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# 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

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## Letter from our EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

We grow enough food to feed every person on the planet. Yet, every year one third of that food goes to waste while nearly a billion people go to bed hungry. The Farmlink Project aims to fight hunger using fresh produce that would otherwise unnecessarily be wasted.

While the past year has brought widespread hardship and suffering, the idea of going to bed hungry is still foreign to so many of us. For 50 million Americans, and over 2 billion people globally, that is not the case. This crisis is called food insecurity, and it's growing every year in the United States and around the world.

The effects of food insecurity linger long after the feeling of hunger; those that suffer are twice as likely to never graduate high school and 5 times more likely to commit suicide. They have lower test scores and substantially worse health outcomes, with an average life span that is 10 years shorter than the national average.

The Covid-19 pandemic exposed flaws in our food system, causing millions of American families to face a new reality of food insecurity, all while billions of pounds of fresh food rotted in fields.

That's where our story begins.

Amid the pandemic, students refusing to accept that nothing could be done began cold calling hundreds of farmers to locate surplus along with hundreds of food banks to find out what kind of food was needed where. With no better option, we rented trucks ourselves to drive to farms and deliver the fresh nutritious produce to communities. Within a matter of weeks, millions of people around the country began to

emulate these actions -- gathering friends to volunteer, offering their own trucks, even shipping surplus food from home gardens. People pledged birthdays, donated their stimulus checks and chipped in whatever they could. One 10 year old girl in Washington sold flowers for months outside of her family farm, only to donate every cent to our effort.

A group of students became a grassroots movement delivering millions of meals across our country. Thus, The Farmlink Project was born. With a doer mindset, no overhead cost, and a desire to serve, the team found a way to deliver millions of meals every month to those in need.

We're on a mission, and it's simple. Rescue billions of pounds of fresh nutritious produce that would otherwise be wasted to feed people in need, reduce carbon emissions, and heal our planet.

We believe young people have the power to inspire change. We believe we can bring an end to the absurdity of massive food waste amid rampant hunger. And we believe there will be a day in our lifetime when every person in our country has access to nourishing food.

We want to celebrate that day with you. There are those who will wait for the world to change and there are those who will change the world. Let's change the world together.

Yours,  
James and Aidan



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Dick Beahrs**  
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**Doug O'Brien**  
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**Mehran Sahami**  
Head of Stanford Computer Science Department

**Sheryl Sandberg**  
COO of Facebook

**Bruce Taylor**  
CEO of Taylor Farms and Earthbound Farms

We are proud to partner with our fiscal agent and advisor Food Finders (Tax ID#33-0412749), a 501(c)3 food rescue organization connecting donated perishable food to hundreds of nonprofit pantries and shelters throughout Southern California.

*Origin story***ABOUT THE FARMLINK PROJECT**

Farmlink members Stella Delp and Chad Kanoff at the very first Farmlink Project delivery in April 2020.

Many people remember March of 2020 as a time when the COVID-19 pandemic took over and life as we knew it was put on hold. For much of the Farmlink team, this change also meant being sent home from college.

Four students from Brown and Stanford sat at home watching as the food supply chain was devastated. Unemployment and hunger were skyrocketing, with 54 million Americans going to bed hungry every night. Yet farmers were being forced to throw away millions of pounds of food as restaurants were forced to close and commercial orders plummeted. The produce was available, but simply was not getting to where it was most needed. These four friends began cold-calling farmers in the hopes of finding surplus that they could redirect to a local food bank experiencing unprecedented demand.

After contacting a farmer that was on the verge of sending 50,000 pounds of onions to the landfill, these students rented a truck and delivered the onions to food banks throughout Los Angeles. And thus, The Farmlink Project was born.

Since our inception in mid April, we have worked with farms all across the nation, purchasing their excess produce and providing the logistics to deliver the food to where it is needed most in the United States, including food deserts and underrepresented communities. Our team has grown to encompass hundreds of volunteers from across the country, who tirelessly work to move millions of pounds of food every month. We feel so fortunate for our success thus far, and we are so excited for what the future of the Farmlink Project will hold!



## MEET THE TEAM

We are so proud to have a dedicated team of over 200 volunteers, mostly students and recent graduates with an average age of 21. While we cannot work together in person, we have made the most of our time over Zoom, and we have loved getting to know one another. We are hoping for an in-person Farmlink meet-up in 2021!



The Farmlink Project

# BY THE NUMBERS

pounds of carbon  
dioxide prevented  
**22,765,300**

pounds of food rescued  
**21,897,332**

farms  
**93**

states  
**29**

# PRODUCE

pounds of onions  
**1,485,291**

pounds of milk  
**4,891,839**

pounds of potatoes  
**4,236,391**

pounds of lettuce greens  
**2,003,472**

meals delivered  
**18,222,776**

food banks  
**266**

states  
**42**

# FUNDS

**\$2.2 MILLION**  
in relief paid to farmers and truckers

**\$5.1 MILLION**  
fundraised from individual donations, corporate  
grants, and foundation grants

180 volunteers with  
an average age of

**21**



# TIMELINE

From our first delivery and beyond, The Farmlink Project has grown from a seedling of an idea to a vast field of flourishing produce that extends nationwide—and we're only getting started!

## APRIL 2020

We completed our first delivery! On April 16, The Farmlink Project drove 10,800 eggs from Trafficanda Egg Ranches Inc. in Van Nuys, CA to Food Finders Inc. in Los Alamitos, CA using a rented Penske truck. Two days later, on April 18, The Farmlink project helped connect 50,000 pounds of onions from Owyhee Produce in Oregon to West Side Food Bank in California.

## MAY 2020

We reached the milestone of rescuing and delivering 1 million pounds of produce in just six weeks. We were also featured in The New York Times!

## JUNE 2020

We reached the milestone of rescuing and delivering 3.5 million pounds of produce. We were also featured on ABC's World News Tonight with David Muir and The Today Show with Al Roker!

## JULY 2020

We reached the milestone of rescuing and delivering 5 million pounds of produce, and received a donation and hand-written note from 10-year-old Chloe, who contributed 100% of her flower-stand profits to The Farmlink Project — she donated because our team was “closer to her age” than teams at other hunger-relief organizations.

## AUGUST 2020

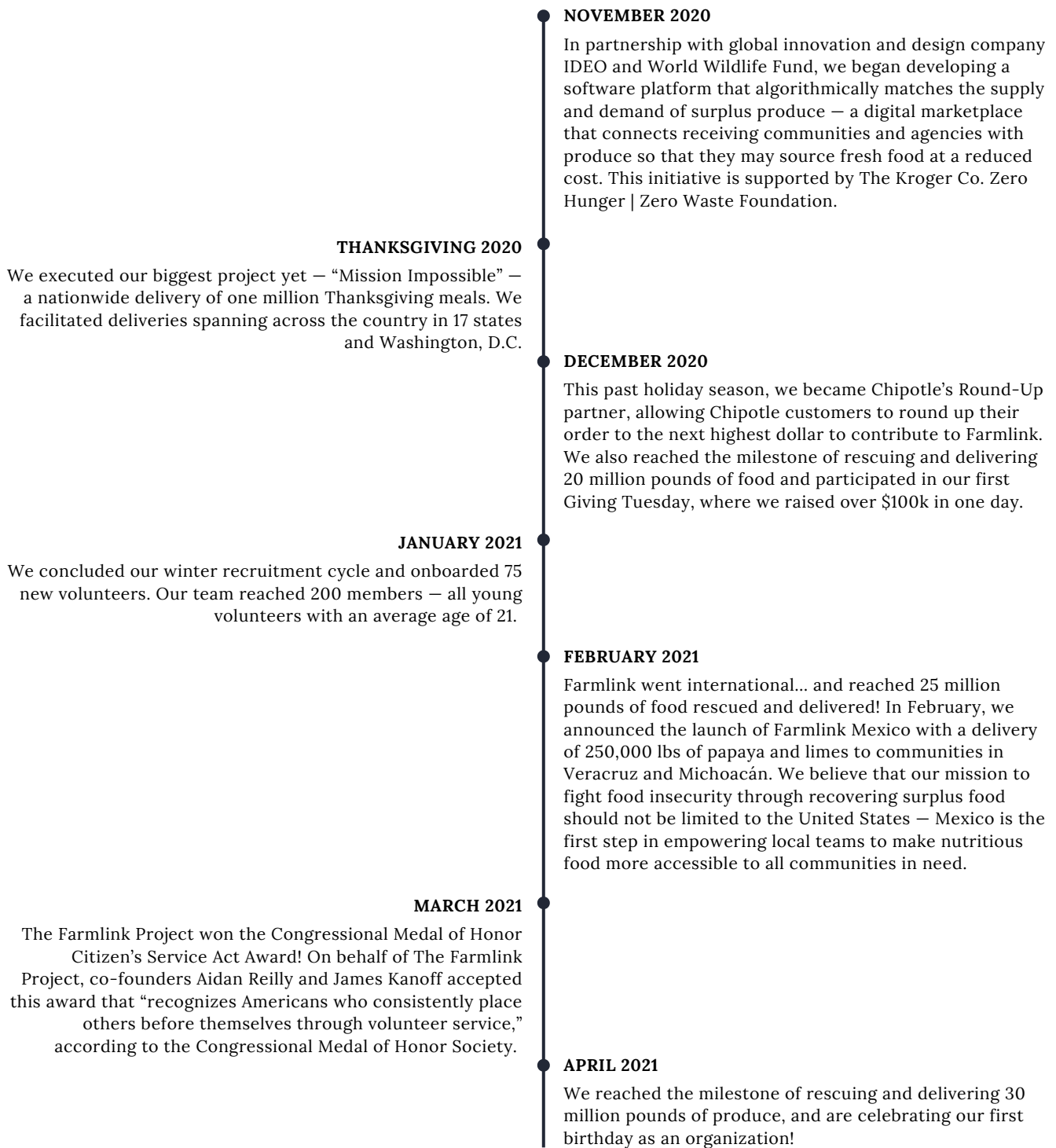
The Farmlink Project took flight... and reached 10 million pounds of food delivered! Partnering with Angel Flight West, The Farmlink Project connected 320 boxes of fresh produce from Salinas, California to Tehama Together in Tehama County and Clearlake Gleaners in Lake County — two of the most food insecure counties in California. Just a week later, The Farmlink Project reached 10 million pounds of produce connected from farms to communities facing food insecurity.

## AUGUST - SEPTEMBER 2020

We formed the Farmlink Response Team, a crew of Farmlinkers who set out on a road trip journey across the United States in an RV. Their goal — to get on the ground to identify communities in need, execute deliveries, and tell the stories that need to be heard to better understand the food insecurity crisis.

## OCTOBER 2020

Farmlink's virtual power hours — an hour in which team members help research or call food banks and farms — were opened to the public, allowing external volunteers to donate their time and energy to make a tangible difference. Hundreds of volunteers have joined our Farms Team to learn about our process and participate in the most important part of feeding communities in need: sourcing surplus food and finding a home for it.







## CHIPOTLE PARTNERSHIP

This year, we were fortunate enough to be Chipotle's Round-Up Partner for two months. Every person that ordered a meal through Chipotle's app had the option to round up and donate a few cents to us -- money which went directly to purchasing produce and delivering it to those in need.

With Chipotle's help, we raised \$1.23 million through this program, which will allow us to provide an additional 984,000 meals to hungry Americans. Furthermore, we are now partnering with Chipotle's farm suppliers to prevent food waste at the source.

Our relationship with Chipotle has strengthened The Farmlink Project as a whole and we are incredibly grateful for their support and belief in our mission.



## THANK YOU, CHIPOTLE!

## RV TRIP

For 40 days this summer, members of our team rented an RV and drove around the United States to see firsthand the food insecurity plaguing our nation. They saw food banks the size of Walmarts, endless lines of people hoping to get a meal, and entire towns obliterated by natural disasters in which nearly every person in the town was facing hunger. However, throughout the course of this trip, our team members met countless determined and innovative individuals who are all executing unique plans to alleviate food insecurity. This trip underscored the urgency of The Farmlink Project's mission and inspired us to continue working hard to end hunger and eliminate food waste.



## Fundraisers

# PEER-TO-PEERS

Many members of The Farmlink Project team have run successful peer-to-peer fundraisers over social media, incentivizing donations through fun stunts and games. These impressive fundraisers highlight the talents and creativity of those who are kind enough to support our project.



From left to right: 1. Brothers and Farmlinkers Jack and Will Renken ran a mile a day together in animal costumes to raise thousands for Farmlink! 2. Farmlink members Kate, Ezra, and Jules completed a series of dares over the summer to raise money for Farmlink. 3. Brothers Pete and Cam ran a marathon wearing produce costumes to raise money for Farmlink!



## Thanksgiving 2020

# MISSION IMPOSSIBLE

This year, amid the ongoing pandemic and unprecedented hunger plaguing the United States, we set out to do something big for Thanksgiving. Committed to our mission of fighting food insecurity, we pledged to do something more ambitious and challenging than we have ever done— a nationwide delivery of one million Thanksgiving meals.

To accomplish this goal, we facilitated food deliveries in 17 states and Washington, D.C. From coast to coast, members of The Farmlink Project team came out to attend these deliveries and distributions, allowing them to see firsthand the hard work of the food banks and organizations we partner with as well as the wide array of families and individuals we serve.

Mission Impossible became a reality because of the dedication of our farmers, the hard work of our food banks and community partners, and, of course, the incredible generosity of our supporters. We are so thankful for everyone that made this mission possible.

*Deliveries from top to bottom: Los Angeles, New York, Florida, Washington D.C.*



## Honorary Farmlinker

# CHLOE (AKA FARMER HOTZENPLOTZ)



On the side of a road in Bainbridge Island, Washington sits Farmer Hotzenplotz's farm stand, blooming with bouquets of flowers and jars of herbs. Placed among the bouquets is a cash box that reads "Let Honesty Be Your Guide"—a message to any passersby who would like to take something home from the farm stand to leave payment behind.

Farmer Hotzenplotz is not your average farmer. Her farmer name is inspired by the main character of one of her favorite books, *The Robber Hotzenplotz*. Better known as Chloe, this ten-year-old farmer and entrepreneur started her farm stand business at the age of seven. Similar to The Farmlink Project's mission of repurposing the surplus produce of farms in America, Chloe takes the overflow of flowers in her family garden to share them with her community. Shoshanna recalls that "it was abundance and oversupply that led to this whole adventure,"—a business born from and sustained by surplus produce.

In past years, Chloe donated a portion of her farm stand profit to wildlife restoration organizations, but, because of the pandemic and ensuing hunger crisis, she decided this year to donate all her proceeds to feed those who are hungry. When making the decision of whether to continue the farm stand this year in light of the pandemic, Chloe was determined.

"It isn't right to be making money in such a time of poverty and hunger," she explained. Then, Chloe's family discovered The Farmlink Project in a New York Times article. As a young farmer trying to fight hunger through her farm stand, she was drawn to us as we, too, are a group of students, not much older than she, trying to feed as many people as we can. From just this spring, Chloe raised 482 dollars from her farm stand to donate to The Farmlink Project, which her parents generously matched to total 964 dollars. In late June, we received the donation along with a handwritten letter from Chloe. Awestruck and inspired by her generosity, maturity, and hard work, we see Chloe as an amazing role model not only for those her own age, but for us all.

Chloe's flowers have truly gone far beyond her family's garden. With the money she raised from her farm stand, The Farmlink Project has been able to provide over 8,000 meals to individuals and families in need—all made possible by the work of one ten-year-old girl. Chloe has shown us that no matter how young you are or how small your actions may seem, you can make a huge difference. In the wise words of Farmer Hotzenplotz, the youngest member of the Farmlink family, "If you want to do it, then there's practically nothing stopping you other than your own doubts—that can stop someone just as much as it can start someone."



### Faces of Farmlink

# JULIA KREMER AND CHRISTIAN BAILEY

Christian Bailey and Julie Kremer stand outside a temporary refrigerator unit in a hot field on June 26, 2020. Julie and Christian are completing a delivery arranged by The Farmlink Project of 10,450 pounds of mixed greens from Plainville Farms in Hadley to four food bank locations across the state.

Julie started Food Link, a Boston-based nonprofit organization, eight years ago with Anne Dupont when Julie encountered food waste first-hand while volunteering at a fundraiser for her daughter's school. She realized that the extra bread the school reserved from Panera usually went to waste at the end of the day. What began with a simple bread donation has now flourished into a thousand-pound delivery service to food banks and distributors throughout the Greater Boston area.

Christian Bailey has been a delivery driver for almost twenty years, making the same trek from Georgia to Massachusetts weekly. He leaves every Tuesday and returns home every Saturday.

Julie and Christian meet at the next drop-off location on this delivery—Food Link's other temporary set-up at Tufts University. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, Food Link collected and distributed about 45,000 pounds of produce a month. Since the pandemic, they have taken in an additional 225,000 pounds and opened temporary storage locations throughout Boston. Tufts and other organizations have donated refrigeration space, volunteers, and cars to help Julie and others with their mission to feed individuals deemed food insecure by the backlash of the pandemic.

"My favorite thing about driving is the people," Christian tells me. "You get to see all different walks of life." He nods, as if confirming his belief. "Yep. People, persons, individuals—that's what I love." He takes another box of mixed greens off the tall stack in the car and hands it to me. A bag of lettuce pokes out from the cardboard lip.

Wiping a bead of sweat off his forehead, Christian hops off the side of the truck onto the pavement. The metal cart, stacked high with boxes, shudders in the gust of air. He grabs the handle with one of his calloused palms and uses the other to straighten out the tower of lettuce.

Julie, standing in the doorframe, rushes over to help him. "You get to see what a lot of people feel about different things. The opinions differ in every state, but people share a commonality. A common goal. We all are giving food to people who need food." Julie grabs the other end of the cart while Christian speaks. "And to me, that feels like a good deed accomplished." Together, Christian and Julie wheel the cart towards the curb next to the food bank. They look at each other, nod, and both raise the cart at the same time. Not a single box falls.



# CORPORATE PARTNERSHIPS

The Farmlink Project has been fortunate to have the support of incredible foundations and corporations that have helped us every step of the way. We are so grateful for their faith in us and for their continued support.

UBER FREIGHT



Smart&Final.



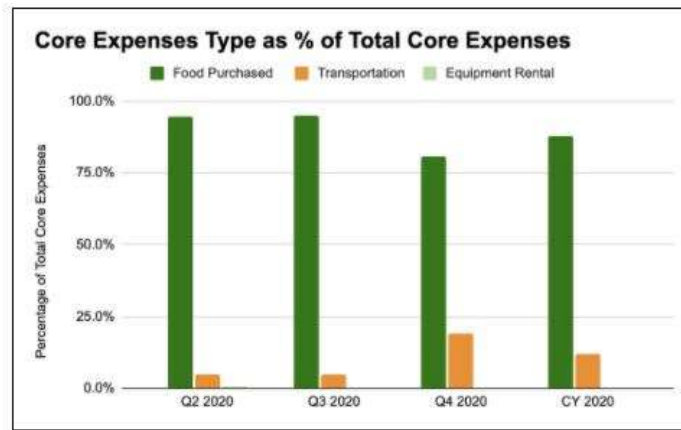
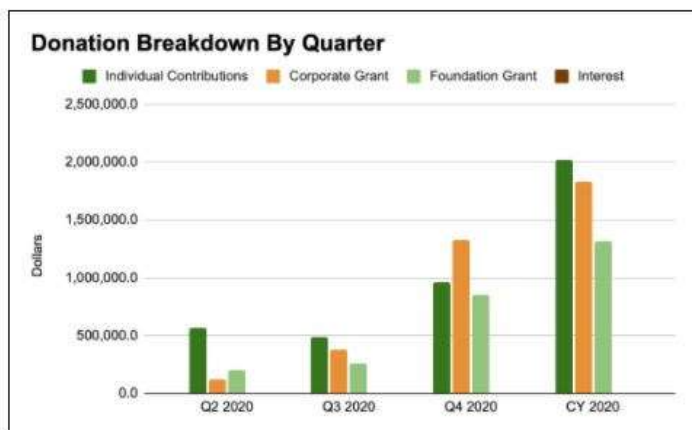
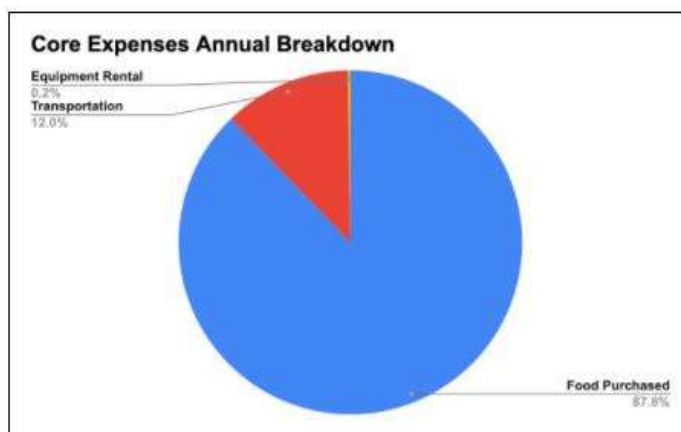
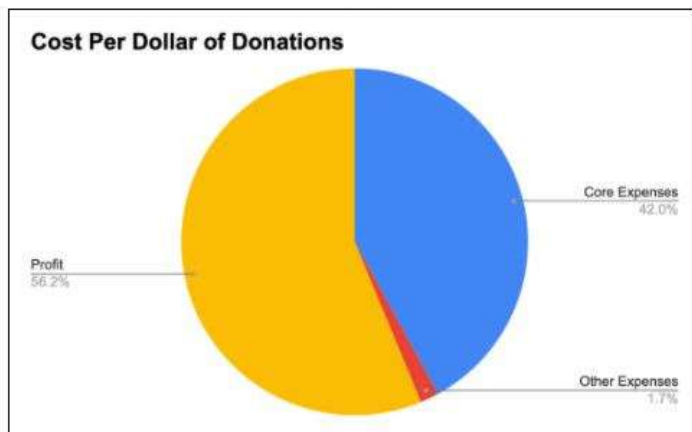
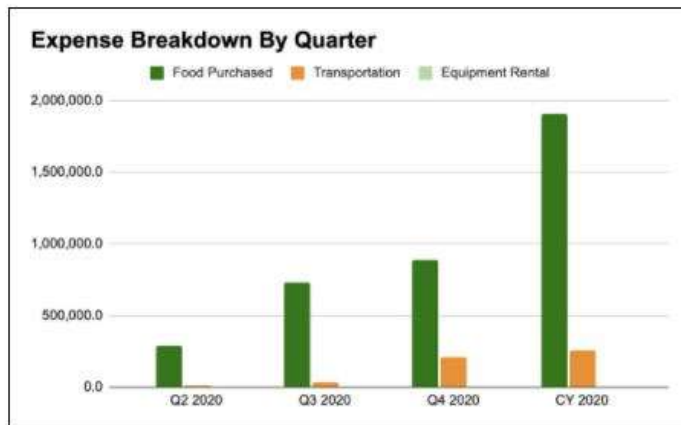
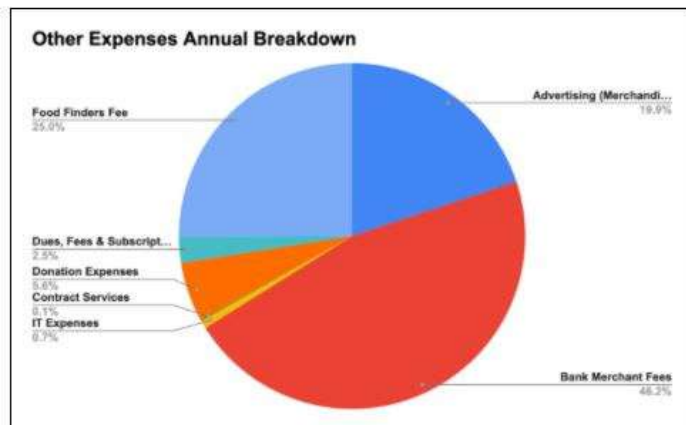
PURPLE CARROT



WANDER  
BEAUTY



# FINANCIAL SUMMARY



# LEARN MORE

From all of us here at The Farmlink Project, THANK YOU! We are so humbled by what we accomplished in 2020 and we could not be more excited to see what the future holds.

Let's get out there and rescue some produce!



**farmlinkproject.org**



**@farmlinkproject**



**@The Farmlink Project**



**@The Farmlink Project**

**Scan to donate:**



*Special thanks to Farmlinkers Isabel Tran, Katie Dvonch, Nelson Liu, Julia Friedl, Nelson Liu, and Jahnvi Deb for the creation of this annual report.*