



Village Harvest Facts:

Problem:

- Monthly, an average of 163,500 people are seeking food assistance in Santa Clara & San Mateo Counties (source: www.2ndHarvest.net)
- Majority are seniors and families with children for whom nutrition is key to health and learning.

Opportunity:

- There are millions and millions of pounds of fresh fruit dropping just in Santa Clara County backyards.
- An average backyard citrus tree provides 250 lbs of fruit in a season or 660 servings.
- Santa Clara Valley has some of the most fertile soil in the world making it easy for even neglected fruit trees to provide an overabundance of fruit, certainly more than most families can consume in a season.

Solution:

Village Harvest is a nonprofit suburban harvesting cooperative in Santa Clara Valley, California, which brings together neighbors and community organizations to provide food for the hungry, preserve our heritage and skills, and promote sustainable use of urban resources. We organize and coordinate backyard fruit harvesting, and provide education on fruit tree care, harvesting, and food preservation. Village Harvest is a completely volunteer run organization.

- We have harvested:
 - 110,615 lbs in 2005.
 - Over 50,000 lbs in 2006. (5/5/06)
 - Over 366,000 lbs. cumulative for the hungry from backyard fruit trees since inception (does not include self-harvested fruit).
- Harvested Backyard Fruit is donated to several agencies in Santa Clara Valley including:
 - Salvation Army in San Jose
 - Second Harvest Food Bank of Santa Clara County
 - Sacred Heart Community Services Agency
 - Mountain View Community Services Agency
- Volunteer teams are made available to homeowners for a suggested donation (no one turned away for lack of funds).
 - Elderly and disabled with medium to large fruit trees
 - Those with a moderate amount of fruit (150 lbs, 3 large boxes, or less) are encouraged to see our web-site for ladder-less harvesting tips, equipment sources and neighborhood drop-off locations.

Resources:

See www.villageharvest.org for:

- Drop off locations for fruit and produce donations
- Preserves from locally grown fruit
- Upcoming Events
- Educational Resources for Fruit Tree Owners.
- Signing up to receive our Volunteer or Homeowner e-mail Newsletter

Organization:

- Village Harvest is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization founded in 2001.
- Completely volunteer run with over 150 volunteers participating.

Fun Facts:

- Our annually record breaking tree is in Cambrian, San Jose. In 2005, we harvested over 1,800 lbs from this single grapefruit tree.
- In parts of Santa Clara County, the soil is so deep and fertile that it's not unusual for us to be harvesting nearly 1000 lbs of fruit on a regular basis from these trees. The old time farmers knew what they were doing when they choose Santa Clara Valley to be home to fruit trees.
- Before Silicon Valley, Santa Clara Valley used to be called "The Valley of Heart's Delight". When the orchards blossomed, it was a sight to behold.
- Our volunteers range from school children to seniors, from athletes to developmentally disabled. We have hosted groups from hi-tech companies, church groups of all faiths, community service organizations, schools and gardening groups.
- Harvesting for the Hungry was piloted as a concept in Palo Alto with 5,000 lbs harvested in 2000.
- In 2006, Village Harvest will have provided 1 million servings of healthy, nutritious fruit to the hungry in Santa Clara County.

Funding:

- We're a grass roots organization that does an amazing amount on a shoestring budget. Every donation makes a very large difference in our community. We're constantly being asked to grow in our own community as well as support efforts in other communities and states. It's an infectious and contagious idea that's spreading the country and beyond.
- We depend completely upon community support from individuals and local organizations and businesses. We don't receive any government funding.

Further Information:

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