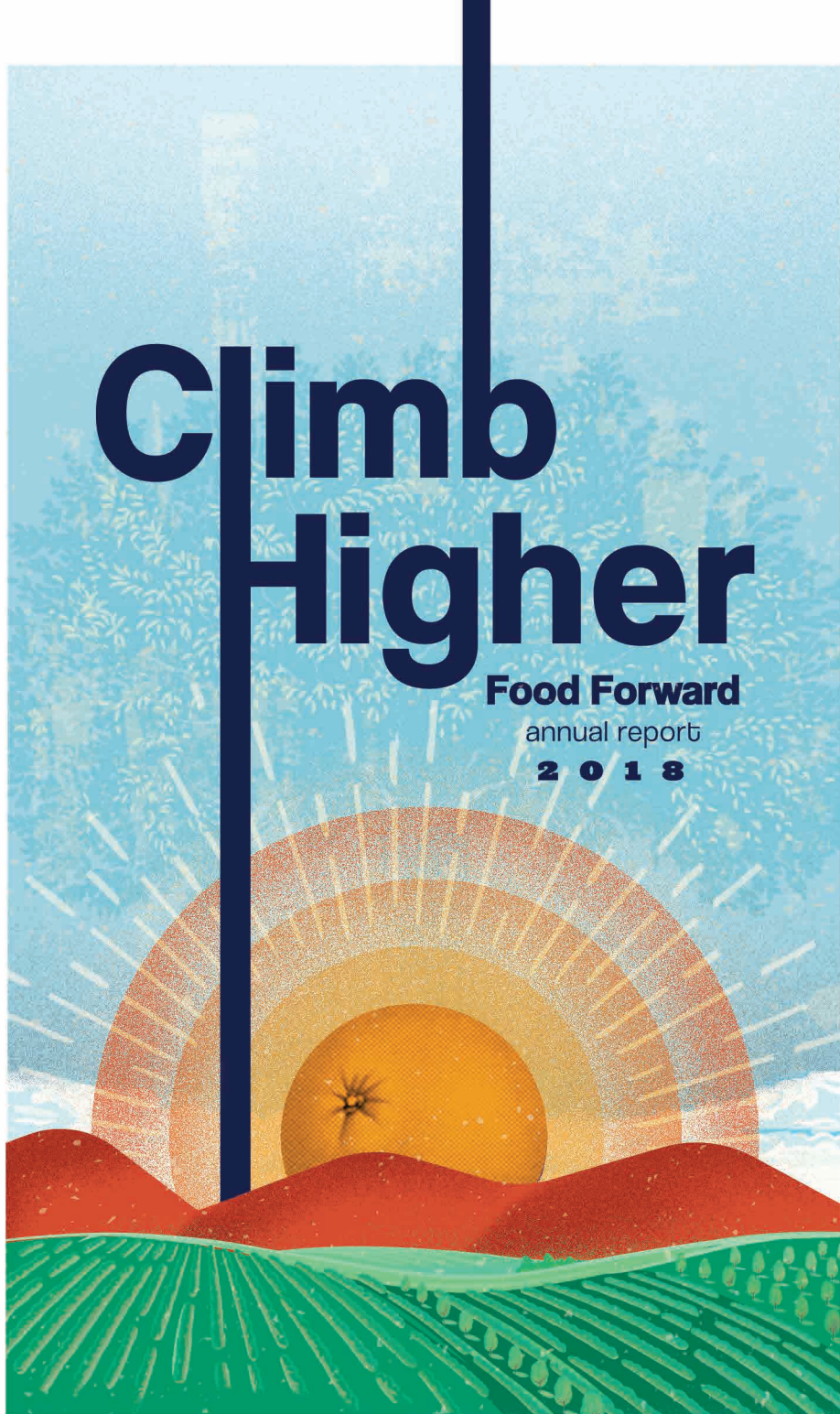


# Climb Higher

**Food Forward**

annual report

**2 0 1 8**



# Dear Friends,

Food Forward's origins had little in the way of an agenda—simply a handful of well-meaning fruit warriors and a grassroots experiment to share the abundance in our own backyards.

But along the way we've seen the need and grown into the region's most efficient and impactful produce recovery organization, helping **1.75 million food insecure individuals across 8 counties annually**.

Much of our work is about taking risks: "Go out on a limb, it's where the fruit is," was one of our very first slogans. It resonates just as much today. When faced with 40% of food going to waste and millions of food insecure individuals in our region, you are compelled to think and act big.

In 2018, we began expanding the concept of our wholesale produce hub—the "Depot." First was the development of the audacious idea itself: creating a 6,000-square-foot warehouse—allowing us to double our Fruitanthropy by 2020. Then we added the necessary \$1.3 million to our budget over the next two years to make it a reality.

Several of our most dedicated funders have stepped up to be lead supporters of this project. These foundations, along with anchor funder CalRecycle, plus 143 intrepid, fruitastic souls who donated at levels from \$1 to \$50,000, are right there with us and making it all possible.



The Depot is just one of Food Forward's initiatives. All three of our produce recovery programs have grown and will continue to grow in their own way; our volunteers and staff will remain change-makers on the frontline of SoCal hunger relief; and we will be there for all 1,800 agencies that depend on us.

With one eye staring down our first decade and the other on the exciting and impactful projects ahead, I'm filled with anticipation. I want to extend Food Forward's collective gratitude to all who have gotten us here, redefined words like **abundance**, and defied expectations of what is possible when a group of individuals come together as a community to act on a simple but powerful idea.

Thank you—

**Rick Nahmias**

Founder/Executive Director



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Rod Cordova

Lucky Lynch

Tobie Mitchell

Suki Sir



**1.75M**  
people fed

**20+**



varieties of fruit hand-picked by  
the Backyard Harvest program

**220**



wholesale distributors donated  
produce to the Wholesale Produce  
Recovery program

**1,800**

agencies received donated  
produce from Food Forward



The Farmers Market  
Recovery program had  
its biggest year ever:

**680,269**

pounds recovered  
and donated

# 2018 impact

**23.1M**  
**pounds**

of fruits and vegetables  
recovered and donated



Won a  
Food  
Recovery  
Challenge  
Award

from the U.S. EPA  
for the 4th year in  
a row

**9¢**

Organizational cost  
to recover and  
donate one pound of  
produce



**4,050**  
volunteers engaged

**25,000**  
**pounds**



of **oranges** harvested from  
Franklin Canyon

**22**

new hunger relief agencies served  
in Ventura County

**250+**



LAUSD 5th graders participated  
in kNow Waste, Food Forward's  
Youth Education program that  
teaches students how to reduce  
food waste

**694,000** pounds of fruits  
and vegetables were directly  
distributed to the community at  
Produce Pick-Up events

## PARTNER HIGHLIGHT:

"As Food Forward's first agency partner, Jewish Family Service of Los Angeles (JFS) has watched Food Forward greatly expand its impact across Los Angeles and Southern California. The fresh produce they have provided to JFS has been crucial in helping us to serve thousands of people throughout our LA community. This 50 million pound harvest is a cause for celebration and an inspiration to strengthen our efforts as we move ahead. JFS looks forward to continuing our partnership, and together promoting positive change for the individuals and families in our city experiencing food insecurity and hunger."

Nancy Volpert,

*Director of Public Policy, Jewish Family Service of Los Angeles*



## A 50 million pound milestone


In February, Food Forward celebrated its **50 millionth pound of produce recovered and donated** while harvesting at Franklin Canyon Orange Grove.

Located on the edge of Beverly Hills, Franklin Canyon is a public park managed by the Los Angeles Parks Foundation, featuring a 10 acre orange grove. Since the partnership began in 2010, Food Forward has harvested over 100,000 pounds of oranges, serving agencies such as SOVA, Project Angel Food, Seeds of Hope, and MEND.

For this milestone, Food Forward was joined by representatives from local and state government, City of Los Angeles Mayor Garcetti's office, LA Board of Public Works, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and David Bohnett Foundation, a long-time funder of Franklin Canyon and Food Forward.



# Strong partnerships create healthy communities



The Produce Pick-Up program distributes fruits and vegetables sourced by the Wholesale Recovery program to families at sites in Watts, South Los Angeles, Inglewood, and Simi Valley.

These free distributions are made possible with volunteer power and in collaboration with four partners: Watts Labor Community Action Committee, Social Justice Learning Institute, Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust, and Simi at the Garden.

This model enables Food Forward to reduce barriers to food access by strategically serving communities that have limited supermarkets, food pantries, or farmers markets to provide affordable, healthy options. To meet the needs of each neighborhood being served through a Produce Pick-Up, five to eight varieties of fresh produce are given out through a market-style distribution or in pre-packed bags. In 2018, 321 volunteer shifts were filled and nearly 700,000 pounds of fruits and vegetables were distributed at Produce Pick-Up events.



## **PARTNER HIGHLIGHT:** **Social Justice Learning Institute**

“One of the original tenets of our 100 Seeds of Change initiative was to grow, aggregate, and distribute enough produce to help end food insecurity in our community. We built over 100 gardens, growing tens of thousands of pounds of produce over the last eight years. We started regularly harvesting and distributing that produce through our CSA program. However, even with accepting EBT, we saw that there was still a major gap in access to food that our programs didn’t have the capacity to address. Partnering with Food Forward to create the Food for Thought Produce Pick-Up became the solution that significantly filled in that gap. In one year together, we’ve made an amazing amount of fresh produce available—over 100,000 pounds—while concurrently implementing Inglewood’s first closed-loop food system by composting the produce not given away. I believe that our model will prove to make LA County one of the largest food rescue communities eliminating food waste in the country.”

*Derek Steele, Health Equity Programs Director, Social Justice Learning Institute*

Since Food Forward Ventura County opened its doors in 2011, the region's agricultural abundance has offered countless opportunities to collect massive quantities of fresh produce from farms and large orchards. In 2018, there was a 28% increase in our harvest efforts in the region—up from 153,000 pounds in 2017 to 196,000 pounds in 2018.

Due to the growth of our Backyard Harvest and Produce Pick-Up programs, we were able to serve 22 new hunger relief agencies in the county including Friends of Fieldworkers, Mixteco/Indigena Community Organizing Project (MICOP), Upper Ojai Relief, and Restore Ventura. The latter two organizations sprung up in response to the Thomas Fire, which devastated Ventura County in late 2017. In collaboration with community partners, we created weekly free produce giveaways in the cities of Ventura and Ojai to serve those impacted by the fire.

In addition, we responded to community needs by expanding our Farmers Market Recovery program to the Oxnard Farmers Market, our fifth market in the county. That weekly market is gleaned by and serves people living at the C Street Family Plan, a residential facility that provides low-cost treatment options for those in recovery from substance abuse. Through this partnership model, 4,024 pounds of fresh produce went directly back with the C Street volunteers responsible for recovering the food, creating a virtuous circle.

# Food Forward Ventura County grows to meet the region's needs



# Our environmental impact

## *Reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by addressing food waste*



In 2018, Food Forward diverted 23.1 million pounds of food waste from landfills, an increase of 25.8% from the previous year. We prevented over 8,763 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent, commensurate to removing 1,852 passenger vehicles from the road for a year. Estimates indicate that if food recovery organizations work together, annual food waste (13.2 million tons) can be reduced by 20% in the next decade. Our accomplishments will help the United States meet the first-ever national goal to reduce food waste—a 50% reduction by 2030.

The environmental cost of food waste is extreme. According to the EPA, food waste sent to landfills produces methane, a harmful greenhouse gas 25 times more potent than CO<sub>2</sub>. Globally, food waste contributes over 8% of total greenhouse gas emissions, making it a significant contributor to climate change. Food is the largest source of waste in California, comprising 18% of California's landfills.

Rescuing food can help individuals and families that do not always have access to fresh and nutritious produce. Through our food recovery model, Food Forward helps to protect the environment from harmful toxins caused by food waste decomposition. Our programs are interconnected with our surroundings, environment, and the power of communities to create change.





# Let's hear it for our volunteers!

In 2018, over 4,000 people volunteered with Food Forward by harvesting from backyards, gleaning at farmers markets, distributing healthy fruits and vegetables, representing us at community fairs, and supporting our program staff in our offices. These volunteers contributed over 22,000 hours to our efforts to reduce food insecurity and food waste. We never could have accomplished all we did without their help!

**"The volunteer experience at a harvest is always an opportunity to influence people to continue to make an impact. Everyone shares stories, learns from each other, and grows from being a part of something greater than themselves."**

**Rebecca,**

*Backyard Harvest Pick Leader*



# How can you help?



## DONATE

It only costs Food Forward 9¢ to recover and donate one pound of fresh produce. That means a gift of any size goes a long way! Your financial support helps Food Forward make an impact on people's health and the health of our planet every single day. Fight hunger and food waste across Southern California by making a contribution at [foodforward.org/donate](https://foodforward.org/donate).



## VOLUNTEER

Food Forward hosts an average of 190 volunteer-powered events across Los Angeles and Ventura Counties each and every month. Pick oranges in an orchard, glean local veggies from a farmers market, or train as an Event Leader. Giving just a few hours can make a big difference. Learn more at [foodforward.org/volunteer](https://foodforward.org/volunteer) or by emailing [volunteer@foodforward.org](mailto:volunteer@foodforward.org).



## SHARE

Do you have more fruits or vegetables than you can use? Contact Food Forward! 100% of what we collect is donated, free of charge, to hundreds of hunger relief agencies across our region. Plus, produce donors get a tax-deductible receipt for every donation. Go to [foodforward.org/fruittrees](https://foodforward.org/fruittrees) or email [harvest@foodforward.org](mailto:harvest@foodforward.org) for more information.



## FOLLOW

Get the latest news from Food Forward by following us on social media or signing up for our bimonthly newsletter, Fresh Juice.

Find us:

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 [foodforwardla](https://twitter.com/foodforwardla)

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To receive Fresh Juice, email [freshjuice@foodforward.org](mailto:freshjuice@foodforward.org)



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## \$25,000 AND ABOVE

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Julia Meltzer & David Thorne

## \$10,000 AND ABOVE

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Robert & Kim Valencia

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# Corporate, Foundation, & Government Supporters

## \$250,000 AND ABOVE

New Argosy Foundation

## \$100,000 AND ABOVE

California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle) through California Climate Investments

Draper Richards Kaplan Foundation

Flora Family Foundation

## \$75,000 AND ABOVE

The Annenberg Foundation

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## \$5,000 AND ABOVE

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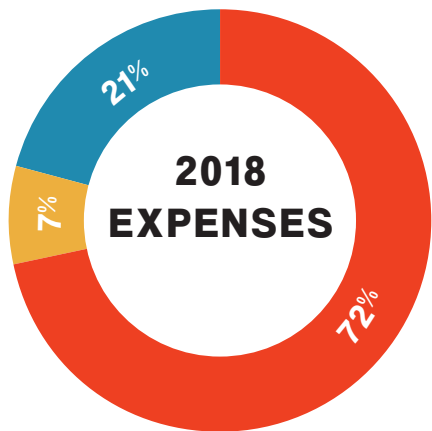
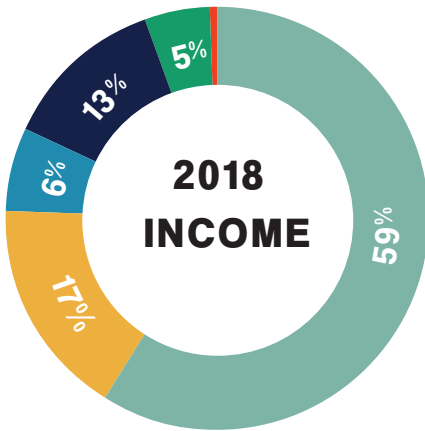
Serena Creative, Inc three6ixty

YH Advisors

Yin Yang Naturals




# Financials



FOUNDATION	\$1,296,123
INDIVIDUAL	\$364,611
CORPORATE	\$275,791
SPECIAL EVENTS	\$140,655
GOVERNMENT	\$111,861
MERCHANDISE/OTHER	\$7,608
TOTAL	\$2,196,649

PROGRAM SERVICES	\$1,514,969
FUNDRAISING	\$434,491
ADMINISTRATION	\$156,882
TOTAL	\$2,106,342

In 2018, Food Forward collected and donated produce with an in-kind value of  
**\$38,019,435**



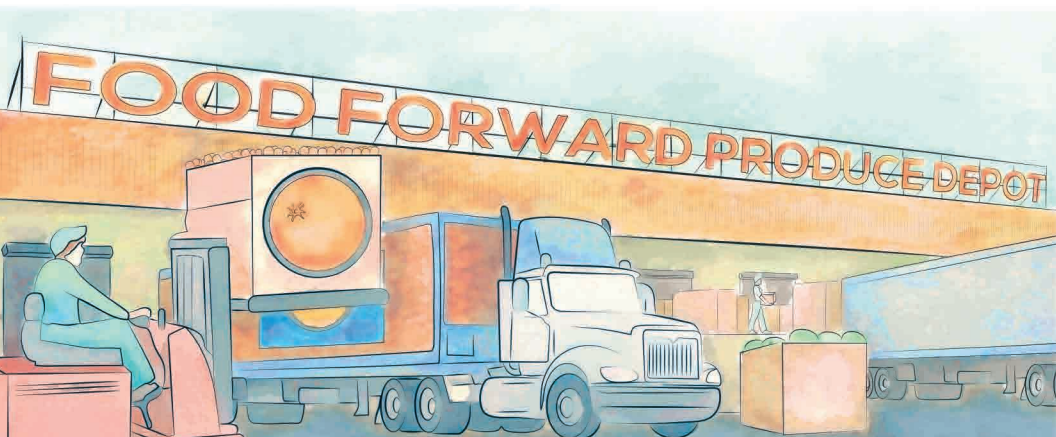


# What's Ahead?

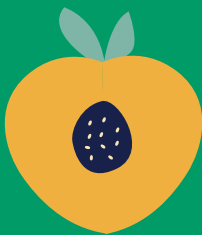
In April 2018, Food Forward received some amazing news: we were awarded a \$500,000 grant from the CalRecycle Food Waste Prevention and Rescue Grant Program to create a produce distribution hub. Dubbed the “Depot,” Food Forward’s first-ever warehouse and refrigeration space will allow the organization to nearly double the amount of produce we can recover and donate by 2020.

Since then, our team has been working tirelessly to make the Depot a reality. We have the keys to the warehouse, a 6,000-square-foot space in Bell adjacent to downtown Los Angeles. In 2019, we’ll build out the space to fit our produce rescue needs by creating a refrigeration and food storage system, constructing offices for staff, and procuring equipment like forklifts and pallet jacks. Along with the warehouse, the Depot project includes expanding our Wholesale Produce Recovery vehicle fleet to five box trucks and growing our staff. We’re also implementing new produce tracking and inventory software to help keep produce flowing in and out of the Depot without a hitch!

All of these fruitful changes will give Food Forward the capacity to transport, store, and distribute strawberries, oranges, mangoes, spinach, bananas, watermelon, kale, avocado, onions, and so much more! By 2020, the Depot will allow Food Forward to recover and distribute an unprecedented 40 million pounds of fruits and vegetables annually. This fresh food hub will transform the food recovery landscape of Los Angeles, helping us to work with even more hunger relief agencies and create new ways to help feed the one in nine Californians facing food insecurity. And we think that’s an achievement berry worthy of celebration.



# Our Core Values



## **Creativity**

We seek to innovate in all facets of our work.



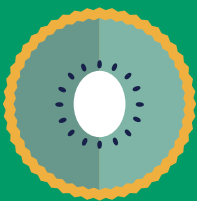
## **Joyfulness**

We cultivate a meaningful, fun, positive, and spirited work environment.



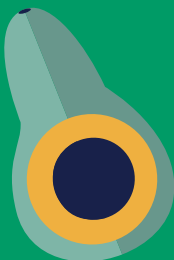
## **Committed to Food Justice**

We believe that access to wholesome food and fresh, nutritious produce is not a privilege, but a right. We work hard to end food inequality and reduce food insecurity.



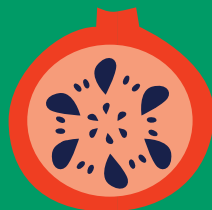
## **Authenticity**

We are transparent and honest in our words, deeds, and actions. We act at the highest level of integrity.



## **Disciplined**

We are reliable, professional, accountable, rigorous, and committed to excellence in all areas of our work, both internally and externally.



## **Community-minded**

We aim to include and connect people in the community and to remain open, diverse, respectful, and accessible. We take pride in offering people meaningful volunteer and work experiences.



**Food Forward fights hunger and prevents food waste by rescuing fresh surplus produce, connecting this abundance with people in need and inspiring others to do the same.**

**HARVEST FOOD - FIGHT HUNGER - BUILD COMMUNITY**

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