

2018 United Fresh Start Community Grant Recipients

Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts of Miami-Dade County, Miami FL - The organization enlightens, educates, and entertains its community through transformational arts and culture experiences. Serving kids from the Miami-Dade School District, which the United Fresh Start Foundation supports through its in-school programming, the organization's AileyCamp Miami empowers underserved teens through dance, movement, whole-body wellness, self-esteem building, body positivity and nutrition. The funds help the Camp provide fresh, locally-sourced produce to 110 campers, 75% of whom qualify for free school lunch.

Ag Against Hunger, Salinas CA – Ag Against Hunger's mission is to alleviate hunger by creating the necessary link between the agricultural community and food assistance programs, food banks, and schools. Funds support the gleaning program, including the portion that partners with youth organizations so young people can glean, and can learn about sustainability, food waste, nutrition, and the crops they glean. Glens take place at a number of United Fresh Produce Association member sites, and reach thousands of food insecure households with kids.

Alameda Boys and Girls Club, Alameda CA – The Boys and Girls Club inspires and enables all youth to realize their full potential as productive, responsible, and caring citizens. Funds support the Seed-to-Table program, which provides fresh produce through an edible garden and associated garden-based nutrition and ecology education. Kids learn culinary skills, including selecting, preparing, and cooking fresh fruits and vegetables. Over 70% of the 500 youth participants live at or below the poverty line.

Alfond Youth Center, Waterville ME – The Alfond Youth Center inspires and enables all young people and their families to realize their full potential as healthy, productive, responsible and caring citizens. Funds increase the amount of fresh produce used in the Kids' Kitchen meal preparation, increase the amount of fresh produce being provided through the Weekend backpacks program, and increase youth participation in both programs. Seventy-eight percent of the youth qualify for free/reduced lunches.

Boys and Girls Club of Santa Cruz County, Nogales AZ – The Boys and Girls Club inspires and enables young people to realize their full potential as productive, responsible, healthy and caring citizens. Funds enhance the existing Healthy Habits program by opening a "Fruit Stand" where members can choose from a selection of fresh fruit, and not just from chips and candy, when they are hungry throughout the afternoon. At the end of the week, bags of fruit are distributed to food insecure families. Over 1,000 children will participate in the program, and 84% of them are Medicare eligible.

Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Salt Lake, Murray UT – The Boys and Girls Club mission is to inspire and empower youth to realize their full potential as productive, responsible, and caring citizens. Funds support the Triple Play Healthy Habits program by ensuring that snacks and meals include fresh fruits and vegetables in a greater quantity and wider variety than the current standard. The program includes lessons on portions, healthy snacking, fresh produce, and meal and snack preparation. Nearly 80% of the 1,300 kids come from low-income families, including refugee and homeless families.

Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Scottsdale, Scottsdale AZ – The Boys and Girls Clubs enable all young people to reach their full potential as productive, caring, responsible citizens. Funds provide 300 youth on the Hualapai Indian Community reservation with fresh fruits and vegetable snacks and lunches, as well as a youth-led community garden that is run in collaboration with several tribal departments.

Ninety-eight percent of youth are Native American, and nearly 90% qualify for free/reduced school lunch. The nearest fresh produce is more than a 120-mile round trip.

Community of Hope Ministries, Garner NC – Community of Hope Ministries identifies and facilitates the use of God’s resources to serve the at-risk and needy population in the greater Garner area. Funds help purchase a walk-in cooler and walk-in freezer for the organization’s food pantry, which will greatly increase the amount of fresh produce that is distributed through its programs. Currently, the organization is limited on the fresh options it offers because it lacks adequate cold storage. With the increased capacity, the organization can better serve produce to children through its summer feeding programs, food pantry, summer camp, after-school programs, and more.

FeedMore, Inc., Richmond VA – FeedMore Inc. fights hunger in Central Virginia and serves as the regions core hunger relief organization. Funds support increasing the amount of fresh fruits and vegetables provided through the School Market Program, which provides healthy meals during the weekend through a monthly farmer’s market style distribution of fresh produce and a menu of family friendly foods for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. The program serves nearly 800 rural children, and is building upon its successful first year.

Food From Farms, Anacortes WA – Food From Farms provides sustainable, farm-direct food to children, seniors, and those in need. Funds support Skagit PICKS, a program that distributes fresh fruit and vegetable incentive coupons during Medicaid Well-Child Exams at the local pediatric center. Families receive additional fresh fruit and vegetable coupons upon redemption of those they received through their healthcare provider. This is the second year that the program is receiving funding from the United Fresh Start Foundation, and it is expanding from four to six farmers markets this year. The program reaches over 70 children.

Gowan Science Academy Parent Teacher Organization, Yuma, AZ – The organization supports the learning activities and teachers at Gowan Science Academy. Serving kids who attend school just a few miles from the US-Mexico border, funds support a garden that is the basis of weekly agriculture education lessons and morning “Brain Break” snacks. Importantly, funds also support increasing the capacity of the garden so that students can take produce home to their families, extending access to siblings and other household members, and extending access after school and on weekends. The organization plans to build relationships with local distributors so families can better serve their children fresh produce outside of school.

Inclusion Connections, Olathe KS – Inclusion Connections strengthens the lives of individuals with disabilities by creating inclusive opportunities for community involvement, access to meaningful employment, and better options for independent living. Funds purchase fresh produce for summer camps and for cooking classes, all of which help people with developmental disabilities such as Down syndrome and Cerebral Palsy transition from living at home to living independently.

Lake County Free Clinic, Painesville OH – Lake Country Free Clinic addresses the unmet health needs of its community through the provision of quality medical and dental care. Funding allows healthcare providers to give children who come to the clinic for dental or medical care a voucher for fresh fruits and vegetables at one of three local farmers markets. Nearly 20% of the 200 children the program will serve are food insecure.

Ottawa County Farmers Market, Miami OK – The Ottawa County Farmers market was created to improve the health and stimulate the economy of Ottawa County. Funds support the “Veggie Victors Kids Club,” in which children are provided with a story about a fruit or vegetable and then challenged to find that item at the farmers market, where they purchase the item with “market cash.” Children complete the challenge by taking a bite of the fresh fruit or vegetable, and then they receive a small prize. After completing three challenges, the kids get a chef starter kit and their guardian receives market cash. Seventy percent of the 250 children served qualify for free or reduced lunches.

Students for Eco Education and Agriculture, Inc., Ojai CA – Students for Eco Education and Agriculture educates students about the farm origins of their food from field to table. Funds purchase fresh fruits and vegetables for the Journey of a Lemon Healthy Nutrition Program, which includes in-school food preparation and education, as well as a Healthy Hero Passport which helps kids eat fresh produce at home through recipes, activities, games, and resources on where to find Ventura County specialty crops.

Teen Kitchen Project, Soquel CA – Teen Kitchen Project builds healthy communities through food by bringing volunteer teens into the kitchen to prepare food for individuals and families who are in crisis due to a life-threatening illness. Funds support the Afterschool Program, which provides a free 8-week cooking course to low-income children ages 6-12. This will develop a longer-term interest in cooking and nutrition, so when the kids turn 13 they can volunteer as a teen chef to prepare meals for people facing a life-threatening illness.

Western Indiana Community Action Agency (WICAA), Terre Haute IN – WICCA provides comprehensive services to improve the living conditions and promote self-sufficiency to individuals and families. Funds support helping Head Start families access fresh produce by taking children on a fieldtrip to a local farm, by partnering with that farm to provide a mobile market during events, and by providing vouchers for the mobile market. Children will also participate in planting and growing root vegetables during the winter, and will plant produce to take home in containers in the spring.

Wolverine Human Services, Detroit MI – Wolverine Human Services helps children to be victors and supports diverse treatment needs for children and families in need. Funds support the organization’s Wolverine Center, a residential campus in Detroit that houses males who are in the juvenile justice system or who have experienced abuse or neglect. Specifically, funds would support the garden program, in which youth in the program plant, grow, and eat fresh food.

YMCA Camp Greenville, Cleveland SC – YMCA Camp Greenville puts Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind, and body for all. Funds support the introduction of fresh fruits and vegetables as snacks, and teaching campers to make healthy choices in the dining hall. With support from a 2017 United Fresh Start Foundation Community Grant, the camp increased its fresh options from two to four. With increased funds this year, the camp can provide eight options to 2,000 campers. Twenty-five percent of campers are on financial scholarship assistance.

Youth Services Bureau of St. Joseph County, South Bend IN – The Youth Services Bureau provides crisis intervention services to vulnerable runaway and homeless youth. Funds help provide produce for youth participating in classes at Martin’s School of Cooking, and through a new “Fun and Fresh” area during an event where children and families sample fresh fruits and vegetables. These opportunities are especially important to this population, which often has little experience with and exposure to fresh produce due to unstable housing.