

NEWSLETTER | SUMMER 2022

URBAN HARVESTER[®]



10th Anniversary Celebration

It's hard to believe Urban Harvester is 10 years old. Urban Harvester's birthday also means that I, Linda, am celebrating 13 years working in the food rescue space. I owe a heartfelt thank you to my community for joining me in finding solutions that address hunger and the needless waste of fresh food.

Some of our donors have included neighborhood cafes, global coffee chains, big box grocers, commercial caterers, schools, food producers and farmers. To date, Urban Harvester has connected over \$1,000,000 worth of food, provided 250,000 meals and diverted over 100 tons of food waste. We look back on early days of transporting food in the trunk of our Prius and smile at how far we've come.

Highlights



When we started in 2009, many businesses were reluctant to donate excess food due to concerns about liability. A Federal bill was passed in 1996 protecting businesses from exactly this, The Good Samaritan Food Donation Act, but people remained wary nonetheless. Most stores weren't even tracking usable surplus; it was all considered spoiled and thrown away.

I began testing my methods for streamlining food donations in 2009 in South Pasadena with a high school, a coffee shop and a grocery store. We officially opened as a nonprofit in 2012, finding appropriate matches on the receiving side for food donors. Some businesses were up for testing out experimental procedures, and others were a hard no. A decade later, some of our early methods are proving strong against the test of time.

It's been an honor working with generous food donors, community leaders and dedicated food rescue communities across California. It is with a full heart that we step into the next decade of Urban Harvester, with gratitude for the incredible workers in the social services and food industries that we've been lucky to cross paths with.

Wishing you all comfort and good health!

Linda Hess
Founder/CEO
Urban Harvester



Urban Harvester Board



Deb Snyder, Linda Hess,
Debra Williams, Richard
Weinroth



Tales from the
2020 Covid-19
Lockdowns

The launch of Urban Harvester's Chill Project: Cold storage to the rescue

In March 2020, food donors and receivers were reaching out. Some needed immediate assistance, and others had potential “what if” situations on the horizon, many impacting the older adult communities of Los Angeles County.

Akila Gibbs, Executive Director of the Pasadena Senior Center, led the transition from providing daily, in-person hot lunches to home deliveries and onsite grab-and-go meals.

To address the spike in demand for cold storage, Urban Harvester launched the Chill Project. We reached out to our network of caterers and chefs to ask if anyone had extra food from recent cancelled events, and ended up with a bounty of generous donations.

The Chill Project acquired our first chest freezer, and Chef Richard Weinroth began the cooking. Ingredients and resources resulted in over 125 quarts of fresh beef chili, fruit cups and sandwiches that were frozen and distributed as needed.

Special thank you to Chef Gustavo and Kimberly of Sodexo Foods, Jordan of Jordi & CO Events, Chef Tony of Hope Catering and the team at the San Fernando Valley Food Bank, who all helped us discover that a freezer, food donations and a plan can create tangible sustainable solutions.

Similar to a tsunami and the tidal waves that follow, the March 2020 lockdowns caused an immediate wave of surplus food from a wide variety of industries, followed by phone calls that just kept coming. The lockdowns also triggered our first indications that future supply chain shortages would impact food access, storage and distribution, especially in marginalized communities. Traditional methods for donated food distribution were paused, and cold storage was suddenly in short supply.



URBAN HARVESTER PRODUCES FOR California Conference of Directors of Environmental Health (CCDEH)

The California Conference of Directors of Environmental Health (CCDEH) contracted Urban Harvester to produce their 2022 education and communication



Anybody Need a Ton of Tahini? – March 2020

One company came to us with 50 40-pound buckets of tahini paste, looking for a place to share the shelf-stable product. This was a new product for Urban Harvester, but we were up for the challenge. We contacted our network of food pantries, soup kitchens and community programs, yet all of them declined. We opened our outreach up to local businesses in Southern California with insured food production kitchens by word-of-mouth, who met us with serious interest. Suddenly caterers, chefs, bakeries, banquet halls and event spaces were accepting the donation, and the ton of tahini paste was used in soups, salad dressings, entrees and desserts. The tahini made its way into food that fed essential workers, as well as home delivered meals with the World Central Kitchen, Los Angeles County project. Our special thanks to Vertigo, Noor, Fun with Forks and Knives, Tastemonger, Cosmic Kichin, Food Fetish Catering and Seed Bakery – all businesses in the greater

onboarding materials for California Environmental Health Directors, Associates and Managers. Urban Harvester also produced an inspiring collection of interviews from their recently retired directors: Terri Williams (Los Angeles and San Bernardino County) Lewis Pozzebon (City of Vernon), and Jami Aggers (Stanislaus County). This was a fun project to reflect on the mission of the organization and the passion they share.



Los Angeles area – for bringing the creativity to this food rescue operation.



Going the Extra Mile: Tales of the Butternut Squash

When unexpected circumstances bring together compassion, talent and resources, it helps to restore hope across communities.

In October 2020, Linda Hess received a call from her colleague Derek calling from the Bowles Farming Company, a sixth-generation commercial grower. Their fall harvest was underway, and they were experiencing both a bountiful harvest and canceled orders during the lockdown. We were asked to assist in the placement and donation of 14 tons of fresh butternut squash.

Urban Harvester reached out to the largest food banks in the L.A. area, but they all declined due to transportation challenges, volunteer shortages in packing and distribution, and general logistical hardships due to lockdown. For this, it was Linda reaching out to Sodexo Foods to offer freshly harvested butternut squash for use, or to share with the community. We received an enthusiastic “yes”, and they offered both transportation and an overnight stay for West Coast Executive Chef Gustavo Vega and his colleague Chef Jose Santana. Together they embarked on a 16-hour driving journey to and from Central California to rescue over a ton of perfect squash, just as we had hoped.

The remainder of the butternut squash was placed with the assistance of Chef Jeffrey Mora of Food Fleet. He helped us to connect the produce to the Monterey Food Bank and to the tribes of the Columbia River Gorge in Oregon: the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, Yakama Nation, Nez Perce Tribe and the Confederated Tribes of Umatilla Indian Reservation.

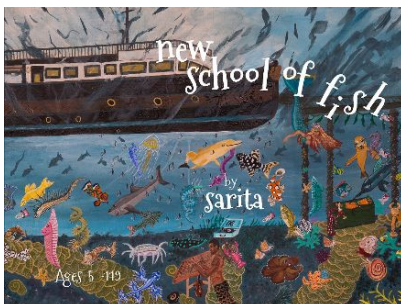


When In-Person Events Return, Leftovers Do Too

In Los Angeles Spring of 2022, donations from Sodexo foods, to Urban Harvester came from the AT&T Cafe, the Mattel Toys commissary and the Fabletics kitchen. All of these food donations went to the Upward Bound House, with sites across the greater Los Angeles area. Upward Bound House is instrumental in helping homeless families get off the streets by offering housing, food and other critical support services.

In the San Fernando Valley Food Fetish Catering in North Hollywood, resumed frequent donations to Urban Harvester. These donations are matched to the Hope of the Valley Rescue Mission, which provides housing and services to the Tiny Home Villages and throughout the greater Los Angeles area.

Thank you to Momofuku Restaurant in downtown Los Angeles, headed by Executive Chef Jude Parra-Sickels and Founder/Chef David Chang. Approximately 450 meals of ready-to-serve chicken sandwiches, tasty sides and pre-bottled beverages were donated to Urban Harvester. We distributed this donation to the Hollywood Food Coalition, which serves fresh, hot dinners to anyone in need seven days a week.



New School of Fish, Donates Portion of Proceeds

Special thanks to Sarita the Mermaid and her Girl Friday, Susann Edmonds for donating a portion of the proceeds of their New School of Fish book to Urban Harvester. To learn more: <https://www.saritamermaid.com>

Crown City Fundraiser



Thank you for bringing attention to our mission through your customers. www.CrownCityTire.com

Have a great summer!
www.UrbanHarvester.org



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