

ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL GROWING SEASON



DIMA ABOU KASSEM

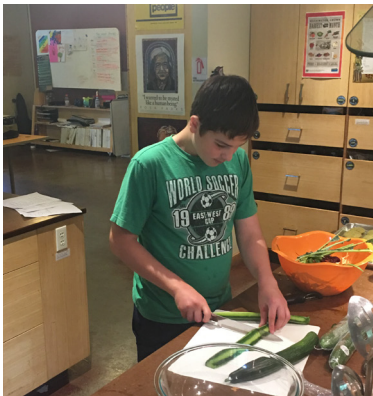
GRUB VOLUNTEER & VICTORY GARDENER

I'm from Syria, and my family and I moved to Olympia in February 2014. I started to learn English at South Puget Sound Community College (SPSCC) that year in the spring.

One of my best friends is my first English teacher. She's volunteered with GRuB for a long time. Last fall, she invited me to a GRuB party. I made dolma (stuffed grape leaves), and everybody liked it and asked me about the recipe. I really enjoyed talking to the people there.

It was like I knew them for a long time.

They were very kind, humble & generous.



After this experience, my 14-year old son and I started to volunteer regularly with GRuB, and I had my dream come true last May when a great group from GRuB came and built my family a garden. We've met so many new people, and my son was so happy to be part of this community.



GRuB invited me to teach cooking classes over the summer and share my talent about Mediterranean cooking, specifically Syrian cuisine. I worked with three GRuB youth this summer to make lunch for 40 people. We had a great feast of dolma, bulgur, and baklava.

Working with GRuB brought me the spirit of being back home with my family—laughing and working hard to grow all kinds of vegetables and fruits. Everything at GRuB reminds me of my family. I want my son to learn about this great relationship of being close to nature and learn about growing plants in order to keep him close his grandparents and our Syrian culture.



Working alongside people in the GRuB kitchen reminds me of working with my sisters back home. We cook, clean, share & eat together. There is a proverb in my language — “We had bread & salt together” —which means we became very close friends.



SEAN HAWKINS

CURRENT GRUB BOARD MEMBER & 2011-2012 YOUTH CREW ALUM

I came to GRuB when I was fifteen. Classic story—I didn't like public school. I'm a tribal member, so public school and I didn't start out on the right foot. My principal recommended this program GRuB.

It was an amazing experience! I didn't know we were going to dig deep & talk about issues that are really hard to talk about.

One of the things I took away from my experience is that **anytime we see someone hungry—oppression is present.**

That realization jumpstarted my passion for agriculture and my passion to help our community grow. I graduate from college next year. GRuB's given me hope. Resilience isn't just about weathering or riding out the storm, it's about the seeds you sow along the way.



WITH YOUR SUPPORT, WE DID SO MUCH IN 2017!

38 HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH FLOURISHED:

95% increased their GPA

91% improved their communication skills
& felt an enhanced sense that they
have some control over their lives

82% increased their self-esteem
& problem-solving skills

20 seniors with low incomes
received free CSA shares
(totaling more than 790
pounds of fresh produce!),
grown with care by our
youth & 10 dedicated farm interns



560 younger kids experienced
GRuB through a mix of field trips
& two week-long camps

Only 54% were
on track to
graduate
when they
joined GRuB



64 households,
183 individuals
(just under
half were kids)
received
GRuB gardens



Over 1,131 hours of community connection on
our land for volunteers tending to the farm

DEAR GRUBBERS,

Here we are approaching winter with another successful growing season to celebrate and another year of lessons to learn from. This is the season for turning inward and reflection, and I like to take opportunities like this letter to share the multicultural guidelines we use at GRuB that shape how we do our work.

One of the guidelines that we adopted from our work with VISIONS, Inc. back in 2012 is to “practice both/and thinking.” It reminds us that more than one perspective can be true at the same time. Whenever we use the word “but,” it effectively negates the first statement. For example, two people can experience the same situation completely differently, and each person’s account can *both be true!* In the context of our work at GRuB, I would say that we do a great job engaging youth in powerful work in our community, AND we do not offer enough opportunities for youth alumni to further develop their skills & leadership. The world that we live in is complex, and “both/and thinking” is a powerful tool for deepening our appreciation for the many facets of that complexity.

So, now is the time to share bread and salt, to connect with the land and to be thoughtful about the seeds that we sow, especially in the face of adversity.



Complexity can challenge us to make good choices and to live well. While so many folks want to *be right*, at GRuB we want to *do right*—by choosing to learn and grow together in every way we can. It is my hope that our unwavering commitment to the simple acts of bringing people together to grow, gather and share food will continue to inspire and compel our community to grow together in powerful ways.

So, now is the time to share bread and salt, to connect with the land and to be thoughtful about the seeds that we sow, especially in the face of adversity. GRuB’s mission is strong and resilient in our community, and it will only stay that way if we continue to grow together and to invest in what we care about. Our goal is to raise \$40,000 in one time gifts between now and the end of 2017. Additionally, we hope that 200 people will also sign on as sustaining donors, giving small, recurring gifts of \$5-\$50 each month. Yes, I am asking you to consider making a one-time, end-of-year gift at a larger amount AND to sign on for a monthly sustaining gift, at a level that you can comfortably contribute over time.

Your gift of \$10 a month can help subsidize a field trip for a class of 30 grade schoolers. Your gift of \$1,000 is enough to sponsor a stipend for a youth during the summer or a veteran during the garden building season. A \$20 gift covers plant starts for a new gardener in the spring. \$500 provides scholarships for our Seed to Table camp. Every gift received will be a seed well sown to grow future crops of healthy food, people and community.



As I write this, I am both grateful and hopeful. I am grateful to every person who has helped shape GRuB's work in our community, especially the youth, families, elders, veterans, volunteers, donors and partners who've been brave enough to accept our invitation to grow together. I am hopeful that you will accept my invitation to invest in our mission with your dollars and your heart and will choose to grow with us in the coming year.

With love & gratitude,

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



IN LOVING MEMORY

It is with full hearts that we honor Dan Barker's passing on 9/5/17. Dan created the Home Gardening Project in Portland, OR where he built & gifted vegetable gardens to people in need. His work catalyzed Richard and Maria Doss to start the Kitchen Garden Project to serve western WA, a project they eventually passed on to GRuB. Dan's legacy as a Vietnam veteran inspired us to engage more veterans in this work, now known as GRuB's Victory Garden Project.

"WHAT IS BOTHERSOME IS NOT THAT GIVING AWAY GARDENS IS SO WONDERFUL, BUT THAT IT IS SO RARE."

– Dan Barker



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