



MILL CITY GROWS

Annual Report | 2016



2017 Board of Directors

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CFO, Microdesk/M2 Technologies

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Director of Residential Programming, Bridgewell

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Community Volunteer

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Consultant, Jocelyn Bishop Consulting

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Director of Campus Planning and Development,
University of Massachusetts Lowell

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Lowell Community Health Center

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Master Gardener/Volunteer

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Director of Real Estate, Coalition for a Better Acre

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Teacher, Lowell Public Schools

JOHN WOODING
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Professor of Political Science,
University of Massachusetts Lowell

2017 Staff

FRANCEY SLATER Founding Co-Director

LYDIA SISSON Founding Co-Director

Food Access Team

DAI KIM Mobile Market Manager

KARL GOETHERT Urban Farm Manager

ALEXANDRA GREENE Farm & Market Apprentice

JOSEPH KAPUSANSKY Farm & Education Apprentice

BRIAN MARIANO Farm & Market Apprentice

Food Education Team

VAL SNOWDON Director of Education Programs

LAURA SANTIAGO Community Program Manager

FELICIA PINTO Community Food Educator

GIULIANA CAPPUCCI Food-Corps Service Member

HANNAH CORBIN MassLift AmeriCorps Service Member

TIM SHUGRUE MassLift Community Engagement Coordinator

ENRIQUE VARGAS MassLift Community Engagement
Coordinator

Admin Team

SUZANNE CROMWELL Marketing & Publicity Coordinator

GALLAGHER HANNAN Operations & Project Manager

JESSICA MOORE WILSON Development Manager

4 NICHOLS Facilities & Construction Coordinator





MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

Dear Mill City Grows’ friends and supporters,

After joining the Mill City Grows’ board in 2015 as Treasurer, I was honored to take on the role of Board President this year to lead MCG through our next chapter of growth.

At the start of 2016, the Board made commitments to focus our attention on building the financial stability of Mill City Grows while planning for strategic growth. We celebrated MCG’s 5th year of building food justice in Lowell by hosting a series of events with food, friends, and fun at their core. The goal of these events was not only to raise funds, but also to build new relationships with those who had not yet heard of MCG.

We also began a strategic planning process which will be completed in 2017 and will provide a map for sustainable growth in the future. With the support of friends new and old, I look forward to seeing what the future brings.

DARREN END

MESSAGE FROM THE CO-DIRECTORS

Dear MCG Family,

When we formed Mill City Grows in 2011, we envisioned an organization that would help Lowellians access land and local food, making residents and neighborhoods healthier in the process. To date, we’ve worked with nearly 15,000 people in Lowell and we are humbled by your support of our vision.



In 2011, we knew Lowell’s residents wanted and needed more healthy food. As we have grown, the demand for our programs has left us both surprised and elated. We have seen the impact of these programs in our program participants. We met a father who found relief from diabetes through eating garden fresh foods. We met a student who had her first taste of zucchini in one of our workshops. We met parents who learned how to make dishes for their children that were healthy and delicious. We witnessed gardens transform vacant lots into community hubs where residents with seemingly little in common forged bonds and built stronger neighborhoods. We served customers who finally could get fresh greens in their neighborhood, without having to hire a cab to get to a grocery store.

We are so grateful for the people who have touched our lives, and we are privileged to play a role in yours. It is our honor to help you feed your family, and to know that we are making it possible for all of Lowell to live healthier, tastier lives.

LYDIA SISSON & FRANCEY SLATER

What We Do

MISSION, VISION AND VALUES

Mill City Grows' mission is to improve physical health, economic independence and environmental sustainability in Lowell through increased access to land, locally grown food and education.

We pursue this mission through the following strategies and programs: education both in and out of schools, supporting community leadership through community gardens, increasing urban agriculture in Lowell through two urban farms, implementing a mobile market, and empowering people to produce their own food. MCG's two main program areas are Food Access and Food Education. Our work in Food Justice is rooted in the idea that a well-educated and connected community will make healthier choices.

FOOD ACCESS

The **Urban Farm** boasts two sites totaling four acres. In 2016 we had 2 acres in production. Produce is sold via our Mobile Market or donated to area food pantries.

The **Mobile Market** is a food hub delivering local produce, meat, dairy and value-added products to Lowell neighborhoods that lack full-service grocery stores. In 2016 we made 9 stops per week across the city. We provide discounts to customers paying with SNAP, WIC, and Senior Coupons to ensure this food is accessible to all.

Our **Community Gardens** include 5 gardens with 162 garden beds serving more than 400 individuals. Gardeners produce about 85 pounds of produce per bed.



LEARNING ABOUT FOOD JUSTICE AT THE URBAN FARM

Over the summer, we met Brendon and Macayla, two young Lowell residents who found their work at Mill City Grows to be more than just a job. Brendon, a 25-year-old college grad born and raised in Lowell, made a living delivering pizza until he joined the Mill City Grows Farm Team. Macayla, who graduated from Lowell High this May, joined Mill City Grows as part of J-Squad, a food justice summer employment program for youth offered by Mill City Grows in partnership with the Career Center of Lowell.

Before working with Mill City Grows, neither Brendon nor Macayla had any farming experience, nor were they aware of any urban farms in Lowell. They spent the summer working at our Urban Farms and Mobile Markets, sharing stories, recipes, and their passion for healthy food access with every volunteer, visitor, and market-goer they met!



Brendon loved working at the Mobile Market, seeing residents from all walks of life excited to purchase MCG produce. That was one of the experiences that made him truly proud of his work. “Sometimes there are customers who don’t speak any English, and so we communicate through the food. Food is really what brings people together, and everyone can see that we’re here to serve them.”

Brendon and Macayla worked with hundreds of volunteers and MCG program participants, and even brought some of their lessons home. Brendon shared veggies with his family all season. “Next year I want a garden in my own yard,” he states, “where I can grow fresh herbs, scallions, kale, and tomatoes for my family.” Now pursuing a degree in environmental studies at Middlesex Community College, Macayla joined Mill City Grows’ West 3rd Community Garden near her home, and has integrated more produce into her diet by experimenting with recipes she’s learned from MCG staff. She enrolled in the 2017 Garden Coordinator Institute because as she put it, “I want to help out because I am a leader. That means I have a responsibility to help others and be there when they need me.”

Through their experiences at Mill City Grows, Brendon and Macayla have ignited their passion for local food, community, and sustainable living. They’ve transformed their lives, and have shown us that changing the food system does indeed happen by planting seeds in the soil and in the minds and lives of those around us.

What We Do

FOOD EDUCATION

The **Garden Coordinator Institute** leads 25+ participants through a 7-session leadership course, sharing technical gardening skills and leadership skills. Graduates serve as volunteer garden leaders within their community and school gardens.

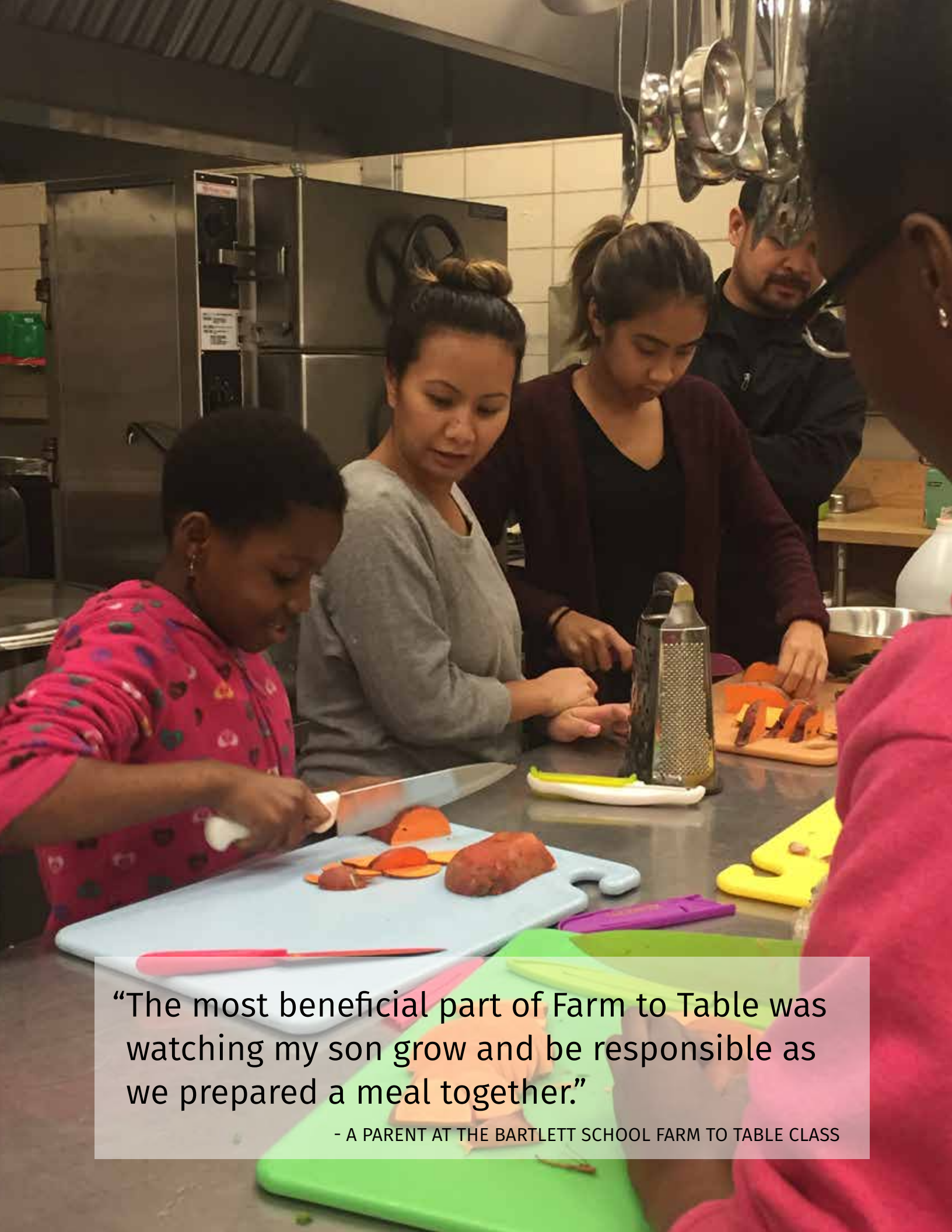
The **Gardener Training Program** consists of 14 year-round experiential workshops, and a community wide seed swap. 341 people attended these events in 2016 and learned how to grow organic food safely.

The **Volunteer and Youth Food Justice Programs** give youth and adults opportunities to plant and harvest food and learn about food justice. In 2016, 812 individuals participated in farm volunteer-ism and hands-on programming.

Our **School Based Programs** bring gardening and nutrition education to over 8,000 students in Lowell Public Schools each year through in-school, after-school and out-of-school programs. Through this program, we have built 12 school gardens in partnership with Lowell Public Schools and provided professional development to teachers who use the gardens in their classrooms.

Farm to Table is a series of classes designed to teach the whole family how to cook delicious and nutritious meals from scratch. Parents and children receive instructions and ingredients to take home and make the meal again.





“The most beneficial part of Farm to Table was watching my son grow and be responsible as we prepared a meal together.”

- A PARENT AT THE BARTLETT SCHOOL FARM TO TABLE CLASS

2016 IMPACT



URBAN FARM



24,157 pounds grown

with the help of 414 volunteers.

SCHOOL BASED PROGRAMS



8,590 kids learned about nutrition and gardening at 12 school gardens.

394 youth participated in our summer Youth Food Justice Program.

COMMUNITY GARDENS



Of the 162 families involved in our program

31% are eating more vegetables on a weekly basis.

46% report increasing their weekly physical activity.

78% spend more time outdoors.

38% increased the frequency of home cooking.

FARM TO TABLE CLASSES



113 participants.

Cooked 608 pounds of food and made 38 new healthy, vegetable rich meals.

MOBILE MARKET



\$68,238 in sales

19% of all sales to SNAP, WIC, and Senior Farmers' Market Coupon users



TESTIMONIALS FROM THE FIELD

“A customer at Mobile Market bought some husk cherries to share with her colleagues. The next week she told me that she works with a man who is originally from Vietnam, who used to forage for husk cherries as a kid, and hadn’t seen them since. The customer gave the rest of her husk cherries to him to share with his kids at home, though she was back to buy more the following week.”

– Mobile Market staff



“We came back in from doing our math class in the garden which was right in-line with our curriculum about measuring in centimeters and counting by 10s. We were getting ready to go out for dismissal and the kids started saying, “But we never did math today!” I explained to them that what we did in the garden was math. They didn’t even realize it! They just thought they were having fun, and yet they were applying everything they learned in the classroom in the garden.”

–Mrs. Bergeron, 2nd grade teacher, Lincoln Elementary School.

“Being part of a group of different people helped to remind me that not everyone thinks alike. I now realize that no matter our personalities, we all have something to add to a group. I’ll be less apt to judge someone or think we can’t see eye to eye simply because we have different styles or personalities.”

– Garden Coordinator Institute Graduate & Current Garden Leader



Financial Statements

YEAR IN REVIEW

Mill City Grows' goal is to provide robust food justice programming for Lowell with a lean and efficient budget. MCG was formed in 2011 under the fiscal sponsorship of the YWCA of Lowell. In 2015, MCG became an independent 501(c)3 non-profit, as recognized by the IRS. The following figures are taken from our audited financial statements from calendar year 2016.

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITY

Revenue

Grants and Contributions	\$622,816
Special Events	\$82,546
Produce Sales	\$47,328
In-kind Contributions	\$14,389
Educational Programs	\$12,936
Garden Fees	\$3,487
Miscellaneous	\$494

Total Revenue \$783,996

Expenses

Urban Farm	\$109,357
Mobile Market	\$110,450
Community Gardens	\$115,079
Education Programs	\$147,421
Management & General	\$139,132
Fundraising	\$61,870

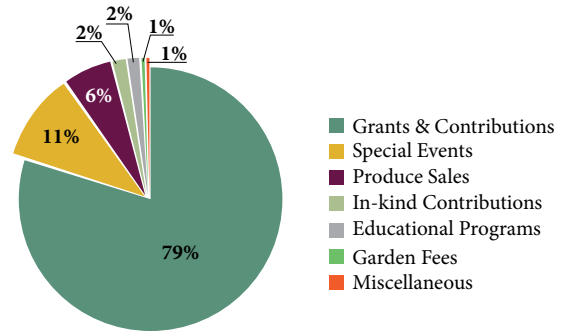
Total Expenses \$683,309

Donations

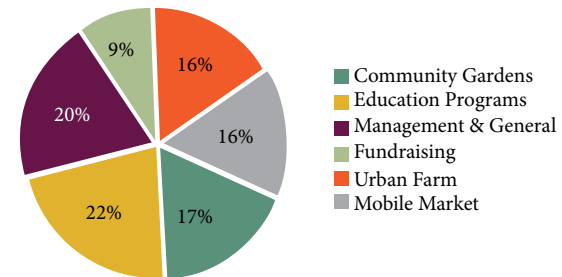
Government Grants	\$229,404
Foundation Grants	\$273,039
Corporate Contributions	\$86,791
Individual Contributions	\$33,582

Total Donations \$622,816

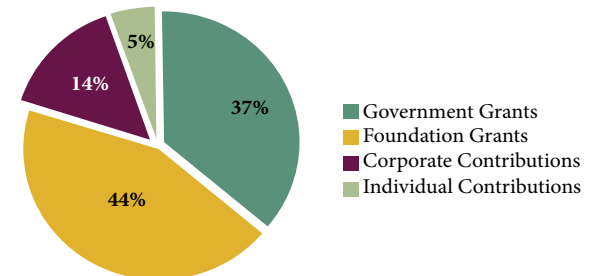
REVENUE



EXPENSES



DONATIONS



Donor Support

PRIVATE FOUNDATIONS

Anonymous
Bank of America Charitable Foundation
Church Home Society
Clif Bar Family Foundation
Cummings Foundation
DCU For Kids
Devonshire Foundation
Richard K. and Nancy L. Donahue Charitable Foundation
Farm Credit Northeast AgEnhancement
The Forest Foundation
Greater Lowell Community Foundation
Greater Lowell Health Alliance
Harvard Pilgrim HealthCare Foundation
Massachusetts Service Alliance
Merck Family Fund
Nathaniel and Elizabeth P. Stevens Foundation
The Philanthropy Connection
Project Bread
The Schrafft Charitable Trust
Sudbury Foundation
The Theodore Edson Parker Foundation
Whole Kids Foundation

BUSINESSES & CORPORATIONS

Align Credit Union
BMC Healthnet Plan
Christ Church United
D'Youville Life & Wellness Community
Digital Credit Union
Eastern Bank
The Edge Group Inc.
Element Care
Enterprise Bank
Farley White Interests
The Flatbread Company
Gallagher & Cavanaugh
Jeanne D'Arc Credit Union
Kronos
Lahey Health
Lowell General Hospital

Market Basket
Microdesk
Middlesex Community College
Plenus Group
Princeton Properties
Red AntlerApothecary
Sage Bank
Seeds of Change
Senior Whole Health
Target Corporation
Trinity EMS
Tufts Health Plan Foundation
UMass Lowell
Washington Savings Bank
Watermark
Whole Foods Market
Woodard & Curran
YWCA of Lowell

INDIVIDUALS & FAMILY FOUNDATIONS

Anonymous
Claire Abrams
Alexa Adams
Connie and Rob Adams
Robin and Rhys Adams
Virginia Adams and Diane Johns
Christine Ahearn
Annette Alexander
Elizabeth Almeida
Elizabeth Ambe
Ellen Andre
Sue Andrews and Becky Warren
Milagros Applebee
Lisa and Charles Arnold
Leeann Atkinson
Elaine Aubin and Gerald Loyack
Rosemary and Peter Aucella
Michael Auclair
Melanie Audy
Adam Baacke and Stephen Laput
Anna Barker
Linda Barrington



John Bauer
 Donna Besecker and John Walsh
 Szifra Birke
 Douglas Bishop
 Jocelyn and Bob Bishop
 Amy and Adrien Bisson
 Nicole Blute
 Tom Bo
 Katherine Bradbury and Philip Moss
 Michael Breda
 Cyndie and John Breen
 Cate Brennan
 Carolyn Breton
 Beatrice Brown
 Rosemary Brown
 Angel and Mike Brunelle
 Jennifer Brunelle
 Jim Brunelle and Brian Smith
 Melissa Burgio
 Patricia Burke
 Ann Buskey
 Randi Bussin
 Shannon Butler-Mokoro and Julius Mokoro
 Michelle Cabrera
 Deb Callery
 Elaine Caltabiano/Schneider and Frederick Schneider
 Jane Calvin
 Emma and Gary Campbell
 Nicholas Cappucci
 Jill Carmen
 Linda and Jeff Carney
 Paula Carr
 Joe Carreiro
 Ellen and Frank Casazza
 Marcia Cassidy
 Anthony Cavaliere
 Stephen Cerand
 Rachel Chandler and Rick Stec
 Carole and Alex Chanler
 Julie Chen
 Jennifer Chesnulovitch
 Christine Chisholm
 Yun-Ju Choi
 Stephanie Church
 Hilary Clark
 Sarah Cleaver
 Martha Cohn
 Carlos Colon
 Denise and Tim Conry
 Michael Conway
 Carolyn and Phillip Copelas
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 Carolyn Cox
 Rebecca and Ed Cox
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 Kirstin Curley
 Marla and Larry Curtis
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 Cynthia DeSando
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 Kirsten and Peter Doherty
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 Carol and George Duncan
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 Fred Faust
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 Collette Ferola
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 Jack Flynn
 Judy Foley
 Roshia Forman and Caleb Hurst-Hiller
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 Louisa French and Adam Scharff
 Leia Friedman
 Todd Fry
 Barbara Gagel
 Shelagh Galvin



Julia Gavin
Kerry and Dave Gavin
Meg Gavin
Diane and Chris Geggis
Kate and Steve Gendron
Sarah Golding and Robb White
Kimberly and Rick Goldstein
Crystal and Chip Gonsalves
Brenda and Perry Gould
Marilyn Graham
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Elizabeth Guttenplan
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Mary L. and Frank Hart
John Hartigan
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Craig Himmelberger
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Nancy Houghton
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Bonnie and Joseph Hungler
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Rebecca Hutcheon
Kim Sarith
Analissa Iversen
Vicky Jasper
Steve Jean
Stephanie Jeloe
Holly Johnson

Steve Joncas
Kelly Joy
Zenub Kakli and Jimmy Woolman
Terri Karpel
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Kei Kawashima-Ginsberg
Kerri Keeler
Mary Lou Keenan
Elizabeth Kegley
Priscilla and Nathan Keliher
Alana Kelley
KI KI
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Felice Kincannon
Jill King
Sheila Kirschbaum
Cynthia and Eliot Klein
Joanna Kleinschmidt
Roberta Klix
Sodany Krouch
Charles Krueger
Jenna Kuhn
Sarah Kuhn
Lianna Kushi and Sovanna Pouv
Aenoy Lakmany
Barbara Lallas
Sheila Lasell
Jonathan Lathrop
James Lathrop
Ko Ko Lay
Eileen Lees
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Janice Lind
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Elayne Loving
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Michele Mackenzie
Suzanne Maher
Tanya Mahoney
Marie Marchand
Bridget Marshall and Jake Bridge
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Tess and Tony Marts
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Martha Mayo
Christine McCall
Susan McCracken



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Nancy McGovern
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Carolyn Meklenburg
Joshua Midgett
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Susan and Paul Miller
William Miller
Jennifer Millett-Barrett
Susan Mitchell and Jim Waldo
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Jennifer Moore
Jessica Moore Wilson and Peter Moore
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Kathleen Moynihan
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Leah O'Sullivan
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Saody Ouch
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Muriel Parseghian
Scott Pelletier
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Ashley Peterson
Mark Peterson
Bernie Petruzzello
Sophan Phin

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Paulette Renault-Caragianes
Valerie Rice and Vince Sisko
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Coleman Rogers
Tahani Roman
Kristin Ross-Sitcawich
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Eric Rudisaile
Kayla Ruiz
Kelly Rusch
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Hans Santos
Leslie Santos
Sophia Santos
Patricia Sawyer
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Kristin and Jake Scott
Emma Scudder
Keelyn and David Sebeny
Karen Sennott
Melissa Sennott
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Janelle Sherburne
D. Claire Shugrue
Kelsea Shugrue
Tim Silva
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Lydia Sisson and Derek Mitchell
Regana and John Sisson
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Jeanne and Gil Slater
Robert Slezak
Martha Sloane



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Derek SooHoo
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Kristina St. Cyr
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Michael Therrien
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Vilma Thomas
Joslyn Thompson
Vighoti Tifah
Jennie Tim
Brendan Toolin
Laura Torres
Lyneth and King Torres
Mary Torres
Orlando Torres
Raul Torres
Moustapha Toure
Diane Tradd
Dahvy Tran and Vandoeun Pech
Angelica Tringale
Samantha Tucker and Jim Foster
Linda Uch
Tooch Van
Kerri and Sergio Velazquez
Janet and Chris Vincze
Asa Wagner
Christy and David Waller
Ryan Walls
Carolyn Walsh and Jack Moynihan
Pamela Wamala and Kevin Staid
April White
Jenifer Whitten-Woodring and Carleton Woodring
Jim Wilde
Carol and John Wilson
Carolyn Wilson
Jean and Will Winslow
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Susu Wong
Beverly Woods
Nancy and Mike Wormwood
Juliane Wright
Gary Yin
Sue Zacharer





Growing A Healthy Community.



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