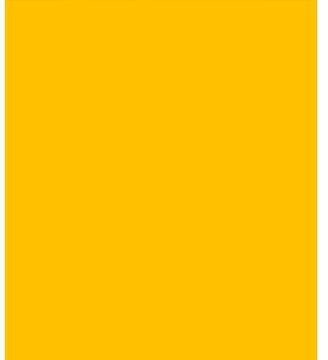
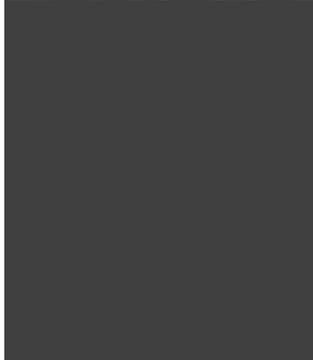
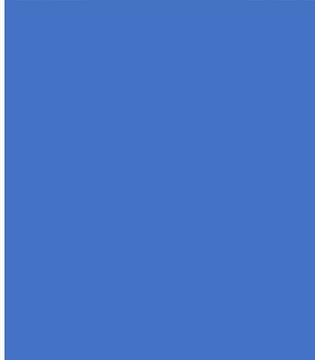


# 2017 Annual Report



**COMMUNITY**  
**ALLIANCE**  
For Education And Hunger Relief



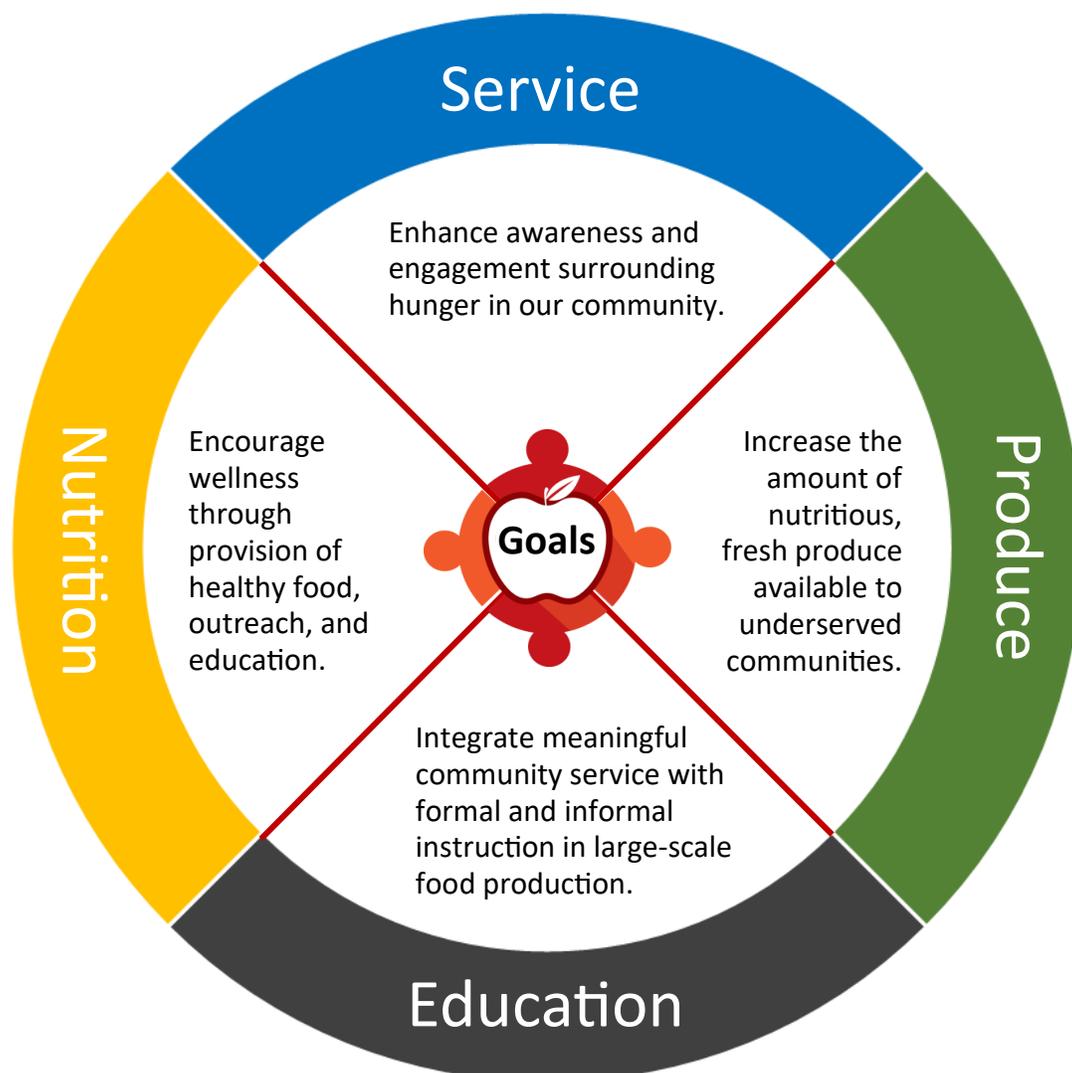
# Program Overview

The Community Alliance for Education and Hunger Relief (Community Alliance) is a partnership of organizations committed to increasing access of fresh produce to underserved communities and providing educational opportunities for college and K-12 students and life-long learners. Based at the Colorado State University Western Colorado Research Center in Mesa County, Colorado, the Research Center's orchards and arable land make a perfect site for food production and community outreach. Programming in four areas of focus is carried out through collaborations between the Research Center, Western Colorado Community College, Mesa County Valley School District #51, Food Bank of the Rockies, Colorado State University Extension, John McConnell Math and Science Center, and many other community organizations.

In the first year of operation, the Community Alliance has grown 92,851 pounds of high-value fruits and vegetables to support hunger relief, engaged 203 volunteers in meaningful community service, and facilitated over 3,000 college and K-12 student-learning hours.

The Community Alliance serves as a model that can be replicated at other agriculture experiment stations across the United States. Through documentation and evaluation of programming, we hope to provide support to academic institutions that wish to become collaborators in addressing hunger in their communities.

The activities of the Community Alliance are supported by cash and in-kind donations from Colorado-based philanthropic foundations and Community Alliance partners. With careful management of these funds and the demonstrated enthusiasm and support from the community, the Community Alliance looks forward to increasing the impact on hunger relief efforts and expanding the programming that strengthens our local community in 2018.



# 2017 Snap Shot



Volunteer Hours



Pounds of Produce



Fieldtrips Hosted



Nutrition Education Cards



Unique Volunteers



Crops Cultivated



K-12 Student Learning Hours



Colorado agencies using nutrition education cards

Service

Produce

Education

Nutrition

# Partners



The Western Colorado Research Center in Mesa County Colorado is the site of most Community Alliance activities. The Research Center's Orchard Mesa and Fruita stations have contributed nine acres of fruit trees, nine acres of arable land, farming infrastructure, and valuable staff time and expertise to Community Alliance programming. The CSU College of Agriculture pays the Community Alliance Program Coordinator salary.



As a part of its two-year degree program in sustainable agriculture, Western Colorado Community College students in the vegetable/herb production course propagated over 2,600 seedlings for the vegetable production fields. In summer, with training from instructors and staff, paid interns managed the cultivation, harvest and delivery of three acres of vegetables.



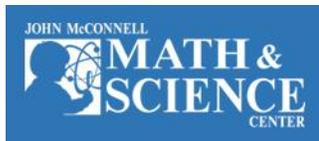
Teachers and administrators within Mesa County Valley School District 51 help shape elementary, middle and high school field trips. The Nutrition Services Department is a major partner in developing K-12 student service learning experiences and the Western Colorado Community College vegetable internship program.



Food Bank of the Rockies (FBR) is a key partner in the Community Alliance by shaping programming and providing valuable education about state-wide hunger relief efforts and policies. FBR provides containers and transportation for the safe distribution of produce to hunger relief agencies throughout 15 counties in Colorado. FBR was a semi-finalist for the 2017 Feeding America Innovator of the Year Award for its partnership with the Community Alliance.



Nutrition programming is led by the Colorado State University Extension agent Ann Duncan. Ann designs the produce cards and leads activities based around wellness and healthy eating. The Tri-River Extension office in Montrose, Colorado provides website support and assistance. Extension agents in Grand Junction, Colorado have contributed supplies and valuable advice.



The John McConnell Math and Science Center is an important partner in providing ongoing educational programming through the Dig In! agriculture camp, which is held at the Research Center. The Center provides STEM curriculum guidance, support, and resources.



Loading produce into Food Bank of the Rockies truck for distribution



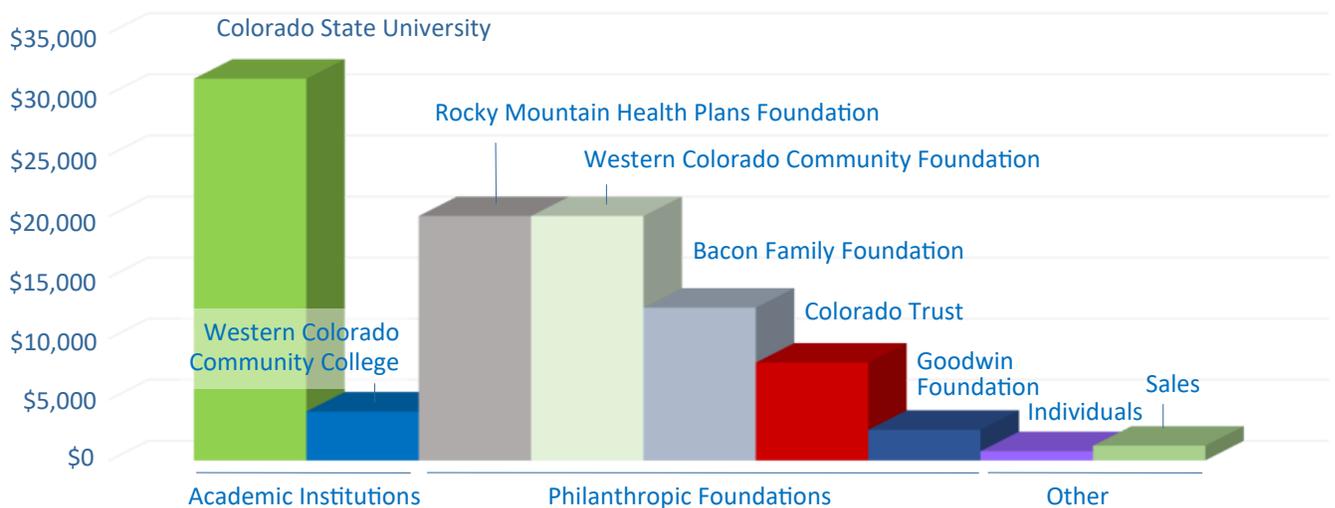
Camper planting during the Math and Science Center Dig In! Camp

# Income and Expenses

## INCOME

The activities of the Community Alliance are primarily supported by cash and in-kind donations from philanthropic foundations and Community Alliance partners. Colorado State University pays for the Program Coordinator’s part-time position and Western Colorado Community College contributes to the summer farm instructor wages and costs associated with the vegetable production class. Cash donations of \$63,750 from Colorado-based philanthropic foundations and private individuals comprise most of the income for 2017. The Community Alliance enjoys strong local support as seven of the eight foundations are based in Mesa County. Proceeds from sales to Sodexo, the dining service provider for Western Colorado Community College, (\$1,404) are reinvested into joint programming with the college. In-kind donations of staff time, supplies, and infrastructure from Community Alliance partners, companies, and Mesa County significantly reduce our fundraising needs. The remaining funds, \$44,639, will be directed to 2018 programming.

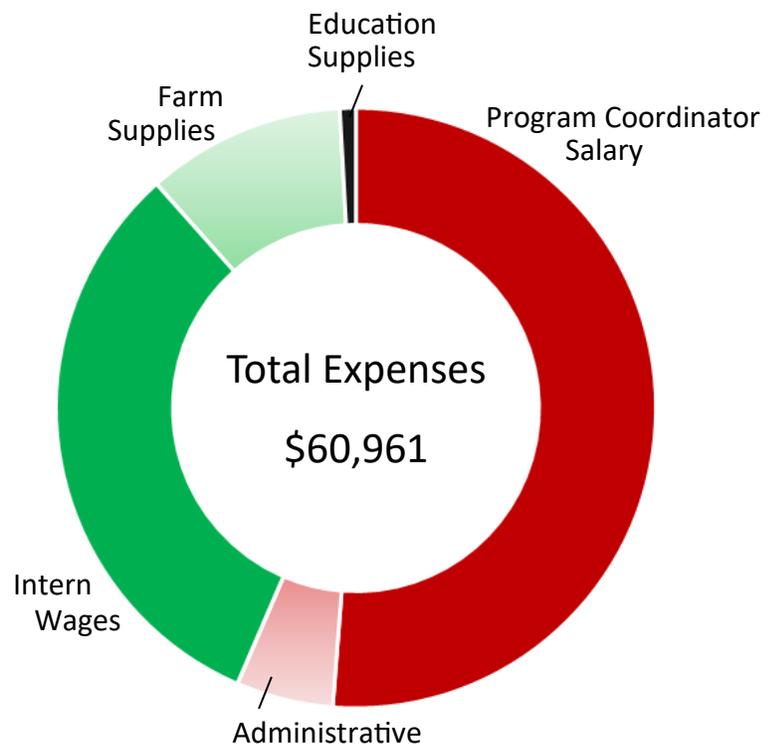
**Total Income 2017—\$100,392**



## EXPENSES

Wages and salaries for the Community College Interns, the Summer Farm Instructor and the Program Coordinator comprise the bulk of the expenses in 2017. We benefited from utilizing the existing infrastructure at the Western Colorado Research Center, which required very little investment to convert fields into vegetable plots. The primary expenditures for farm supplies included one-time use irrigation equipment, plastic mulch, soil amendments and fertilizer, pest control, harvest wagons, seeds and plant propagation supplies.

Our partnership with the Food Banks of the Rockies (FBR) significantly reduced our packaging and transportation costs. FBR was awarded a \$10,000 Morgan Stanley Foundation Produce Capacity Grant to purchase 730 plastic totes and 16 orchard bins for use by the Community Alliance, thus eliminating the need to purchase single-use cardboard boxes. FBR was able to pick-up food in bulk from the Research Center, which almost eliminated our transportation costs.



# In the Media

## PRINT MEDIA

Langford, Katie. "Students harvest fruits of their labor." *The Grand Junction Daily Sentinel* 13 Sept. 2017: A2. Print.

Langford, Katie. "Look at how the kids have grown." *The Grand Junction Daily Sentinel* 16 Aug. 2016: A1. Print.

Ashcraft, Richie Ann. "Community booster hits 20-year mark." *The Grand Junction Daily Sentinel* May 2017: A2. Print.



## Students harvest fruits of their labor



Home / Local / Article

Planted by students...served to students

KKCO - Veggies Harvested For Schools



Home / Local / Article

Students plant veggies for field-to-fork movement



## BROADCAST MEDIA

*KJCT News 8*. American Broadcasting Company. ABC, KJCT, Grand Junction 12 Sept. 2017. Television.

*KKCO 11 News*. National Broadcasting Company. NBC, KKCO, Grand Junction 26 July 2017. Television.

*News Channel 5 KREX*. Columbia Broadcasting System. CBS, KREX, Grand Junction 10 May 2017. Television.

*KKCO 11 News*. National Broadcasting Company. NBC, KKCO, Grand Junction 10 May 2017. Television.

*Diggin' in the Garden*. KAFM, Grand Junction 21 June 2017. Radio.

# Service

The Community Alliance organized 33 community harvest events in which volunteers picked apples, peaches, and vegetables for hunger relief organizations. Volunteers also contributed a wide-range of talents by planting fields, working with students, and providing clerical work. Volunteers harvested 36,543 pounds of produce, which is 45% of the total picked by hand.

Our 203 volunteers came to us as individuals, families, groups of friends, members of social, religious and employer groups, and participants in physician-led wellness programs. Many volunteers were students who chose to work with us in fulfilling their service hours for their school or club requirements. We connected to our volunteers primarily through traditional and social media, word of mouth, and presentations in the community.

Volunteers received training to ensure the safety of the produce. Staff worked to ensure the volunteers' safety by reducing the amount of weight that had to be carried, providing wagons to assist in the harvest, and limiting harvests to pedestrian orchards where fruit could be

reached from the ground. Volunteers with physical limitations found roles in washing, bundling, and sorting produce.

The Community harvests provide an outdoor activity centered around healthy food and civic engagement. Volunteers brought home food to share with families, and while a box of fresh produce is a perk, it was clear their primary motivation was to help others. The orchards and fields were sites of discussions about food insecurity and the needs of our community. An appreciation of local agriculture grew as volunteers asked staff and interns about their work and experienced a small slice of large-scale agriculture.

Civic service strengthens our community and enriches the lives of volunteers. The harvests are a way for individuals to give without having to donate money. In 2018, we will expand our volunteer recruitment efforts to include a wider cross-section of the community.



Volunteers filling up a wagon with cucumbers for the Food Bank of the Rockies

678

Volunteer Hours

45%

Portion of donated fruits & vegetables harvested by volunteers

203

Unique Volunteers

33

Community Harvest Events

# Produce

Seasonal fresh vegetables and fruit are one of the most requested items at food banks and pantries, but they are among the hardest foods for agencies to acquire. To increase the amount of produce available for hunger relief, Community Alliance partners coordinated the harvest of nine acres of fruit trees, planted and harvested six acres of pinto beans, and cultivated three acres of vegetables. Community outreach and education programs were supported by these projects.

The orchards at the Western Colorado Research Center Orchard Mesa location support the agricultural research program led by Dr. Ioannis Minas. The Research Center donated 100% of the fruit not required for study. A total of 44,915 pounds of apples and peaches were picked by Research Center staff and volunteers participating in community harvests events.

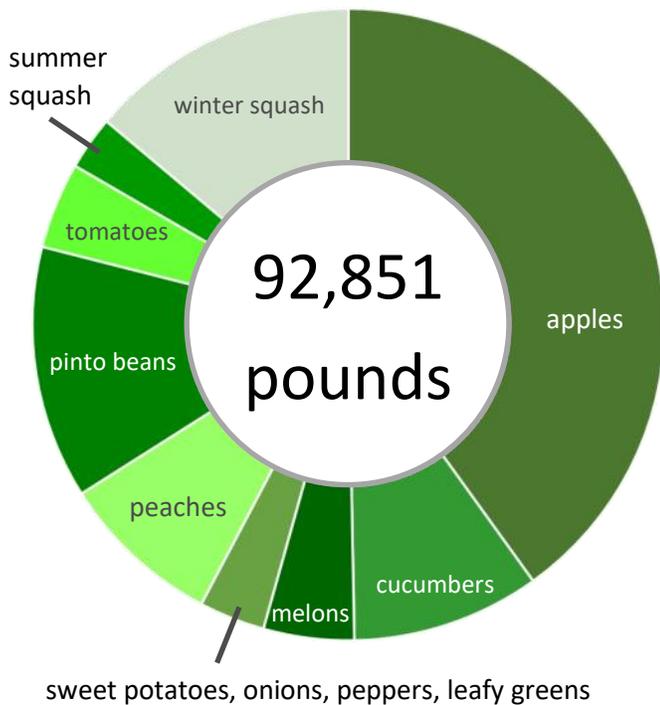
The Western Colorado Foundation Seed Program at the Research Center's Fruita location donated 12,027 pounds of pinto beans grown by Research Associates Fred Judson and Kevin Gobbo.

We grew 35,909 pounds of vegetables requested by our partners — cucumbers, winter and summer squash, tomatoes, melons, sweet potatoes, peppers, onions, and herbs. We grew, washed, and bundled 1,028 bunches of kale, collard greens, chard, and lettuce.

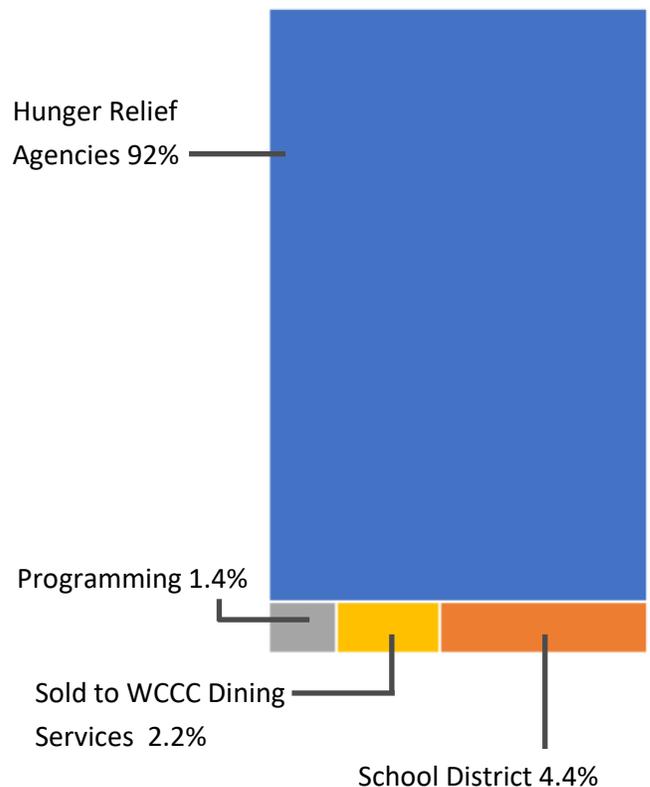
The primary recipient of the produce was the Food Bank of the Rockies, which distributed the food to hunger relief agencies in Mesa County and 14 additional counties throughout Colorado. We donated 4,083 pounds of cucumbers, cherry tomatoes, and lettuce to the Mesa County Valley School District #51 Nutrition Services Department, which runs the Lunch Lizard summer meal program to areas of high need in Mesa County. Produce was also used in school cafeteria salad bars.

Produce was given to partners to support educational programming. It was also sold to the Western Colorado Community College (WCCC) Dining Services provider, Sodexo, to enhance intern training. Earnings from the sales will be reinvested in joint WCCC programming in 2018.

## Produce yields



## Produce Distribution



# Produce

## VEGETABLE PRODUCTION INTERNSHIP

The Western Colorado Community College offers a two-year degree in sustainable agriculture. As a part of their coursework in Dr. Curtis Swift's vegetable and herb production class, students researched plant varieties to use in the vegetable production program. They gained hands-on experience in plant propagation and greenhouse management by growing over 2,600 seedlings for use by the Community Alliance.

Three students from the sustainable agriculture program were hired to manage vegetable production program. These interns helped develop the farm layout, established the planting, fertilizing, and harvesting schedules, set-up and maintained the irrigation systems, and implemented integrated pest-control management practices. The interns also supervised a full-time, paid high school student interested in horticulture and helped lead volunteers during community harvests.

## PRODUCE QUALITY

Although a majority of the produce was donated, we maintained the same standards of safety and quality as would be expected if the produce was sold. Large-scale produce deliveries to the Food Bank of the Rockies were substantively equivalent to selling to a commercial distributor. Small-scale deliveries to the School District and sales to Sodexo were equivalent to delivering a customized product to a farm stand or restaurant. The primary focus of producing food for hunger relief provided the interns an intrinsic reward of contributing to their community. Participation with the School District's summer meal program was especially motivating and impactful for the interns.

## PRODUCE SAFETY

Our farm practices were guided by USDA and FDA standards for food safety, reflecting our principle for equal treatment of people regardless of need. Interns attended a mock audit to learn good agricultural practices required by law. They helped build facilities and establish harvest and post-harvest procedures to ensure produce safety.

## PLANNING FOR IMPROVEMENT

Evaluation by interns, staff and faculty of the season's successes and challenges has shaped the plan for next year's vegetable production program. To increase the efficiency and productivity of the fields, we will make changes in the varieties of vegetables we plant, the layout of the plots, and our pest-control management strategy. The ability to use reusable containers all season long and implementing other changes will reduce our labor needs. While our goal is to provide the most food we can to hunger relief, separating production from pressures of financial return allows students more independence, allowing for a richer and more applicable learning experience.

1,143

Internship  
Hours



Western Colorado Community College Intern harvesting kale for hunger relief agencies



23

Varieties of  
produce  
grown

3

Acres of  
vegetables  
cultivated



# K-12 Education

## SCHOOL PROGRAMMING

Students from seven district 51 schools visited the Western Colorado Research Center on ten occasions. The Community Alliance program coordinator worked with teachers to design these visits. Trips ranged in scope from focusing on civic service to pairing service with a STEM-based activity or overview of the research conducted on site.

One school started seedlings in three classrooms and although freezing temperatures prevented them from planting, they returned in the fall to harvest and share the food with their school and families.

Pomona Elementary School piloted a particularly effective field trip in which third grade students planted fields in the spring as a part of their unit on life cycles. They returned as fourth graders during their civics unit to harvest those fields. They brought cherry tomatoes back to their school to share with classmates and the rest was donated to hunger relief.

The Community Alliance gives students unique, hands-on access to local agriculture because the Research Center grows many of the common crops in Mesa County. We look forward to hosting more schools in 2018.

## YOUTH GROUPS

Four youth groups participated in on-going programming with the Community Alliance. Students with the Riverside Education Center started plants in the classroom, planted them in the quarter-acre Service Learning Garden, and returned to harvest the food. Produce from their plants contributed to the 955 pounds of food distributed during the free farmers market night held at the Riverside Education Center. This particularly successful program will be replicated and expanded in 2018.

The Research Center hosted the John McConnell Math and Science Center Dig In! camp with 20 enrolled students. Students met once a month from April to October, with activities centered around the Service Learning garden. During breaks from planting, weeding and harvesting, students had lessons in horticulture, local agriculture, nutrition and cooking, and food insecurity. Combining first through fifth graders allowed siblings to be at the same camp and gave older students the opportunity to take leadership roles. The day-long nature of the camp allowed for free time where students could explore their own interests in the garden. We look forward to Dig In! 2018.



Students filling the bus with apples they harvested for the Food Bank (above). Dig In! camper having an early lunch in the Service Garden (top right). Camper with a runaway zucchini—proving learning does not require perfection (right).



11

Different Schools & Youth Groups

28

Youth Fieldtrips

2,224

Student Learning Hours

# Nutrition



**LEAFY GREENS**

[WWW.COMMUNITYALLIANCE.EXTENSION.COLOSTATE.EDU](http://WWW.COMMUNITYALLIANCE.EXTENSION.COLOSTATE.EDU)

**GROWING**  
Leafy greens are grown year round in a variety of places across the United States. Leafy greens are generally cool season crops, meaning they are grown in the cooler, shorter growing seasons of the year.

**SELECTING**  
Leafy greens are available year round and range from a mild flavor to bitter or tangy flavor. Try a variety of different greens to taste the differences in each one. Select greens that are not wilted and do not have black or damaged areas.

**STORING**  
Store your leafy greens in a refrigerator in a plastic bag and wash under running water before eating. If they get too soft to eat fresh, try using them in a cooked dish.

**BODY**  
Leafy greens are full of vitamin A, C, K, potassium and fiber. Some leafy greens- like kale and collards-help to prevent cancer. While others-like spinach and turnip greens-can help your eyes stay healthy as you age. Leafy greens are a vegetable and it is recommended a healthy diet contain at least 2-3 cups of vegetables per day.

**KITCHEN**  
Leafy greens can be eaten raw or cooked, but some are enjoyed more if they are cooked. Tip: To revive wilted greens, soak them in clean ice water!

**Logos:** Community Alliance for Education and Hunger Relief, Colorado State University Extension

Example of a produce card for Leafy Greens. Cards such as these accompanied Community Alliance donations of kale, chard, and collards. Cards for apples, peaches, zucchini, butternut squash, sweet potatoes, pinto beans, and potatoes are available.

Increasing access to healthy food is one component of promoting community wellness. The nutrition program extends this goal further by providing educational information on healthy foods and supporting community-based physician wellness programs.

## NUTRITION EDUCATION

Nutritionist and Colorado State University Extension Agent, Ann Duncan, designed eight information cards to accompany the produce donated to food banks. These cards act to label the produce and provide information on its storage and use. The cards provide a simple, healthy recipe with limited ingredients. We hope that in labeling the produce and offering ideas for its preparation that foodbank clients will be more likely to bring it home.

The produce cards were printed and delivered to four local hunger relief agencies and program partners. Electronic versions of the cards are available for free. Nine food pantries from across the state have requested the cards and have made suggestions about other cards they would like to be developed. Follow up assessments will be made regarding the cards effectiveness in increasing clients' selection of produce. The assessment will help shape the future of this program.

As the Family and Consumer Science Agent, Ann provides expert training in healthy and safe food preparation and preservation. Ann led the Dig In! Campers in preparing a four course meal using produce from the garden. Facility expansion at the Western Colorado Research Center in 2018 will include a demonstration kitchen, which will allow Ann to lead more events in the future, possibly including ones involving food preservation.

## SUPPORTING WELLNESS PROGRAMS

There are variety of programs in Mesa County that focus on promoting healthy cooking and eating, exercise, and general wellness. Outreach events with two physician groups and 28 patients at the Research Center provided an outdoor activity (harvesting) centered around healthy food. We Can! Mesa County paired the activity with a lesson in healthy cooking using the harvest. Participants were given food to take home and the rest was donated to hunger relief organizations.

The Community Alliance program coordinator also visited a We Can! Mesa County gathering and spoke about local agriculture and food safety topics. The Community Alliance provided 181 pounds of vegetables to support cooking activities and send home with participants. These events were shown to be so successful and have a high level of interest that we will expand the partnerships with similar local hospitals, physician, and county wellness programs in 2018. Experts will provide the wellness curriculum and the Community Alliance will provide food and host planting or harvesting events at the Research Center.

# Acknowledgements

## Western Colorado Research Center

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Eugene Kelly  
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Greg Litus  
Emily Dowdy  
Bryan Braddy  
Fred Judson  
Kevin Gobbo  
Donna Iovanni  
Judy Craddock  
Ioannis Minas

## Western Colorado Community College

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Katy-Jane Angwin  
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Rose King  
Dan Moran  
Kate Kearney  
Daniel Widhammer (Sodexo)

## Food Bank of the Rockies

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Katie Ettman  
Starlene Collins  
Mike Losorda  
Kim Halladay  
Wonderful staff & volunteers

## CSU Tri River Extension

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Ann Duncan  
Talisha Rowley  
Jeffrey Wood  
Susan Carter  
Susan Honea

## Mesa County Valley School District #51

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Dan Sharp & Nutrition Services  
Maria Deuell  
Pomona Elementary Faculty and Staff



Pomona Elementary Third Graders  
planting tomatoes

## John McConnell Math and Science Center

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Jenn Moore  
Ann Barrett  
Madison Temple (photography)

## Financial Support

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Community Foundation  
Rocky Mountain Health Plans  
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Bacon Family Foundation  
Colorado Trust  
Goodwin Foundation  
Colorado State University  
Western Colorado  
Community College  
Generous Individuals

## In-Kind Support

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Western Colorado  
Research Center  
Western Colorado  
Community College  
Food Bank of the Rockies  
Annie's Heirloom Seeds  
Valley Grown Growers  
Atlasta Solar  
Mesa County Solid Waste  
Management  
Steele Plant Company  
Johnny's Selected Seeds  
Ace Hardware of Clifton  
Bookcliff Gardens  
Sage Creations

## Committees

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Colorado Food Policy Network,  
Healthy Community Food  
Assistance Work Group  
Mesa County Hunger Alliance  
D51 Local Wellness Advisory  
Board



Winter  
2017

Seedlings in the greenhouse managed by WCCC students

Spring  
2017

Peach blossoms budding in early spring



Early morning sunrise over the Service Learning Garden

Summer  
2017

Dig In! campers with their pumpkin harvest

Fall  
2017





3168 B 1/2 Rd • Grand Junction, Colorado 81503

<http://communityalliance.extension.colostate.edu>  Community Alliance for Education and Hunger Relief