Dear Supporters and Friends,

We made great progress last year, touching the lives of thousands of school children with the fresh flavors of local food, helping families grow their own food, connecting with hundreds of people at potlucks, soup nights and fundraising events, and introducing Nevada County residents to local farmers and ranchers. We look back at the year and remember small vignettes that add up to visible progress.

One small brown-haired child takes a tentative bite of cabbage, sitting in a circle with twenty-six other third-graders last Spring. She smiles at the taste and raises her hand to say that she likes it. The Sierra Harvest Farm to School Liaison explains what cabbage is, what local farm it comes from, and why it is good for her. The small piece of cabbage she nibbles is one of thousands that have been provided to 6,000 children in school classrooms throughout Western Nevada County. Along with many other fruits and vegetables, these little bites added up to 28,000 pounds of locally harvested food. The small child remembers enjoying the taste of cabbage and tells her mom when she gets home. Her mom is surprised but pleased and adds local cabbage to her shopping list.

A family is in a new garden behind their house. A father, a mother, and two young children wear broad-brimmed hats in the sun. They weed the garden they planted in late May. They have already harvested many salads, many side dishes, and the fresh tomatoes they love to eat with a little salt. Before getting a Sierra Garden, they struggled to put food on the table, but now they eat fresh food every day during the growing season. Thirty five such “Sierra Gardens” scattered throughout the County supplied over 2 tons of fresh food to families this year.

Seventy-five people or more gather every other Thursday evening at a Sierra Harvest potluck at a local partner farm. They celebrate local food, ranchers and farmers. They get to know the farms and ranches where their food is grown and the people who steward the land. The growers are gratified to see the pleasure they bring to so many people and they increase their relationships and sales in the process.

These small vignettes add up, in larger and larger numbers each year, to a growing local food movement. More people are rethinking what they eat and discovering really good local produce and meats. This change supports better health, reduced obesity, more prosperous farmers, a healthier environment, and a more beautiful rural landscape.

Significant change in how our community supports our food culture is underway, and Sierra Harvest dreams of the day when 25% or more of the food our community consumes is grown locally. We are grateful for everyone whose passion has ignited the local food movement and we hope you will join us on the journey as we create a bright and sustainable food future for Nevada County.

Aimee Retzler and Malaika Bishop
Co-Directors

Phil Turner
Board President
Sierra Harvest inspires children to love local food and farming. Our programs reach over 9,000 students on 22 school campuses. This is 70% of all K-12 students in Western Nevada County!

Through our Farm to School programming, Food Love Project educational farm, Food Corps service member projects, and partnership with food service directors, our students enjoy:

- Monthly Harvest of the Month tastings in 240 classrooms
- Weekly produce stands featuring local farm-fresh produce
- Classroom visits by farmers and chefs
- Field trips to partner farms
- Summer camp, community service days, and U-pick vegetables at the Food Love Project
- Local food purchasing and promotion along with salad bars at schools
- Garden-nutrition curriculum

WHAT HAS CHANGED SINCE 2012?

80% more students can name a farmer.

66% more students report that their families shop directly from farmers (at CSAs, farmers markets, etc).

55% more students know what “local produce” is.

43% more students like the fruits and veggies they try during Harvest of the Month tastings.

28,000 lbs of local produce has been distributed in schools.

50 chefs and farmers visit school classrooms each year.

5 school campuses now offer salad bars.

1 high school district is purchasing fresh seasonal produce for school meals.

1 school is serving local grass-fed beef from a steer that was raised just for them.
“I could never in a million years have predicted the effect that the Farm to School program would have on our campus. Students are excited about eating vegetables! During the Fall, Thursdays became a holiday as students knew THE CART was coming with vegetables to sample. The monthly classroom tastings had kids excited about cabbage and kale! The fact that students are both learning healthy life habits while having fun eating their vegetables is almost beyond belief.”

Gregg Motarjeme, Principal, Alta Sierra school

“The Farm to School program has really made a difference in my students’ lives. They are more engaged in their learning and are excited to try new things. It has been amazing to see their growth and development.”

Kathy Federmeyer, Kindergarten Teacher, Scotten School

“I never tried kale before. Now I want my mom to make it all the time. I love it!”

Ryley Behr, 6th grade, Chicago Park School

“I really love the farm and how we get to learn how to grow food, and then eat it, and seeing chickens too. The farm is awesome!”

Riley, 3rd grade, Deer Creek School

“At first I was a little skeptical about Kindergarteners tasting foods they haven’t tasted before, but this has been an amazing experience for all of us! Recently, we had our farm partner come in and talk about sheep and miner’s lettuce. Every child in my class tried the lettuce! I think this experience has opened their little minds about trying new and healthy foods. Thank you Sierra Harvest. We really look forward to the tastings each month!”

Kathy Federmeyer, Kindergarten Teacher, Scotten School
Farmers

Sierra Harvest supports sustainable farming in Nevada County by training the next generation of farmers and inspiring the next generation of local food consumers.

A One-Year Snapshot

1,500 FAMILIES AT OUR FARM EVENTS
950 HOURS OF FARMER TRAINING
623 FOOD & FARMING EVENTS POSTED TO OUR CALENDAR
400 ATTENDEES AT OUR SUSTAINABLE FOOD & FARM CONFERENCE
10 FARM POTLUCKS
2 SOUP NIGHTS WITH FARM-FRESH SOUP & LIVE LOCAL MUSIC

“The internship opened my eyes to how one or two interactions with a child on a farm can have such a lasting impact on instilling healthy habits for a lifetime. In my time at Sierra Harvest I’ve gained confidence, skills and fostered positive relationships with real food and real farmers for thousands of students.”

Jessica Gimpel (Farm Educator Intern)
Community

Sierra Gardens

The Sierra Gardens program supports families in building or improving their gardens by providing starts, seeds, mentorship, and cooking and gardening classes for two years. These families are now less reliant on food pantries, worry less about having enough food, spend more time outside with their kids, and eat more fruits and vegetables.

Sierra Gardens by the Numbers

- 35 gardens supported
- 4,140 lbs of produce grown and eaten by participants
- 5,384 vegetable seedlings grown and distributed
- 70% increase in gardeners who feel confident about growing their own food
- 71% increase in gardeners who strongly agree that they feel happy and satisfied with life
- 75% of the program participants grew NONE of the produce their family ate BEFORE the program. 100% of gardeners NOW grow 25%-100% of the produce their families eat
- 83% of participants now share their garden produce with friends and neighbors
- 90% of recipients received scholarships
- 250% increase in participants who rate diets as “very healthy”

“Prior to the Sierra Gardens program we had to rely solely on going to the store for our fresh produce, and buying organic is expensive. Now that we have the space and knowledge, we are capable of growing it ourselves, which in itself is incredibly rewarding. I have been able to share my garden and my produce with family, friends and even strangers. We are blessed.”

Misty Clark, Sierra Gardens participant

Nevada County Food Policy Council

Sierra Harvest spearheaded the formation of the Nevada County Food Policy Council to foster collaboration towards a common vision for a healthy and sustainable food economy in Nevada County, and to weigh in on statewide policy decisions as a member of the California Food Policy Council.
Staff, Board and Contributors

Sierra Harvest Team
Co-directors: Aimee Retzler and Malaika Bishop
Engagement Managers: Miriam Limov and Rachel Berry
Farm to School Program Coordinator: Amanda Thibodeau
Food Love Farmer & Educator: Katie Turner
Food Corps Service Members: Elizabeth Brandley & Lauren Valentino
Operations Manager: Carlyle Miller
Sierra Gardens Coordinator: Leo Chapman
Farm Educator Interns: Brianna Abundiz, Jessica Gimpel
Sierra Harvest team: Singer, Carlos Trujillo, and Phil Turner

Special thanks...
to these donors who have joined the Sierra Harvest team:

Farm to School Liaisons
Michelle Bacon, Michelle Baker, Aleta Barrett, Kimberly Bell, Jaimi Giguerue, Sarah Griffin-Boubacar, Theresia Heinzelva, Pam Hughes, Erika Kosina, Poppo Lebarron-West, Lori Long, Andrea Mahier, Rosie Mariani, Michele McDaniel, Raelynn Noel, Erika Triglia, Rachel Wegman, and Heidi Zimmerman

Board of Directors
Sandra Barrington, Rachel Berry, Amigo Cantisano, Joy Castro-Wehr, Rita de Quercus, Liz Matson, Tiana Rockwell, Jennifer Singer, Carlos Trujillo, and Phil Turner

Income by Type, July 2014–June 2015
$499,781

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<td>Grants</td>
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Expenses, July 2014–June 2015
$446,210

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Design by Design Action Collective
Mission

To educate, inspire, and connect Nevada County families to fresh, local, seasonal foods.

Vision

Sierra Harvest envisions a thriving local food economy where residents of all ages have access to nutritious, local, seasonal food through strong connections among farmers, schools, and the community. We envision a network of financially viable farms providing good food for the community, where health and wellness is the norm and people are engaged in growing, harvesting, preparing, and sharing fresh food.

In 10 years, we envision:

- 20 new farm businesses employing hundreds of young farmers
- A local food network that grows 25% of the food we consume
- All school meals are cooked from scratch and garden and nutrition education is part of the core curriculum
- 200 families that used to struggle to put food on their table will be confidently growing food for themselves and their neighbors, right in their own backyards