasonal farm staff during the growing season. The organization's activities and program goals were outgrowing its capacity for fundraising and program management. In 2014, Gaining Ground hired a Program Manager to support Gaining Ground's Food Distribution Program, Farm Volunteer Program and Community Communication. Fan Watkinson joined Gaining Ground in April. The addition of a Program Manager significantly improves our ability to carry out several goals:
 - Provide a safe, enjoyable, and engaging volunteer experience
 - Improve follow-up with farm volunteers to collect feedback and maintain engagement
 - Identify and follow-up with volunteers interested in providing financial support
 - Better understand the organizations we supply – who they serve, how many, timing of their distributions, etc. – and build a stronger relationship with their staff and volunteers
 - Satisfy the needs of the organizations we supply in terms of what produce they receive, how the produce is packaged for pick up, pick up schedule, etc.
 - Raise community awareness of Gaining Ground through local newspaper articles and more frequent and engaging Facebook postings
 - Collect and summarize program measurement data on a monthly basis

2015 Goals

1. Grow more food. Our 2015 growing season will benefit from an early start under our new high tunnel. The new irrigation system will be operational during the season. We are also launching an initiative to aggressively build our soil quality by adding more compost, cover crops and mineral amendments. We have observed stronger, healthier, more pest-resistant and productive plants where we have concentrated our efforts to increase soil vitality. This will ultimately enable us to grow more food while remaining responsible stewards of the land resources we use.
2. Create a Farm Apprentice Program. Our Farm Coordinators recognize that our blend of organic farming and meaningful community volunteerism offers a unique farm-learning opportunity for young farmers. In 2015, they are launching a Farm Apprenticeship program with two full-time, six month positions for young farmers to learn all aspects of the farm operations, the volunteer program, the food programs we supply, and the land and resources we use.
3. Support more emergency food programs. Our ability to regularly supply emergency food programs is subject to weather and growing conditions but in 2015 we will seek ways to add regular support to at least one more food program.
4. Design and site a barn for the farm. A barn provides a sheltered, well-organized space for farm staff and farm equipment, supplies and facilities. This capital investment will serve the farm for years to come, providing shelter for volunteers and farm supplies, and protecting the investments we have made in farm equipment

Full-time Staff: 3

Volunteers: 2200

(excludes part-time staff)

Programs Detailed on Profile

Growing organic produce for hunger relief

Farm volunteering

Projected Revenue: \$335,695.00

Projected Expenses: \$335,695.00

Fiscal Year	2014	2013	2012
Total Revenue	\$452,520	\$315,255	\$246,834
Total Expenses	\$266,641	\$209,589	\$172,516

Top Funding Sources

Fiscal Year	2014	2013	2012
Top Funding Source & Dollar Amount	--	--	--
Second Highest Funding Source & Dollar Amount	--	--	--
Third Highest Funding Source & Dollar Amount	--	--	--