

Harvest CROPS

2011 End of Year Report

Sergio D. Padilla January 2012



Two thousand-eleven was a prosperous yet challenging year for Harvest CROPS, made only possible with the many volunteers and financial support. We continue to accomplish our mission, providing fresh residential fruit that will otherwise “drop and rot” to families and seniors. To promote and encourage, to notice and remind, to introduce and socialize, to receive and provide, all made possible by a simple phone call, email or text, as we continue to flourish in the County of San Diego.



With promotion and encouragement, we are traveling in the right direction. We increased on the number of visits, yet decreased on the miles traveled, a relief with the falling price of gasoline. Mostly repeat seasonal calls, new appointers continue to be added. In November, when asked how he hear about us, a new resident caller stated, “from the Union-Tribune” which was published in 2009. We continue to be discovered on the internet if not from word-of-mouth. Our success is challenged with the cost of maintenance, very fortunate with individuals and businesses supporting us.

Since January 2009, our third year, our primary vehicle, the founder’s personal minivan, suffers from “mileage fatigued.” Because of the gracious support from Mr. Enrique Garfias, proprietor of Speedway Auto Body and Paint, Harvest CROPS has been able to continue with its many challenges. We were literally saved from having to permanently suspend all future services.

The minivan’s right suspension bar snapped without warning. Without delay and cost, Mr. Garfias found and installed the pair. The fear of continuing to load 30 to 40 buckets (600 lbs.) of fruit, created a dilemma. Speedway Auto Body and Paint then found and installed a hitch, a needed part as a long-term solution. Mr. Garfias then graciously created our current designed hauling trailer, a wonderful and much needed permanent contribution.



Free without charge, the repairs, hitch plus installation and a haul-trailer, immensely allowed Harvest CROPS to service our community. Occasionally Mr. Garfias continues to assist with minor repairs when the need arises. Recently a referral from Mr. Garfias confirmed having to replace the radiator. I had to pay a specialist 430 dollars. The trust and support from Speedway Auto Body and Paint is a wonderful and continuous gift of support.

One phone call leads to another. Eventually introductions were exchanged at our first county "Fresh Fruit" meeting. Collaboration was the key topic. We are not alone. Collaborative gleaners are listed on our "Resource" web page. The Hunger Coalition along with Feeding America San Diego have extended their services with Fresh Fruit Feeding San Diego, Seniors Gleaners of San Diego, Backyard Produce Project, San Diego Roots, Carlsbad CropSwap, San Diego Food Trader and ours. None offer financial support. We assist one another only with referrals and guidance. One possible idea is an 800 phone number for all organizations. Putting all available resources on one table is a team effort. We can now refer callers to north county gleaners. In return, we receive referrals for the east county. With our very-limited budget, we have returned to our east county and local callers. We are grateful to Judy Jacob, director and coordinator of the La Mesa Community Garden, for having initially contacted me, together with others, bringing together our new network and collaborative team.



Receiving and providing is a beautiful experience when it all comes together. , Because of team support, an October Vista harvest, our 5th trip where we average 80-plus buckets (2,000 pounds of oranges) was a success. An emailed routine notice received a reply the next day. UCSD Tzu Chi

Collegiate Association, a non-profit Buddhist organization, was excited about the opportunity. Their team leader stated, "We so glad we found you...it's difficult to schedule our group (40 +) to volunteer all at once..." The timing was perfect for all groups to participate. Myrna Pascual from Fresh Fruit Feeding San Diego met and received the UCSD students in Vista. When the Lemon Grove group arrived, Myrna had finished her safety and expectation presentation, gathered the completed forms, and presented the group over to us, ready for the caravan to continue onto the house. Together we had 45 volunteers, picking 40 plus trees, and collecting 93 full buckets of oranges within two hours. Everyone had a great time. Lori and her daughter, with her personal pickup helped make the complete delivery possible. The delivery of oranges was delivered to a refugee support organization for the East County Chaldean Community. Volunteer team work made "Picked to be brought. Don't drop and rot" a success.

This year alone, we surpassed our previous record of picking and delivering. We drove over 1,600 miles, paying close to \$400 in gasoline expenses. In return, we collected and delivered about 16,860 pounds of fresh residential fruit, such as oranges, grapefruit, tangerines, lemons, grapes and pears. At a fair market value of 75 cents a pounds, we delivered about \$12,700 worth that would otherwise "drop and rot." Families and seniors benefit from our generosity.



2011, like every year, has been worth the mileage when harvesting residential fruit trees. With gasoline cost alone, the ratio expense is \$1 paid for \$32 worth, picked and delivered—all given to low-income families and seniors. The owner of the minivan paid from his personal pocket over \$600 for vehicle repairs, such as brakes and a radiator replacement, a ratio of \$1 to \$21. Altogether, with administration expenses, an estimated ratio expense would be \$1 paid to \$27

worth picked, collected and delivered. Overall with the current price of gasoline falling, driving the time and distance is worth the volunteer work. On our third year completion, Harvest CROPS is very sustainable and achievable as a win for everyone, residents providing permission, volunteers picking and transporting, low-income families and seniors appreciating greatly the donation and businesses providing tax-deduction donations.

Administration expenses are few, yet vital for our vision: from a simple phone call, email or text message, to receive seasonal appointments so we can harvest and deliver. Our web page is a perfect example. Our email link had to be replaced with an online form. This one switch alone



eliminated spam. A great service, the email forms are provided free from www.emailmeform.com. Cox's Internet pulled its residential-package free web space. Scrambling for a free substitute, free web space (without 3rd party banner advertisements) is a service of the past. Our yearly expenses added 105 dollars to sustain our webpage. Immediate to wireless service, internet service is crucial for network productivity; although, cyber space can never be substituted for friendly representatives at a display table-booth.

Harvest CROPS' 2012 goals are the development and creation of:

- **A mobile display booth for public presentations**
- **An independent California 501(c)(3) tax-exempt ID**

Resident's phone calls are currently received and scheduled for harvests. Volunteers are ready to meet, pick and deliver fruit. Communities are beginning to recognize the significant benefits of our mission, sharing their experiences and encouraging others. All that is currently missing is a budget.



For the past three years, under the generous and gracious support of St John of the Cross Parish of Lemon Grove, Steve Brown, director of St John Youth Group, has been tremendous with his support as an individual and group leader. Regardless of the success, understandably, the church and youth group cannot sustain Harvest CROPS financially on its budget. Under the umbrella of the church's 501(c)(3) status, Harvest CROPS needs to "seed" into its own independent identity, encouraging and inviting all faiths to support our mission, feeding low-income families and seniors with residential fruit, that would otherwise "drop and rot." The challenge is start-up financial support.

When Harvest CROPS is given a presentation opportunity, the results is mostly a show of hands requesting to pick at their homes or of a neighbor's. Our position is never to ask, let alone imply a fee. This encourages the public—especially seniors—to call without hesitation. Harvest CROPS will never fund raise with picked fruit, avoiding any association or suspicion of

selling. To imply or present the fruit as if it's for sale will never happen. All is transported to food shelters, so they can provide the fresh-picked residential fruit free to low-income families and seniors.

Donations for a mobile display-booth for public presentations such as street fairs and annual events will be greatly appreciated. This will allow us a jumpstart into "marketing" our concept into financially supporting Harvest CROPS. We're looking for one corporation, small business or individual philanthropist—all three are welcomed—to financially support us with tax-deduction donations as we continue to grow. To receive a constant financial resource, hence providing a tax-relief deduction, together for the benefit of others, we can provide fresh residential fruit—seasonally. "Drop and rot" fruit should be an attitude of the past.



Whether it is one small tangerine tree in Lemon Grove, forty medium orange trees in Vista, or 120 large lemon trees in Rancho Santa Fe, Harvest CROPS relies on the commitment of volunteers and tax-deduction contributions to make our mission possible. Whether it is driving around one block or round-trip 90 miles in a caravan of seven vehicles, Harvest CROPS is very grateful for all your support. Whether it's two volunteers for one tree or 45 for 100, Harvest CROPS is dependent on all who give their time to make a difference. If it is five dollars or

five thousands, Harvest CROPS provides low-income families and seniors with residential fruit that otherwise "drop and rot" at a very low-cost expenses ratio.

I personally like to give special thanks to volunteers who have been faithfully with us:



- My wife, Jaquelina and children, Abdon, Rosa and Antonio
- Lori Avalos and her daughter Marissa
- Joe Noriega, proprietor of Tile Man Company
- Richard Mata, of Speedway Auto Body and Paint
- Orin Bolden of Lemon Grove
- Magi Newport-Meyers of Lemon Grove
- Jorge Dashevsky of St John Youth Group
- Erick Espinoza and Family of Spring Valley
- Dan Heilbrun of Fresh Fruit For San Diego

Many thanks to the business and individual who have contributed:

Adline Siv of Yum-Yum Donuts, Jamacha Rd and Cardiff St
 Janet M. Lancaster of Advertisement on Flyer
 Mr. & Mrs. Oscar Padilla of San Diego
 Zephyr Carlyle of Vista
 Sarah & Robert Clay of Jamul
 Erlene & Ishmael Johnson Family of San Diego
 The Home Depot of Lemon Grove on Broadway & Buena Vista Ave
 Food-4-Less on Broadway and West Street
 City of Lemon Grove, Grove Gazette Editor
 St John of the Cross Youth Group
 SDSU Students Nutrition Organization Volunteers

The Numbers:

2010	2011	Comparison	Results
26	40	21%	Houses visited
145	232	23%	Trees picked
1,837	1,627	- 6%	Miles Traveled Total
586	843	18%	Current Grand Total of five-gallon buckets picked
11,720	16,860	18%	Pounds total average (20 lbs. average per bucket)
\$8,790	\$12,645	\$10,718	Market Value Average at .75 cents per pound
\$428.63	\$338.96	- 12%	Gasoline Expense Total
\$338	\$316	\$327.1	Per Visit Market Value Average picked
\$16.49	\$8.47	- 32%	Per Visit Gasoline Expense
71	41	- 27%	Per Visit Average Distant Traveled
8	7	- 6%	Per Visit Volunteers Average

Total Donations Received:

Equipment \$ 30.00*

Cash: \$ 410

Purchase Expenses:

Gasoline \$ 338

Stock paper \$ 15

Ink Jet \$ 60

Bottle water \$ 20

Hitch Wiring \$ 40

Sub Total: - \$ 473

Vehicle Expenses:

Brakes \$ 40

Radiator \$ 420

Sub Total: \$ 460 (50% usage only →) - \$ 230

Grand Total Expenses: - \$ 703

Out of Pocket Difference Paid: - \$ 293

* One Harvest Pole



Sponsored by
St. John of the Cross Youth Group
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www.harvestcrops.org