



2023 Annual Report



PLANTING HOPE | GROWING GENEROSITY | HONORING DIGNITY



A bit of the summer bounty



Artsy volunteers paint row markers



Planting seedlings on a sunny day

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A note from our President

To our wonderful community of volunteers, recipients, donors, & partners, I'd like to say a big THANK YOU! With your support, approximately 700 SLO County households received our produce each week during the 2023 harvest season. That's 700 families receiving beautiful, healthy carrots, beets, peppers, tomatoes, corn, squash, melons, lettuce, and so much more. As we say, it takes a village, folks. So thank you for partnering with us to make this happen!



Wes Carlson
President

Additional 2023 highlights: We started experimenting with winter farming, with much success! We nursed our soil and veggies through a harsher climate to start the year (flooding & cooler temps) to be rewarded with higher yields by the end of the year. We welcomed new board members. We initiated our first restaurant fundraising partnership. And we received a grant to build a cooling shed, so our produce can stay fresh for longer!

From all of us on the board, we are honored to be part of this village with you, and we look forward to furthering our mission into 2024 and beyond!

Our mission

Caring for the earth and our neighbors by organically farming and freely giving fruits and vegetables to people experiencing food insecurity in San Luis Obispo County, California.

Our footprint

FIRSTFRUITS FARM SLO DONATES 100% OF OUR ORGANICALLY GROWN, FIRST CHOICE PRODUCE TO OUR LOCAL COMMUNITY

New in 2023: year-round farming! In San Luis Obispo, our mild winters and sun-soaked summers are perfect for growing all sorts of good stuff! We've extended our growing season and introduced permanent veggie beds in our main field. All of our produce is still grown using organic permaculture practices.



Caring for young garlic plants

1 acre

field

1/2 acre

orchard

100%

non-profit



Healthy cover crops and new permanent beds in our main field

2023 at a glance

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Amazing volunteers** have joined us from all across the county, including large groups from schools, businesses, and service organizations. Our fall community potluck was a success!
- We're raising our **sustainability** bar with permanent, no-till raised planting beds and a worm bin built by Bode Breece for his Eagle Scout project.

CHALLENGES

- Two heavy storms in January brought serious **flooding** to our farm. In addition to replacing material losses like tools, buckets, and our weather vane, we're restoring vital nutrients to the field.
- Our beloved Executive Director, Paul, relocated to Africa, creating a **gap in community coordination**. We're seeking new volunteers for fundraising, marketing, and more.



A lovely group of volunteers from Pan American Seed



Our parking lot and lower field under 2-3 feet of water



A pile of supplies swept away



Farmer Marti checks on our seedlings growing at Pan American Seed

Planting hope

In a world divided by clan, creed, practice, status, and politics, Firstfruits Farm SLO is committed to choosing love first.

With love for the earth and love for our neighbors, we aim to be an intersection for our community and inspire hope for generations to come.

40

different
crops

6

distribution
partners

24

monthly
donors

Farm Ops & Harvest Leaders



These dedicated folks **volunteer** to lead teams in the day-to-day operations of the farm:

- Ann Ketelaar
- Ben Horton
- Dave Ward
- Fred Kessler
- Jude Coren
- Kathy Chechopoulos
- Kathy Keil
- Marti Kessler
- Molly Supat
- Paul Shackelford
- Ramdas Kenjale
- Rebecca Bishop
- Sally Brooks-Schulke
- Sara Allen
- Steve Brennan
- Susan McTaggart
- Wes Carlson



Farmer Kathy C plans crop rotations



Ann harvests carrots



Dave and Farmer Fred install shade sails



Farmer Paul introduces our worm bin



Cal Poly students spread compost at the orchard with Farmers Kathy C and Fred

Growing generosity

From seed to harvest, we cultivate our crops through volunteer-run activities, welcoming all ages and skill levels.

Everyone is invited to use their capabilities generously as we grow food to feed our community.

437
volunteers

152
community
events

16,692
pounds of
produce
shared

Crop spotlight



GleanSLO's Dave & Sally harvest squash

IN THE FIELD

Each season, we adjust produce varieties to better support those we serve. In 2023, we planted these **nutritious & delicious vegetables**:

- Allium (garlic, leeks, onions)
- Brassicas (broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, kale)
- Cucurbits (cucumber, melons, squash)
- Greens (bok choy, chard, lettuce)
- Herbs (basil, cilantro, mint, oregano, parsley)
- Nightshades (eggplant, peppers, tomatoes, tomatillos)
- Root vegetables (beets, carrots, radishes)
- Succotash (beans, peas, corn)



These kiddos are great green bean pickers

IN THE ORCHARD

Fruit tree varieties include:

- Citrus (lemons, limes, oranges)
- Pome (apples, pears)
- Stone fruit (apricots, nectarines, peaches, plums, pluots)
- Persimmons



Brett prepares a delivery after a Friday harvest

Honoring dignity

We affirm the human right to dignity and belonging, celebrating diversity in our volunteers and recipients.

Through agency partnerships, our donated produce reaches individuals and families with limited access to high-quality, community-grown, fresh food.

1 in 5

people in SLO
County with
food
insecurity

300+

families
reached each
week

\$76,579

retail value
of donated
crops

Our partners

It takes a community to feed a community! We partner with a **variety of organizations** around SLO County. They donate land, tools, or seedlings, provide financial support or nursery services, help prep our field with tractor work, recruit volunteers, or distribute produce.



CAL POLY



**SON CARE
FOUNDATION**
SAVING LIVES



**Hitachi Zosen
INOVA**



Estero Bay
Kindess Coalition

THE *Community*
FOUNDATION
SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY

Board of Directors

Keeping the organization on mission is the primary responsibility of the board of directors. Our **volunteer** board members receive no financial or material compensation for their service.

2024 board members have backgrounds in finance, education, technology, and non-profit sectors.

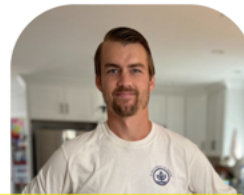
2023



Jen Smith
President



Paul Shackelford
Executive Director



Wes Carlson
President



Dinora Escalera
Secretary



Wes Carlson
Vice President



Kyle Madel
Treasurer



Rick Wolfe
Treasurer



Kathy Keil
Farm Liason



Dinora Escalera
Secretary



Kathy Keil
Farm Liason



Ben Horton
Harvest Captain



Sara Allen
Comms Director

2024

2023 Financials

Financial accountability and good stewardship are the foundation of trust. We're committed to being transparent about what we do and how we do it. We want you to have the utmost confidence that your gifts are bringing a **positive impact** to San Luis Obispo County.



INCOME

\$ 45,433

- Recurring donations 45.3%
- One-time donations 32.7%
- Grants 22.0%



EXPENSES

\$ 35,798

- Farming 75.8%
- Insurance 11.4%
- Admin 8.0%
- Fundraising & recruitment 4.7%

Seeds,
soil amendments,
field supplies,
equipment rental...

BALANCE SHEET SUMMARY

Assets	\$ 95,198
Cash and Cash Equivalents	68,027
Equipment	27,171
Liabilities	\$ 0
Total Liabilities & Net Assets	\$ 95,198



We welcome individuals and groups of all ages, backgrounds, & abilities to come grow with us

Ways to give



With support from you, we're working toward long-term change in the community every day.



FRIENDS OF THE FARM

Become a monthly sustaining donor as a Friend of the Farm.

Go to FirstfruitsSLO.org/support

<p>VOLUNTEER</p> <p>Join us at a regularly scheduled harvest, farm care, or orchard care event. Bring a friend! Get in touch with us to schedule your group.</p>	<p>SUBSCRIBE</p> <p>Stay up to date with the latest happenings by visiting our website to subscribe to our emails. (We won't spam you.)</p>
<p>LEAD A TEAM</p> <p>Step up to lead projects and support other volunteers in the regular operations of the farm.</p>	<p>GET SOCIAL</p> <p>Tag us in your photos of the farm & orchard! While you're at it, give us a follow on Facebook or Instagram.</p>
<p>IN-KIND GIFTS</p> <p>Donated items help keep our costs low and our impact high.</p>	<p>SHOPPING</p> <p>Mention Firstfruits Farm SLO when checking out at Ralph's & a portion of sales will be donated to our farm.</p>
<p>PLANNED GIFTS</p> <p>Making a planned ensures our work can continue for generations to come. Contact us to arrange.</p>	<p>FUNDRAISING</p> <p>Sponsor an event, host a bake sale, create a friendly challenge, etc. to raise funds for the farm.</p>

Contact us



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Firstfruits Farm SLO
is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3)
non-profit