



# ROOTS OF RESILIENCE

CULTIVATING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE



Lift UP 2023 | IMPACT REPORT | FY 23-24





## LETTER FROM STEPHANIE

Dear Friends of Lift UP,

How fast time flies! I can't believe I've rounded the corner on four years with Lift UP. When I started, we were in the thick of the pandemic, navigating how to safely get food to our neighbors. But our community showed up in big ways! We were one of the few organizations that continued to provide food in the affordable housing buildings where our neighbors live.

During this time, I learned so much about the wonderful community of Lift UP. Over 125 dedicated volunteers showed up day in and day out to help pack food boxes, glean, deliver food, set up Preston's Pantry, and run the Pantry outdoors. Although it may sound cliché, we would never be able to do the work we do without the strength of this community.

Serving as an Executive Director is a unique role. I have the honor of stewarding an organization with a rich and long history. This report is a snapshot in time, but many of you have been part of our work for decades. Lift UP was founded in 1980 by a group of volunteers from churches and synagogues. Originally named "Northwest Portland Ministries," the goal was to help neighborhood residents through coordinated volunteer efforts. Eventually, food security and community building emerged as our neighbor's primary needs. We have the honor of still having founding members who support the organization and are giving back in many ways today. I'm sincerely grateful for the vision that inspired the founding of Lift UP, and the commitment to our mission and community that has kept us strong, and I feel fortunate to be a part of the trajectory of growth of Lift UP.

As we prepare for our next growth cycle, this Annual Report will help us look back, take stock of where we are today, and give a nod to our the future. We are excited to grow upon the vision that was established 44 years ago.

Looking ahead, we are dedicated to sustainable practices, laying a fertile foundation that will yield abundant harvests for our community for many years to come. For Lift UP, sustainability means meeting our present needs without compromising the ability to remain a reliable resource for neighbors in the future.

Thank you for your continued support and dedication. Together, we are "Beet-ing the Change," fostering growth and nurturing unity in our community. Here's to another fruitful year ahead and, with your help, many more years of cultivating hope and nourishment for everyone.

With Gratitude,

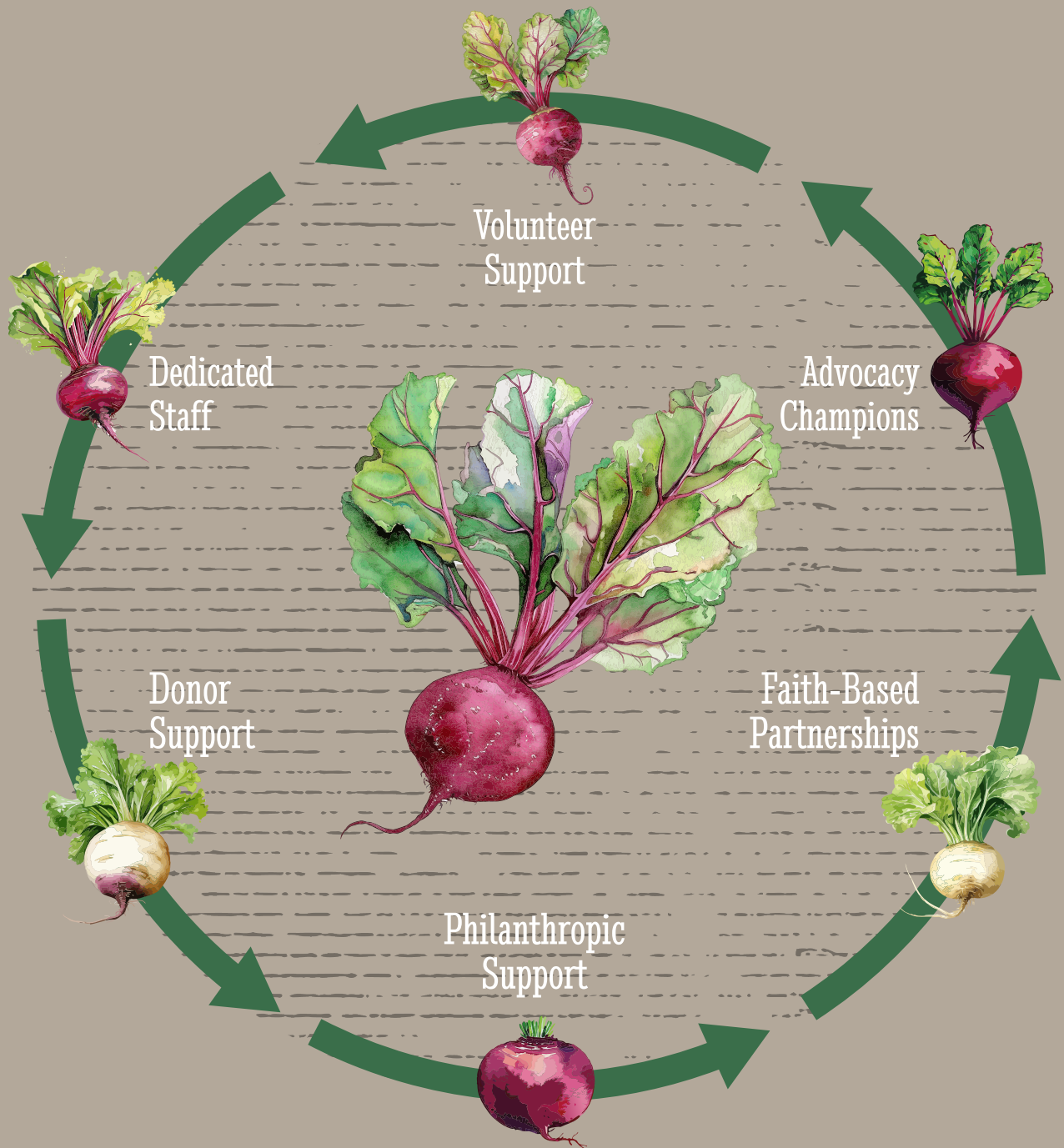
Stephanie Barr Executive Director

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# THE CIRCLE OF RESILIENCE:

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## HOW WE GROW STRONGER TOGETHER



# Sowing Seeds of Service: The Story of Preston's Pantry



Preston Holt picking up food for delivery to neighbors.

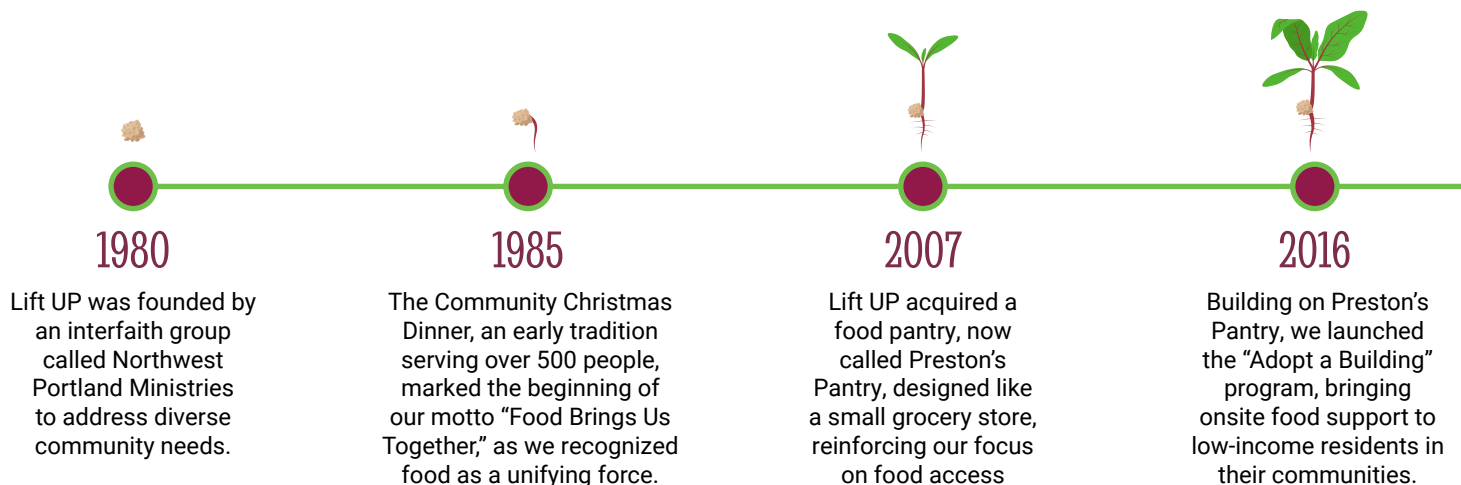
Preston Holt was a long-time volunteer whose dedication to Lift UP was so profound that he had his own desk in the office and essentially served as unpaid staff.

After retiring from a career in commercial real estate in 1992, Preston began volunteering as a driver with Northwest Portland Ministries (now Lift UP), providing transportation for elderly and disabled neighborhood residents. His involvement grew as he joined our Board of Directors, serving as treasurer for over a decade. He also volunteered in our Adopt-a-Highrise program (renamed Adopt-a-Building) and was one of the key organizers of our annual Christmas dinner for the community.

Carole Barkley, a long-time supporter and volunteer of Lift UP, stated that Preston was a vital part of our food collection and distribution programs. "He tirelessly worked with a ready smile and a twinkle in his eye. Always prepared to load up his pickup truck with food for the pantry, Preston played a crucial role in securing donations from Trinity Episcopal Church and was a major supporter of the Christmas dinner." Additionally, he served as Trinity's liaison to Williams Plaza, organizing numerous events there.

In 2018, Lift UP renamed its pantry to "Preston's Pantry" to honor his memory and enduring legacy.

Every time a shopper visits Preston's Pantry, the memory and spirit of Preston's vision to give back to the community are honored. Lift UP wouldn't be what it is today without the selfless dedication of individuals like Preston, who planted seeds of compassion and nurtured the growth of our mission, ensuring a sustainable and regenerative future for all.



# Preston's Pantry: From Strong Roots to Growth



## Preston's Pantry PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE

FY 18-20



averaging  
**11,300**  
shoppers

FY 20-22



averaging  
**9,400**  
shoppers

FY 22/23



**11,972**  
shoppers

FY 23/24



**15,190**  
shoppers

This past fiscal year, Preston's Pantry experienced the highest number of shoppers in its history, with nearly 30% of them being first-time visitors. The increase reflects the growing hunger crisis in our community, following in line with statewide trends. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, food insecurity in Oregon rose by 12%, and Lift UP saw a 20% increase in pantry usage over the past three years.

**23%**  
Mandarin  
speaking

Nearly  
**40%**  
Seniors

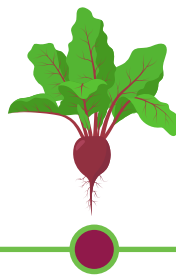
Notice our lowest shopper numbers occurred during FY 20-22, largely due to the relocation of our pantry and the increased supplemental SNAP benefits during the pandemic. **This is proof that the additional support worked!** While the pandemic worsened food insecurity, the expanded benefits helped soften the blow, demonstrating how essential these programs are for those struggling to afford basic necessities.

**Looking Forward:** As demand continues to rise, Lift UP is taking proactive steps to ensure a positive and supportive shopping experience for all. Along with considering measures like managing the number of shoppers per day, we are actively securing more reliable food sources and evaluating new fundraising strategies to meet growing needs. Budgetary pressures have increased alongside the 20% rise in demand, further underscoring the importance of our current advocacy efforts. We are committed to pushing for the expansion of essential food security programs like SNAP, which have proven essential in sustaining resilience in our community.



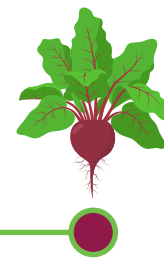
2017-2020

Expansion of food programs, including Preston's Pantry and Delivered Food Boxes, serving thousands of Portland residents per year.



2023

Lift UP increased food distribution by 20% compared to the previous year, reaching 11,970 people and expanding services to over 50 affordable housing buildings.



2024 & Beyond

We looking ahead to sustainable growth. Adding 10 more Adopt Buildings and expanding capacity to serve more neighbors at Preston's Pantry.

# Deepening Roots: Strengthening Food Security in Affordable Housing



Lift UP's Adopt a Building program, originally planted in 2014 as 'Adopt a High Rise,' was designed to cultivate strong roots of community support by connecting local businesses and congregations with affordable living communities. This program has evolved over time into 'Adopt a Building,' allowing us to nourish 50 affordable housing buildings in Downtown and Northwest Portland with essential food security services. Of these, 30 buildings are fully 'adopted,' and receive our full spectrum of food security services including Delivered Food Boxes, on-site Emergency Food Closets, and Supper Club nutrition classes.

As the needs of the community continue to grow, so does the demand for our services. support that enables us to keep pace with these demands and help our community thrive.

## FY 23/24

### Delivered Food Boxes:

4,820 food boxes Delivered Food Boxes (DFB)	20% increase of previous year
44% Seniors	68% identify as having a disability

### Emergency Food Closets:

59,790 lbs of food distributed	Serving nearly 7,000 people
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### Supper Club:

Served 19 buildings	419 people
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Lift UP Adopt a Building program was started in 2014. The goal was to match partners such as congregations and businesses to sponsor holistic and community building activities in living communities in their neighborhood. Today the Adopt a Building program has evolved to deliver essential food security services to 50 affordable living buildings in Downtown and Northwest Portland. Out of these, 30 are fully adopted, benefiting from our full tier of services – **Delivered Food Boxes**, on-site **Emergency Food Closets**, and the **Supper Club** nutrition cooking classes. Regrettably, the demand, especially for our Emergency Food Closets and Delivered Food Boxes, continues to climb. We receive more requests that we can fill. Through all this, our dedicated Adopt a Building partners remain instrumental, providing the necessary funding and volunteer support that enables us to consistently meet these evolving demands.

#### A LOOK BACK

- The Adopt a Building (formally Adopt a High Rise) program began in 2014 by serving just 4 buildings.

#### NOW

- 30 fully Adopted Buildings

#### A LOOK FORWARD

- Expand to 10 buildings feeding 1,000 more neighbors over the next 3 years



# Resident Advocates Sustaining Food Security for Their Neighbors

Resident Advocates (RA) are the roots of our Adopt a Building program, connecting their neighbors to essential food services and cultivating community through shared meals. They know their communities deeply—ensuring those in need, like a neighbor undergoing cancer treatment who can only eat peanut butter, or grandparents caring for grandkids get extra food. Their lived experiences guide how we address food insecurity, especially in buildings with specific cultural needs. With Resident Advocates, we're planting the seeds for a future where no one in these communities goes hungry.



BUILDING	ADOPTER
St. Francis	Home Forward
The Jeffrey	Home Forward
Susan Emmons	Northwest Housing Alternatives
Medallion	Crooke Family
Upshur House	ESCO
Williams Plaza	Trinity Episcopal
Ramona	Juan Young Trust
Morrison Park	Otak
Bronaugh	DCI Engineering
Bud Clark Commons	Home Forward
Gallagher	Legacy Health
Pearl Court	Home Forward
Peter Paulson	Home Forward
Gray's Landing	Zidell Foundation
Alder House	First Presbyterian
1200 Building	Crooke Charitable Trust
Lexington	Crooke Charitable Trust
Katherine Gray	St. Mary's Cathedral
Rose Schnitzer Tower	Downtown Development Group
Hamilton West	Holzman Foundation
Gretchen Kafoury	Gordon & Kathy Keane
333 Oak	Richardson Family
Helen Swindells	Charles & Caroline Swindells
NW Tower	Congregation Beth Israel
Roselyn	AWS Elemental/Amazon in the Community/Pizza Thief
Rosenbaum	Lease Crutcher Lewis
Uptown Tower	Zion Lutheran
The Vibrant	Zera Foundation



Last year, **we distributed a record 869,266 pounds of food**, providing nearly 724,000 meals to our neighbors! At Lift UP, we focus on both the quality and quantity of the food we provide, recognizing that food insecurity is about more than just how much food we can give. Often, the real challenge lies in access to nutritious, fresh options like fruits and vegetables, which are either too expensive or simply unavailable to many neighbors we serve.

We take pride in offering a diverse selection of healthy, culturally relevant, and nutritious foods because we believe everyone deserves access to them. Our Operations Manager, Cecilia Estraviz, works tirelessly to source and diversify our food streams, ensuring we provide the best possible food for those we serve. **Fifty percent of the food we distribute is produce.** Additionally, about 50% of our Delivered Food Boxes are tailored to specific dietary needs—whether for those managing celiac disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, or following vegan diets.



*Bianca, Gleaner of Lift UP loads van for food delivery*

“

With grocery prices the way they are, my food box makes a difference. I've received pears, oranges, and grapefruits. Fruit is expensive so I really appreciate it.”

- Williams Plaza Resident



“

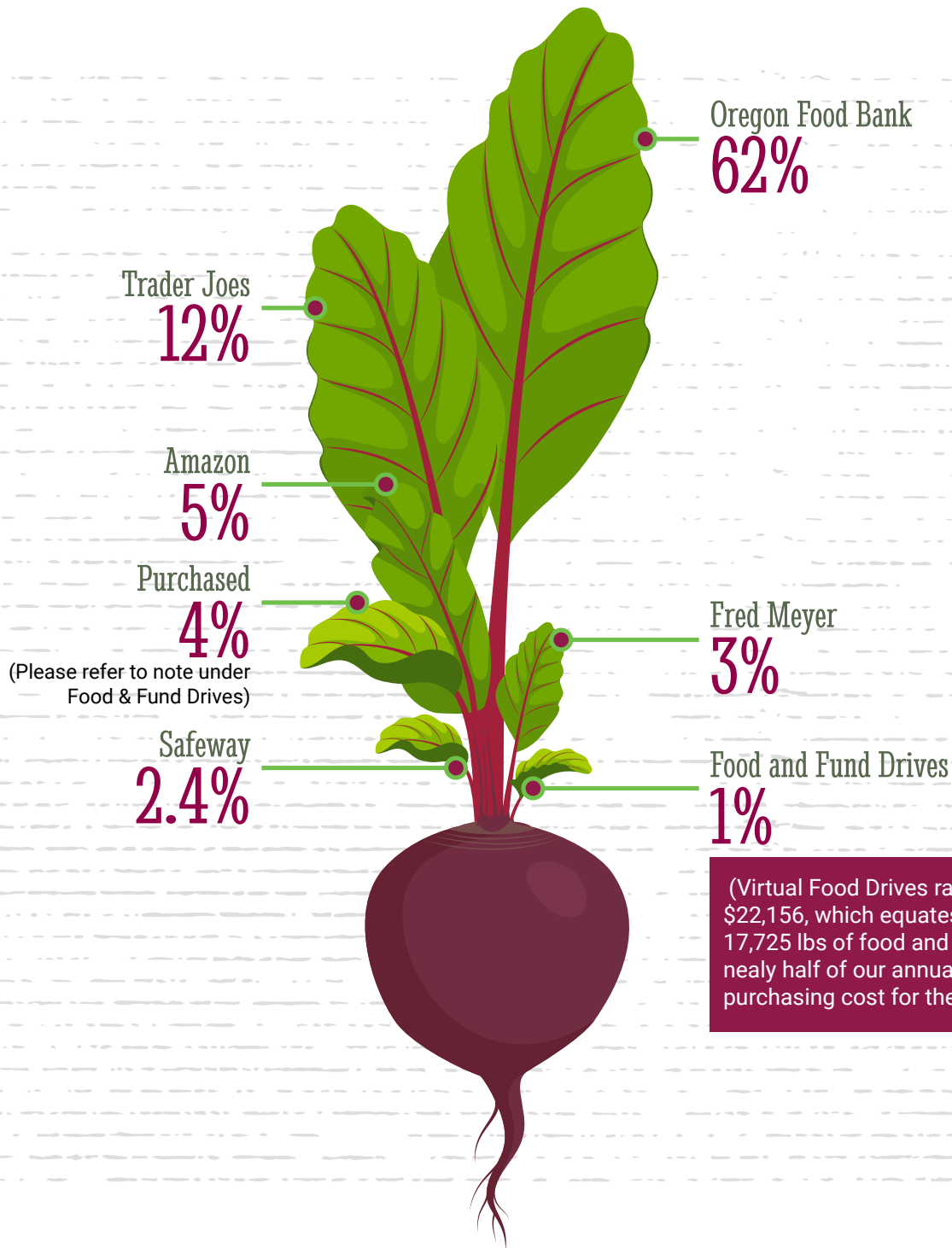
Residents with special diets, especially residents who are diabetic benefit greatly from delivered food boxes.”

- Mina, Alder House Resident Services Coordinator





# WHERE OUR FOOD COMES FROM



We're grateful to other notable partners such as Grand Central Bakery, Bob's Red Mill, Fred Meyer, Safeway, Go Puff, Dave's Killer Bread, Blanchet House, Baltazar Ortiz Center, Sheridan Fruit Company, Portland Fruit Tree Project, and Verdier Farms. Their support has been invaluable in addressing the growing needs of our community.



# From Farm to Pantry: Cultivating Resilience with Verdier Farms

Last year, Lift UP's Operations Manager, Cecilia Estraviz, received a call from Verdier Farms, a new local nonprofit dedicated to sustainable agriculture. Verdier Farms, led by owner Elias Richter, donates 100% of its produce to local food banks with the mission of growing fresh, nourishing food for Portland's food-insecure communities. Elias, with his deep love for growing food, wanted to find a way to give back by making nutritious produce accessible to marginalized communities.



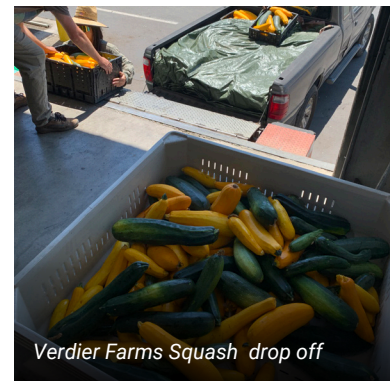
(left) Sebastian Shobaki and (right) Elias Richter operators of Verdier Farms



Stephanie Barr, Executive Director holds broccoli grown by Verdier

Partners like Verdier Farms play a vital role in Lift UP's vision of maintaining a sustainable system to provide quality food for our neighbors. Last year, their donations of squash, zucchini, cucumbers, tomatoes, cauliflower, Swiss chard, kale, and more made a significant impact. Every time Elias and his farm partner, Sebastian, arrive at our warehouse with a fresh haul, the Lift UP team celebrates their arrival, affectionately calling them the 'Farm Bros.' We've seen firsthand how access to fresh produce has improved the health and quality of life for those we serve.

Most of the food Verdier Farms grows goes directly to Preston's Pantry, and 92% of those surveyed reported improved health since receiving food from Lift UP.



Verdier Farms Squash drop off

“

I love the variety at the pantry. I get introduced to vegetables I don't know. They are too expensive in the store, so I'm glad to be able to get them here.”

- Preston's Pantry Shopper

“

Having access to fresh fruits and vegetables has kept me alive.”

- Preston's Pantry Shopper

“

Because of the pantry I've been able to eat more fruits and vegetables and have been able to feel healthier.”

- Preston's Pantry Shopper

# Harvesting Healthy Habits: Supper Club's Impact on Food and Community



Supper Club has deepened roots in our community by breaking down barriers to unfamiliar ingredients like chickpeas, inspiring residents to embrace healthy eating. Natasha's chickpea salad even won over a self-described 'meat-and-potatoes' participant, who returned for seconds. Inspired by Natasha's recipe, Ashley, a Resident Advocate at the Medallion, used the dish to strengthen community bonds by serving it during Emergency Food Closet distribution. What started as a simple recipe sparked creativity, with residents adding blueberries and crispy onions. Once overlooked, chickpeas have now become pantry favorites, showing that exposure to new foods is just as important as making them available. These moments reflect our mission at Lift UP: not just providing food, but cultivating knowledge and joy around nutritious meals.

**83%** participants of  
Supper Club clients  
surveyed say

I am more confident in my ability to prepare  
fruits and vegetables in a way I enjoy them  
because of Supper Club.



DOWNLOAD THE FAMOUS  
CURRIED CHICKPEA SALAD  
RECIPE HERE:



Or go here:  
<https://bit.ly/LiftUPChickpeaSalad>



# Cultivating Fresh Solutions with Pop-Up Pantries



While most on-site pantries provide only dry goods, our neighbors have expressed the need for fresh, perishable items like dairy, eggs, and produce—often out of reach due to fixed incomes and reduced SNAP benefits. To address this, we launched pop-up pantries, cultivating a more sustainable solution.

During this past fiscal year, we've hosted 6 pop-up pantries across six buildings, serving 432 residents and distributing nearly 5,000 pounds of fresh food. The impact has been deeply felt, as one Resident Advocate at Rose Schnitzer shared: "The pop-up pantry was a lifeline, especially for older adults. The eggs, milk, apples, and produce were deeply appreciated. As one resident said, "Food is medicine."

Cecilia Estraviz, Operations Manager, is thrilled by the success and growth of the pop-up program: "Meeting neighbors where they are and building sustainable, accessible food systems is key to deepening our roots and expanding our impact."

We are grateful to our Adopt partners, whose support helps us nurture these initiatives. Special thanks to Care Oregon for their \$25,000 grant and Metro for their \$75,000 two-year grant to support the expansion of the pop-up pantry program.

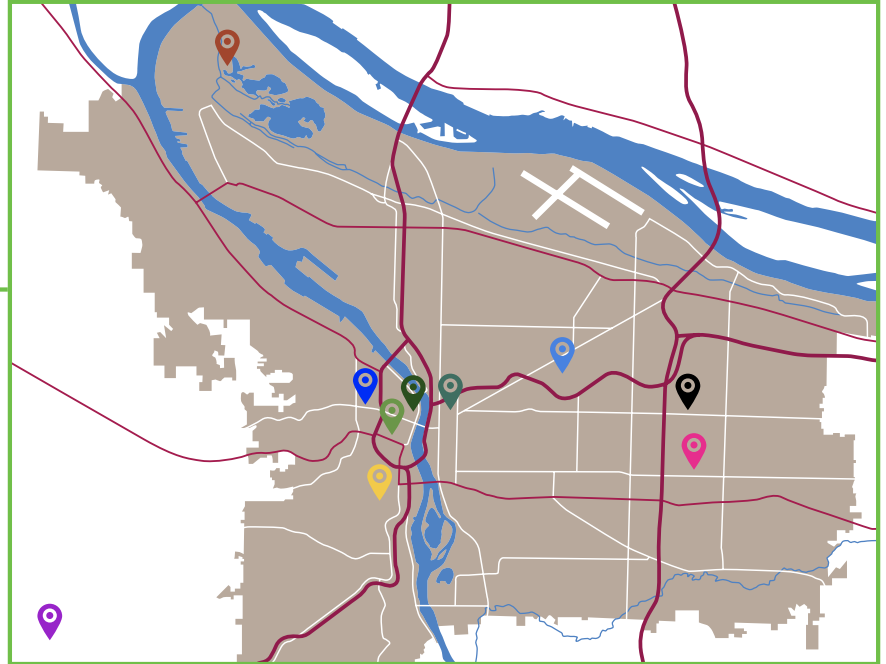


Volunteers work pop-up pantry at Alder House



# Growing our Reach: Extending Food Security Beyond Downtown

One of benefits of moving to larger warehouse was that we can help mutual aid partner agencies in expanding our food security outside the confines of Downtown and Northwest Portland. This we distributed a record nearly 100,000 pounds of food to mutual aid community organizations in the community.





Distributed nearly


**100,000** lbs

of food to our  
community partners


## Community Partners

 **IRCO (Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization):** Supports immigrants, refugees, and underserved communities through education, employment, and social services.


 **De Rose Community Bridge:** The mission of De Rose Community Bridge and Holistic Wellness is to enhance the physical and mental well-being of immigrants and refugees, particularly women and youth.

 **OHSU Student Pantry:** A food pantry for Oregon Health & Science University students, offering free groceries to support their nutrition and well-being.


 **William Temple House Food Pantry:** Offers free groceries, including fresh produce and staples, to low-income individuals and families in Portland.


 **Urban Gleaners:** Urban Gleaners glean surplus fresh food and redistributes it to those in need, reducing both food waste and hunger, with a focus on serving children and families in the Portland metro area.

**Community Resource and Referral Center:** Offers resources and referrals for basic needs, mental health, and community support services.

 **Outside In:** Provides health care, housing, and supportive services to homeless youth and marginalized communities.

 **Milk Crate Kitchen:** A social enterprise providing culinary training and meals to support Portland's food-insecure populations.

 **Bybee Lakes Hope Center:** Provides supportive housing and services for women in recovery from substance abuse.

 **Bethlehem House of Bread:** Bethlehem House of Bread's mission is to feed those who are hungry in body and spirit by providing food, clothing, and support in a welcoming environment.



Volunteers are the fertile soil that nourishes Lift UP's work, allowing us to grow and thrive. Without their generous contributions of time and energy, we wouldn't be able to do what we do. Last year, **250 volunteers enriched our efforts with nearly 12,000 hours**, helping to pack and deliver food boxes and assist with pantry distributions. The successes reflected in this report are a direct result of the strong foundation they've cultivated. Some volunteers have been with us for over a decade, their steady presence helping us stay rooted and adaptable as we've grown to meet a 20% increase in program demand. Their dedication is the reason we can continue to sustain and expand our services.

250  
volunteers  
serving  
12,000  
hours

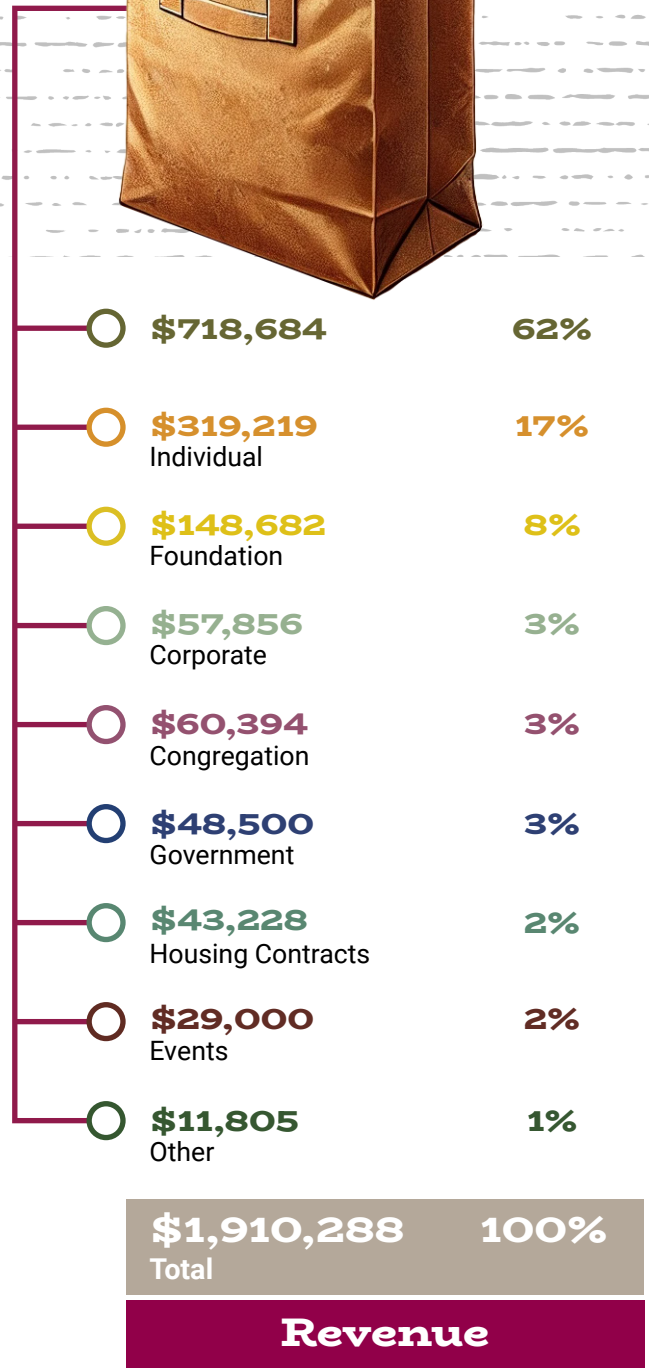
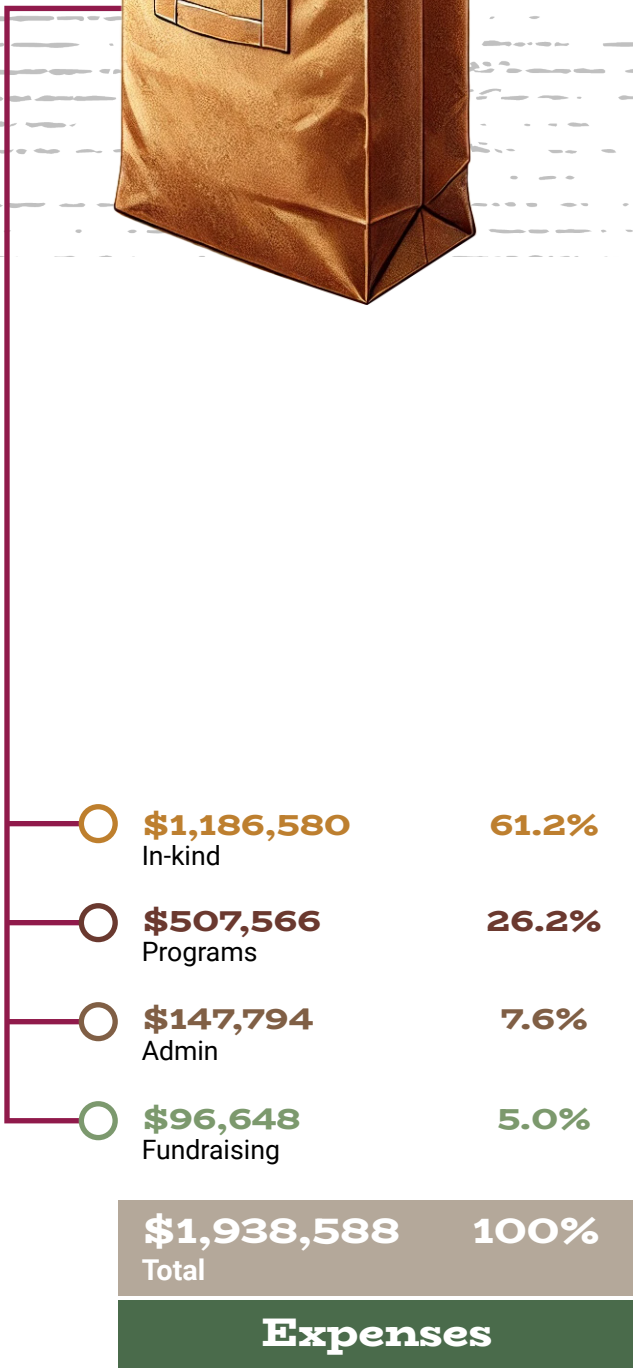
## Rooted in Service: Volunteers Fuel Our Mission



**LIFT UP**  
FOOD BRINGS US TOGETHER



# Financial FY 2023-2024





## **Cultivating the Future:** **Lift UP's Vision for Growth and Resilience**

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**Lift UP envisions** a future where everyone in Downtown and Northwest Portland is free from hunger.

Over the next three years, we are committed to expanding our impact sustainably:

- **Expand our Reach:** We aim to add 10 more buildings, serving an additional 1,000 neighbors in affordable housing throughout Downtown and Northwest Portland.
- **Grow Preston's Pantry:** To meet the growing demand—averaging 20% annually—we will expand operations at Preston's Pantry, ensuring we continue to serve our community with abundance and care.

Whether you're just joining us or have been part of Lift UP's journey from the start, we invite you to be a part of our bold vision. To get a sneak peek and learn more about how you can support or invest in our growth plan, please reach out to Stephanie Barr, Executive Director.

✉ [stephanie@lifturbanportland.org](mailto:stephanie@lifturbanportland.org)

☎ PH: 503-221-1224 EXT 103





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Community Services Program Manager | Home Forward

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**Meryl Haber**  
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**Stephanie Barr**  
Executive Director



## Special Thanks to our Rooted Community

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### Foundations

Carol & Velma Saling Foundation  
The Clark Foundation  
Door Dash  
First Immanuel Lutheran Church  
Herbert A. Templeton Foundation  
Harold & Arlene Schnitzer CARE Foundation (Communicare)  
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