

THANK YOU!



MORE THAN FOOD

Bearing witness to a child's fight for life

She first came through the food line in January 2024, just another **sweet little girl choosing vegetables with her mother**. But in February, I noticed something odd—her lips were the color of bruises. Maybe a purple popsicle, I thought. Weeks later, she was back. Her entire complexion was dusky—**something was unmistakably wrong**.

I asked my colleagues to check in with her mother. The truth was devastating: the four-year-old, newly arrived from Guatemala, was gravely ill. Without documentation or insurance, her family had nowhere to turn. Through local partners, she was taken to the nearest hospital, 40 miles away, then transferred to Miami. **Tests confirmed a serious heart condition**. But without legal status, she couldn't access the full care she needed.

The cycle began—**weeks in and out of hospitals, receiving only emergency treatment**. In December, she had brain surgery. Her mother confided that her father had been detained, likely deported. The hospital in Miami does what it can, but there is no path to the care she truly needs.

Several weeks ago, we saw her again. I knelt beside her, placed a teddy bear in her arms, and watched her face light up. A small gesture in the face of something enormous. It has now been a few weeks since we have seen her.

Being present is more than handing out food. It is seeing. It is standing beside someone in their suffering. It is refusing to look away. And because of your support, we can be there—not just to offer food, but to witness, to listen, to share in the weight of these moments. I would give her the world if I could. In reality, I could only give her this: my presence, my attention, my refusal to look away. **And because of you, we are there.**



FROM THE DIRECTOR

**You
make a
difference!**



Ellen Burnette
Executive Director

The face of immigration is not a statistic—it's a mother who left Guatemala seeking safety and a future for her children. It's a father, his hands calloused from picking tomatoes, sending every extra dollar home. It's a child navigating two languages, balancing dreams with the weight of sacrifice.

In Immokalee, immigration looks like resilience. It's the farmworkers who rise before dawn to harvest food they can barely afford. It's the quiet strength of those who endure, who build community, and who, despite barriers, cultivate hope.

We see these faces every Friday—Haitian, Mexican, and Guatemalan neighbors coming for fresh fruits, vegetables, and herbs that taste like home.

Immigration is not just policy; it is people. And your support ensures these people—our neighbors—are seen, valued, and fed. By growing, collecting, and sharing food, we stand with them. And because of you, we can do so much more.

The face of immigration is the face of our community—diverse, determined, and deserving of dignity.

Thank you for being part of this story. Thank you for making a difference.

Ellen Burnette



Thanks to you....

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21 tons of fresh, culturally preferred food was grown, collected, and shared in 2024!



Over the last year dozens of Immokalee residents came together to highlight, exchange, and celebrate local, healthy culinary knowledge and traditions.



Friendships and community flourish.

A HARVEST OF HOPE

3

The impact of your support



In the heart of Immokalee, where farmworkers labor tirelessly to feed America, **Yasmin has found a small refuge in the Misión Peniel garden.** As a volunteer, she has spent hours tending to the soil, growing food that nourishes her family and others in need. In January alone, she dedicated 13 hours to the garden—an impressive commitment for a mother of two small children.

Yasmin and her family live in a tiny, cramped house—one of many owned by a local slumlord who has callously referred to his tenants as “animals.” Her husband, a farmworker, was arrested for driving without a valid license and forced to wear an ankle monitor. He complied with every requirement, faithfully reporting to the sheriff’s office—until last month, when, without warning, he was taken into custody. His fate remains uncertain.

Just days before his arrest, **Cultivate Abundance had shared a container garden set with Yasmin’s family, offering a small source of fresh food and self-reliance.** Now, without her husband’s income, she faces mounting challenges. Food assistance has become a necessity, and the burden of rent in their deteriorating home grows heavier.



This same spirit of resilience and generosity was evident when Estella, another garden volunteer and farmworker, arrived at Misión Peniel on a Friday evening after harvesting peppers all day. By the time she got there, every bag of produce had already been distributed. Even though she left empty-handed, **she gifted us with two large peppers—proof that in Immokalee, sharing is a way of life, even for those with little to give.**

Thanks to donors like you, Cultivate Abundance was able to provide more food, resources, and opportunities for families like Yasmin’s and Estella’s in 2024. Last year **over 41,000 pounds of culturally preferred produce reached up to 1,000 people each week.** Community gardens grew, more residents gained access to food-growing resources, and over 200 volunteers helped sustain and strengthen the mission.



But the **true impact of your generosity isn’t tracked in numbers**—it’s found in moments like these. It’s in Yasmin’s determination to keep providing for her children, in Estella’s quiet act of giving, and in the resilience of an entire community that refuses to let hardship define them.

Even in struggle, kindness prevails. And as long as we stand together, the work of growing, collecting, and sharing will continue—one harvest, one meal, one shared gift at a time.

Thank you for being part of this mission. **Your support is not just feeding people; it is sustaining hope and extending witness.**

Cultivate Abundance addresses the urgent issue of food insecurity among those who grow and harvest our food.

2024 IMPACT

1

Growing Food

The Cultivate Abundance team grows nutritious food that reflects the cultural preferences of the Immokalee farmworker community. Our dedicated team is committed to cultivating a wide variety of fresh produce to share in Immokalee.

Collecting Food

We cultivate the involvement of scores of small-scale food-producing partners from across the region who donate culturally preferred nutritious food.

3

Sharing Food

Every Friday, Cultivate Abundance and partners share food grown and collected with hundreds of Immokalee residents, benefiting at least 1,000 people weekly. It's a weekly celebration of unity and good food.

Preserving Food Tradition, Promoting Home Gardening

Our team facilitates frequent training and exchange opportunities related to home gardening and household nutrition.

4

102
Tons of fresh food grown, collected, and shared since 2018



650,000
Servings of food shared since 2018



500-1000
People receiving food each week



5
Cultivate Abundance managed gardens



11
Institutional partner gardens/farms




33
Home Gardeners



8
Community radio broadcasts



113
Nutritious plant varieties grown



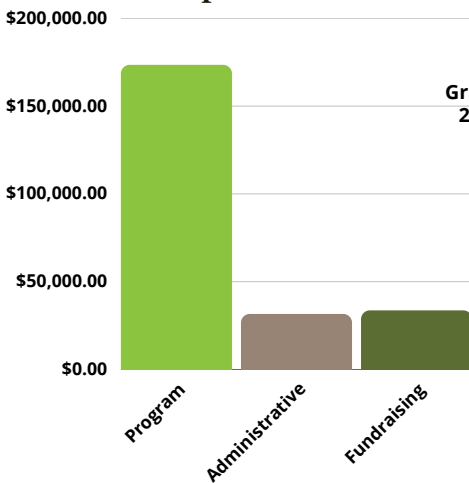
204
Volunteers



24
Varieties of essential open-pollinated seeds were cultivated and saved



2024 Expenses



2024 Income Sources

