

From ancient roots we grow fertile solutions



Painting by Chana Laila



EOY Report 2023

2023 was our year of transition.



Like a tree replanted, we moved to new fertile ground, renewing our roots and re-establishing our foundations.

**- Our goal -
sustain and nourish our roots and continue to bear fruit to feed our community**



Dear Rachel's Table of Western Massachusetts family,

2023 was a year of great change, to put it mildly. It was a year of firsts, and a year of movement. In 2023, for the first time, we distributed an all-time high of **760,210 pounds** of food to our network of recipient partners across three counties, which was made possible by our first year-round use of our new refrigerated van. Reaching a new threshold, Bea's Harvest, our Gleaning Program, delivered **37% more produce** than we projected it would - **28,024 pounds** - and because of our amazing staff and dedicated first-time partnerships, close to **150 new volunteers** joined the RTWM family. Our Growing Gardens program facilitated our first accessible garden so that seniors who use wheelchairs can socialize while gardening. Children from other garden sites made a cookbook, taught others their recipes, and proudly picked strawberries for their parents to bring home. **The pride people reported feeling as they took part in determining their own food futures is as important as the poundage we delivered.**

July 2023 marked our evolution into an independent entity, intensifying our commitment to eradicate hunger and promote food equity. Even through our transition, we doubled our impact in Hampshire County, exceeded our goals in rescue and gleaning for all counties, and built new partnerships with locally celebrated businesses such as the Big E. Thankful for our 30 years as a program of the Jewish Federation of Western Massachusetts and our one-of-a-kind volunteers, we have continued our path towards feeding the immediate need while creating programs that support sustainable food security for all. Our transition helped us move to become more responsive and fill the gaps locally to not only feed, but nourish, our community.

2023 taught us, through so much change, to stay focused on our mission, and recommit to core goals:

Nourish...

our communities together, one delivery, one glean, one garden at a time.

our partnerships and relationships to make the world a better place for all.

and sustain food security and equity with holistic solutions from source to systems.

In an era marked by escalating food insecurity, environmental challenges, war and division, Rachel's Table continues to provide stable, sustainable solutions. While representing a small fraction of the global population, our commitment to equity and self-determination shines brightly, especially in initiatives like community gardening. As a Jewish organization in a world facing rising antisemitism, we stand firm in our belief: Reaching across difference is key to making a real difference. We are proud to uphold this truth in all our actions, serving as a bridge in our diverse community. With our roots deeply entrenched in the values of **tikkun olam (repair of the world)** and **tzedakah (justice and charity)**, we're not just another non-profit; we're a movement. Join us.

To a day when we are all at the table,

Executive Director Jodi Falk



Rescue - by the numbers

- 701,734.50 pounds rescued
- 54% of this was delivered by the van
- Delivered **\$100,000** worth of meat **monthly** to **65** agencies
- Added **19** more food donors and **7** more agencies throughout **3** counties
- Served **25** agencies that are not served by the Food Bank or any other food access program
- Saved **1k+** tons of greenhouse gases from emissions and saved **81 million** gallons of water

Pounds rescued 2022 and 2023

2022 **305,483.9 lbs**

2023* **701,734.5 lbs**

*129% more since 2022

People served 2022 and 2023

2022 **83,874**

2023 **120,923**

Per month

Our refrigerated van **DOUBLED** the meat, dairy and produce we delivered



The Van Team,
12 of the hardest
working people
you will ever meet

Purchase - by the program

Dignity means we follow the platinum rule – feed others as they want to be fed. We respond to the requests of our agencies and their clients.



Lily's Fruit delivered over **2,600 pounds** of fresh fruit during winter months to 15 agencies serving children

ESSEntials delivered, with partner Jewish Family Service of Western Massachusetts, **nearly 2 tons** of kosher food to meet cultural needs – a staple of food justice

Bernice and Joseph Kalicka Milk Project delivered, with our teen and adult volunteers, **7,750 pounds** of shelf-stable milk to **14 agencies** serving children



Daydie's Thanksgiving with amazing community member Betsy Gaberman and RTWM volunteer and Vice President Judy Yaffe, **19,155.7 pounds** of turkey and fixings were delivered to agencies in **Hampden, Hampshire and Franklin Counties**. This year, the Upper Valley turkeys were fully underwritten by Gagne Wealth Management in Greenfield.



Gleaning

Bea's Harvest, the Gleaning program of Rachel's Table, engages the ancient Jewish practice of gathering food after harvest to feed vulnerable community members. We hosted several groups like Girls Inc. of Holyoke and the Anti-Semitism Awareness Project of Amherst Regional High School in gleans that focused on education about food insecurity. We also hosted dozens of open community gleans that prioritized harvesting more food for more people. These gleans brought in many new volunteers (especially from Hampshire and Franklin Counties), fostered unique bonds among gleaners, and provided insights about the talent and generosity of local farmers and the challenges they face. Gather with us in the fields in 2024!

By the numbers



12
farms



177
gleaners



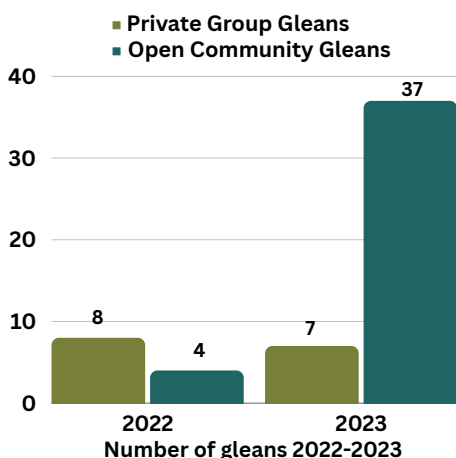
47
delivery
sites



28,024
pounds

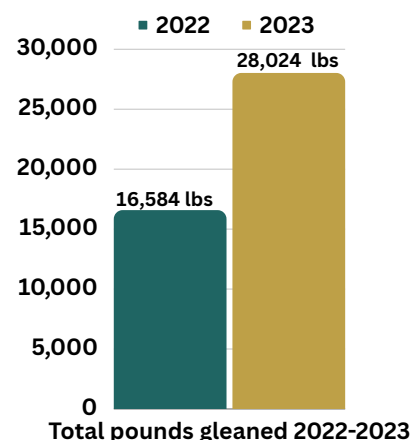


44
gleans



“As someone that grew up going to the food pantry with my mom, this is such an honor for me to be a part of something that is so wonderfully impacting the community and providing food to those that need it. I used to be one of those families that needed it.”

- Gleaning Participant



Growing Gardens

- We evolved the program from a **two-year cycle** for each agency to a **three-year cycle** to better **support agencies** in developing and implementing **sustainability** plans for their gardens.
- We designed and installed our **first wheelchair accessible garden** for seniors at Seniority House
- **Youth took significant roles** through running **interactive cooking demonstrations**, **working as paid part-time gardeners**, and **helping to install gardens at new sites**.

2023 by the numbers



302 constituents and community members engaged across **8** agency gardens



95 youth engaged across **5** gardens



17 agency staff and volunteers took part in developing gardens and garden programming



6 volunteer liaisons and supported agencies in visioning and implementing their gardens



3 teens from partner agencies worked as paid interns tending the gardens



3 new agencies were onboarded by the end of 2023 for a total of **11** agencies in the program as we head into 2024



“We had a child that never had kale before and the mother was so surprised when the kids, alongside a GG volunteer, made kale chips and the baby could not stop eating them; it was wholesome. The children have called the Garden fun - especially when they made smoothies with the kale.” (Executive Director, Christina's House)



Teen Board – “Great is study, for it leads to action” Kiddushin 40b

Twelve years ago, the Rachel’s Table Board sought to engage local youth in food justice work to plant seeds for future generations to continue the work of Rachel’s Table.

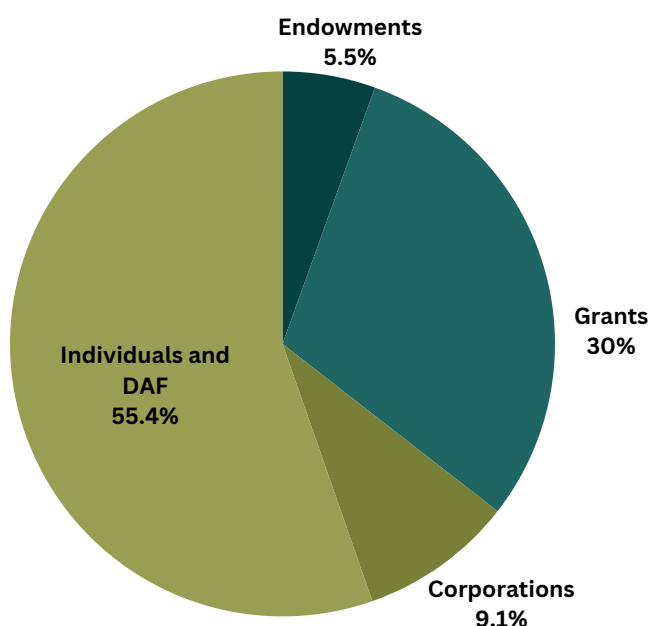
In 2023 the Teen Board...

- Consisted of **45 motivated and passionate 12–18-year-olds** engaged in hands-on, educational food justice work through the RTWM Teen Board.
- Gathered twice monthly to **learn, serve and advocate** (for a total of 20 programs)
- Service Events** - Backpack Program, Teen Glean, Starter Plants, Kalicka Milk, Ronald McDonald House, Artsfest, Speakers – Springfield Schools and farmer Ana Ascencio, Film, Essentials.
- Educational Events** - Addressed the importance of **culturally appropriate food and food choice** in food justice, **farm to school programs**, and **benefits that provide access to food** including SNAP, WIC and Free School Meals. Featured speakers from Springfield Public Schools and local farms.
- Impacted their local community:
 - 1,700 meals** in brand new backpacks, **8 agency gardens** full of plants, **800 lbs of apples** from gleaning, **35 bags** filled with ESSENTial(s) ingredients to create delicious, kosher Thanksgiving meals, **7,000 lbs.** of shelf-stable milk to women, mothers and children.

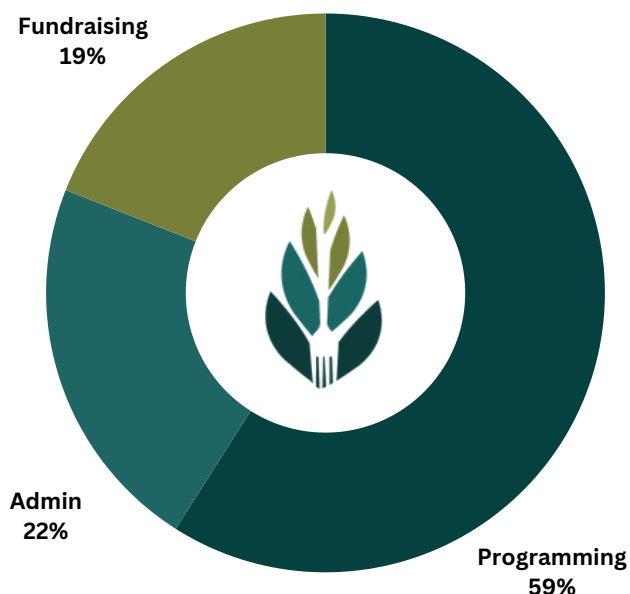


Fiscal Health

Income



Expenses



Income and expense - positive industry standard for nonprofit in years 0-4
- Urban Institute, University of Indiana



Next Steps

How can you join the movement?

We answer the question “how can I help?” when it comes to alleviating hunger locally. You can join us as a volunteer and/or support us through your donations – one-time, monthly, and in addition, through a legacy commitment. How can you help with our 2024 goals?

If seeding food security through the generations is interesting to you, our Growing Gardens program is at the end of its 3-year initial funding from the Arbella Insurance Foundation. We would love to discuss with you how you can support this program by sponsoring a garden from seed to harvest. If supporting local families who are food-insecure and keep the laws of kashrut is of interest, please let us know as we have a growing population for whom local pantries and soup kitchens are not an option. Culturally appropriate food is a part of food justice.

Rachel’s Table of Western Massachusetts needs your support in general to keep our operations going. We have a small staff and a large and loyal volunteer community – a combination that ensures your funds go to providing food, now and the future. Reach out to Executive Director Jodi Falk to discuss your partnership with us to nourish our community.

RTWM wishes to thank so many incredibly important people and institutions that support our work. Please see our sponsor list from Bountiful Bowls. RTWM also wishes to thank first-time top-tier supporters Point32 Foundation, Westfield Bank, Massachusetts Bankers Association and Baystate Health.

Thank you!

Join the movement.

To a day when we are all at the table,
RTWM Staff and Board

