



LET'S CREATE A BETTER WORLD

GROUNDWORK CENTER FOR RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

ANNUAL REPORT 2022



LET'S CREATE A BETTER WORLD.



ne of the greatest joys of my career has been being surrounded by people—supporters, board members, staff, and partners—who not only believe a better world is possible, but who also resolutely act to make that possibility real.

As I look back on our accomplishments in 2022, I see such affirming evidence that all great change begins with that belief in a better world.

For me, the clearest example from our work this year is the state legislature and Governor Whitmer approving \$9.3 million for 10 Cents a Meal for Michigan's Kids & Farms. Now more than a million children can benefit from funds designated to purchase locally grown, nutrient-dense foods for their school meals. We piloted the program in three schools a decade ago, funded by private donors. Now food advocates around the nation look to this program as a model. Let's keep making possibilities real.

Here are a few more top-line accomplishments from our 2022.

- ☀ Secured \$2.3 million in state and federal funding for the next essential study for the north-south passenger rail
- ☀ Completed sixth annual Advocate Academy, totaling 66 graduates trained to make good change in their neighborhoods.
- ☀ Participated in statewide transportation policy efforts to bring more transportation choices to Michigan residents
- ☀ Hosted the largest-yet Michigan Climate & Clean Energy Summit, with 500 attendees
- ☀ Partnered to help 18 families afford to buy home solar arrays in Petoskey in a group-buy discount program
- ☀ Continued to push for Line 5 climate impacts to be considered in tunnel permit applications
- ☀ Completed construction of the Esperance Community Teaching Kitchen to spread skills and knowledge of local-food cooking throughout the community. The kitchen connects to our new office
- ☀ Sustained momentum in purchasing locally grown food for pantries and meal sites
- ☀ Provided mini-grants to 26 sites—schools, farms, pantries, and more—to build local food access and infrastructure at the community level

With gratitude for the better world you bring,

HANS VOSS

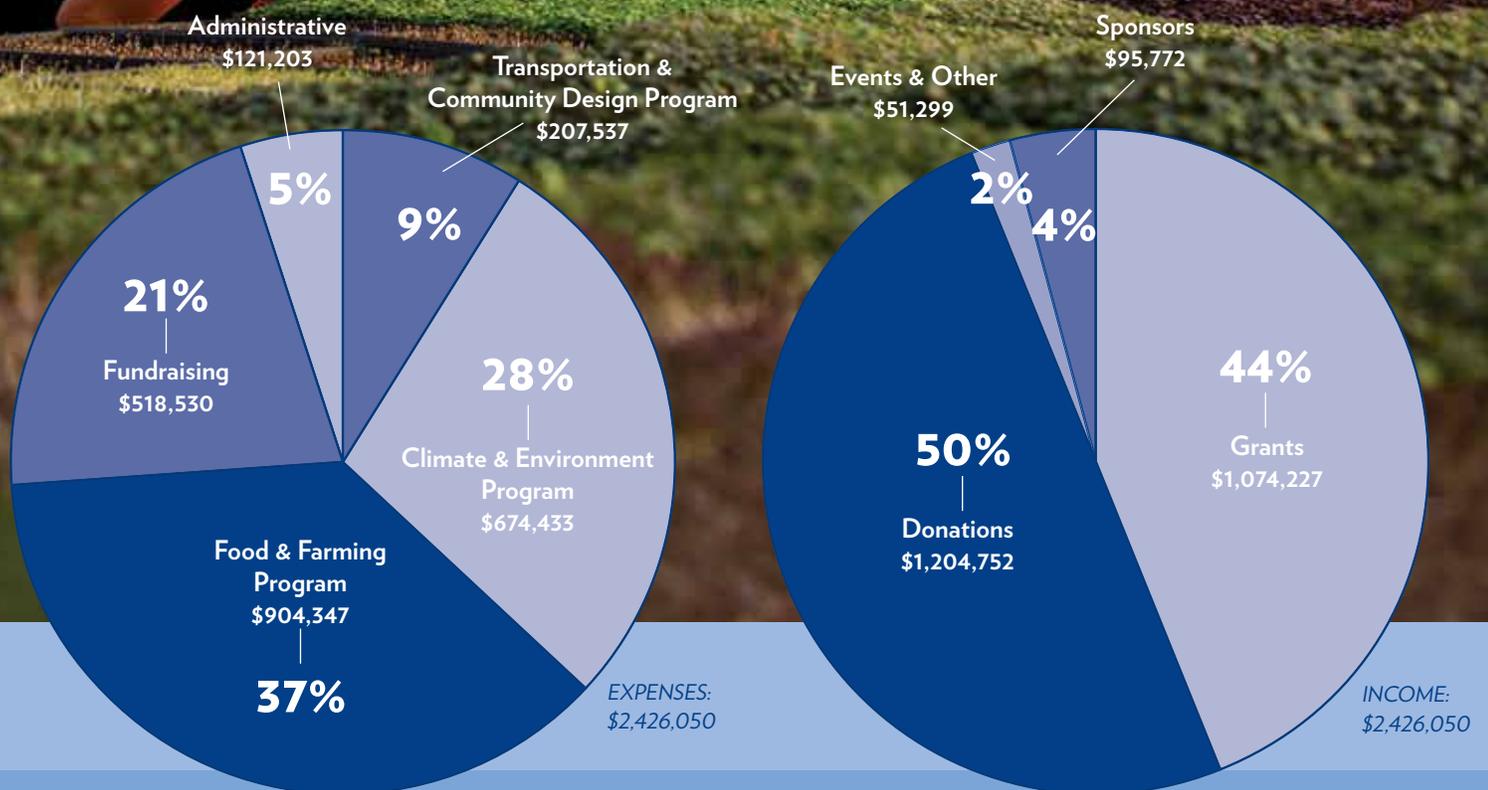
Groundwork Executive Director



⌆ Tony Vu, chef, entrepreneur,
⌆ local food activist, admiring
microgreens at Lakeview
Hill Farm.

<<< On the cover:
Tatum Hendrickson tending
tomato vines at Lakeview
Hill Farm.

— Photos by Beth Price



TREASURER'S STATEMENT

Throughout 2022, the Groundwork Center for Resilient Communities remained financially strong. Thanks to the support of thousands of generous individual donors, corporate sponsors, and foundations, Groundwork has continued to deepen and expand its work. Sustained giving has allowed our key programs in Transportation & Community Design, Food & Farming, and Climate & Environment to grow and expand well into the coming years. Your gifts have also allowed the staff to move the office into the new Commongrounds Cooperative development project on Traverse City's Eighth Street. Thanks to your support, Groundwork continues to focus on our strategic initiatives of Protecting the Environment, Strengthening the Economy and Building Community.

— John Bercini, Treasurer

*Fiscal year ending September 30, 2022.



1

set of comments submitted to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to make the case that climate impact must be considered in the Line 5 tunnel permitting process.

18

families were able to purchase solar arrays through a group buy program in Petoskey.

500

advocates attended the Michigan Climate and Clean Energy Summit.

CLIMATE & ENVIRONMENT

For Michigan and the nation, 2022 was one of the most momentous years yet in the transition to an equitable clean energy economy. In the Mitten, the governor's office put out the Mi Healthy Climate Plan, the first roadmap to a net-zero carbon economy by 2050. Nationally, Congress passed the first big bill to stop global warming, which included \$370 billion to fund all manner of projects. All of which means Groundwork's climate work is more important than ever, and in 2022, we added important achievements to the state's and nation's progress.

- ☀️ Groundwork and MiCAN teamed up again to plan and host the Michigan Climate & Clean Energy Summit. With 500 attendees—online and in person—the Summit was the largest yet, and shows the momentum that is building for climate action in the state. Presenters ranged from a Nobel Prize-winning climate scientist to neighborhood activists, emphasizing how this work needs to push and succeed in every pocket of our culture.
- ☀️ In Petoskey we partnered with Michigan Interfaith Power & Light to offer a discounted group-buy program that enabled 18 families to purchase solar arrays for their homes. In 2023 we will offer the program again in Petoskey and plan to expand it to Traverse City.
- ☀️ We stayed engaged with Line 5, continuing as an intervenor with Environmental Law & Policy Center to influence the Michigan Public Service Commission's decision on the Line 5 tunnel and also encouraging the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to consider global warming impacts when assessing the environmental impacts of the tunnel.
- ☀️ To encourage young people to register and vote, MiCAN produced a “get out the vote” campaign for the social media platform TikTok, attracting a large audience, especially in the Detroit metro area.
- ☀️ Piloted helping teachers implement hands-on and STEM-based solar energy curriculum at schools in Charlevoix County, with the purpose of expanding the curriculum to other districts.
- ☀️ Guided the Petoskey High School Sustainability Club on its journey to power the school district with 100% clean energy. We helped students present to their school board, proposing a 100% Renewable Energy resolution for the school district (to match the City of Petoskey's 2035 goal). The students also asked the school board to conduct a feasibility study for renewable energy on campus and install a solar array to produce 10% to 20% of the district's energy use to begin the process.

<<< Nicola Philpott, clean energy activist whom Groundwork assisted in raising funds for a solar array at her childrens' school at one time. Solar on schools remains an important part of our climate work.

— Photo by Beth Price





1

Esperance Community
Teaching Kitchen.

\$9.3

million for 10 Cents a Meal
statewide.

68,572

pounds of local food purchased
for pantries and meal sites.

FOOD & FARMING

The local food movement is far more than a culinary transformation that delivers better tasting food (though it is certainly that). For agriculture, locally grown food supports family farms, preserves farmland, and expands sustainable farming practices. For communities, locally grown food improves health, reducing the cost of health care and helping solve the crisis of diet-related disease harming America's children.

Recognizing the multi-faceted transformative power of locally grown food, Groundwork set out two decades ago to advance the local food movement along multiple pathways. In 2022 our Food & Farming team reached several milestones in building a robust and resilient local food economy in Michigan.

- ☀ Were instrumental in passing \$9.3 million in funding for Ten Cents a Meal for Michigan's Kids and Farms, which, when paired with federal match dollars, will invest nearly \$20 million into Michigan's family farm economy and provide access to healthy food for more than a million children statewide in K-12 and Early Care and Education settings.
- ☀ Completed construction of the Esperance Community Teaching Kitchen, in Traverse City, and developed its three-year strategic framework with a community steering committee. Groundwork's focus will be teaching local food cooking skills and nutrition to health care professionals to share with clients. Other community groups, like early childcare providers, employee wellness groups and senior living programs will be invited to teach their communities here as well.
- ☀ Received a three-year Regional Food Systems Partnership award from the United States Department of Agriculture to expand the local food economy in six counties along west Michigan's coast. Work begins in 2023.
- ☀ Continued facilitating purchases of locally grown food for food pantries and meal sites—an innovative initiative in the United States. In 2022, we coordinated 68,572 pounds of food purchased from 14 farms.
- ☀ Completed the first stage of Building Resilient Communities, which increases access to locally grown food by expanding infrastructure with micro-grants. Grants went to 26 sites, including schools, farms, food pantries, an addiction treatment center, and more.
- ☀ Continued partnership with FoodCorps in building schoolwide cultures of health. We again hosted three service members based in our Petoskey office—two in individual schools and one in the Charlevoix-Emmet Intermediate School District, influencing 11 districts.

<<< Garryn Johnson harvesting cucumbers at Loma Farm.

— Photo by Beth Price





66

graduates to date from the Advocate Academy, prepped to make their neighborhoods more livable.

\$2.3

million in state and federal funds for the next required phase of the north-south passenger rail study

64

number of times Groundworkers met with elected officials to discuss how to create better transportation and housing policies.



<<< Smooth, clean, modern trains could serve northern Michigan in coming years if the next study phase is favorable and the project moves forward at the federal level.

— Photo by Jeff Smith

TRANSPORTATION & COMMUNITY DESIGN

Transportation & Community Design advocacy has been a central part of Groundwork since our earliest days as Michigan Land Use Institute, and planning continues to be an essential part of our work. In 2022, Groundwork made headlines by helping secure \$2.3 million in funding for the north-south passenger rail project's next stage study. We also continued to play important roles in community and transportation policy development in less high-profile ways as well. One strategic change we made was deciding to assist in the urgent need to develop affordable housing in Traverse City and other northern Michigan communities.

- ☀ Secured necessary funding from the U.S. Secretary of Transportation to support the next planning phase for the north-south Michigan passenger rail project. The Phase II study will identify necessary equipment and infrastructure upgrades and also develop a business plan for passenger service—updating the project's market and ridership forecasts and laying out the stations and schedule of service.
- ☀ Testified at a Michigan Senate hearing to ensure passenger rail was prioritized in the state's 2023 budget, including support for the next steps of the north-south Michigan passenger rail project.
- ☀ Served in the leadership role and as the northern voice for the Michigan Association of Railroad Passengers—Michigan's leading advocacy organization for passenger rail projects around the state.
- ☀ Continued to participate in Traverse City's transportation planning efforts and continued to elevate the profile of a number of transportation and housing-related issues in and around Traverse City. Groundwork has advocated for policies that support walking, biking and increased transit and other mobility options in Traverse City.
- ☀ Participating in statewide transportation policy efforts that brought together transportation and environmental advocates around the state to identify and support state policy changes that will bring more transportation choices to Michigan residents.
- ☀ Continued the Advocate Academy training program, which helps citizens become better advocates for improving their neighborhoods.
- ☀ Advocated for the advancement of a countywide transit system in Emmet County.
- ☀ Partnered with TART Trails and other organizations to help promote and plan Traverse City's annual Smart Commute Week.
- ☀ Participated in the 2022 National Shared Mobility Summit in Chicago, which is an annual gathering of organizations that advocate for equitable, affordable, and environmentally sound mobility across the United States.





COMMONGROUNDS

In December 2022, Groundwork accomplished the long-sought goal of moving our offices into the new Commongrounds Co-Op, on Traverse City's Eighth Street. Far more than just another office move, our relocation to Commongrounds will expand our ability to carry out our mission in a number of important ways.

First, simply by encouraging Groundwork donors to invest in the Commongrounds project and making this move possible, we are able to be an anchor tenant and help bring to life an innovative community project that is a real-life expression of the principles of sustainability and community resilience that lie at the heart of Groundwork's work. Commongrounds will provide accessible housing, a teaching kitchen, a performance venue, communal working spaces, and a collaborative incubator work environment shared by a rich mix of community-focused nonprofit and for-profit organizations. At Commongrounds, Groundwork will occupy a second-floor office that will host a small core group of daily staff and a shared workspace for others. For larger meetings we will be tapping into Commongrounds shared meeting rooms. The generosity of Groundwork supporters enabled us to purchase the space outright and for several years also cover monthly operating fees, all of which will significantly decrease our monthly operating expenses.

A shining jewel at Commongrounds is the Esperance Community Teaching Kitchen, for which Groundwork has served a central fundraising role. We will also be managing the kitchen—a sizable task because many community groups will be using it. The kitchen, with ample space for students, is adjacent to Groundwork's office and to expand kitchen instruction space we need simply open a sliding door. Groundwork will focus its initial efforts on instructing health care professionals on cooking skills and about the health benefits of locally grown food. Other community organizations will also be using the kitchen to teach to their respective groups.

The Commongrounds location will also give us a tremendous opportunity to connect even more with our community as we make use of the performance space that's been named Alluvion. Stay tuned for word of concerts, speakers related to our mission, and fun get-togethers.

We're excited to see you at our new home!

<<< The Commongrounds Cooperative, between Eighth Street and the Boardman River, Traverse City. Find Groundwork's new home in suite 204.

— Photo by Jeff Smith



SHARED ABUNDANCE

Twenty years ago our organization produced an innovative report titled *The New Entrepreneurial Agriculture*, which mapped out a fresh vision for an agricultural economy in Michigan. The report set us on a mission here in the northwest Lower Peninsula that gave rise to what is today one of America’s most respected local food economies. Leveraging this milestone moment, we now intend to produce a 20th anniversary book that will share the experiences, multitude of essential partnerships, key strategic decisions, and lessons learned with the purpose of inspiring and propelling local food economies throughout Michigan and the nation.

Titled “Shared Abundance: Lessons in building a strong community around locally grown food,” the book will be a celebration of Groundwork’s innovative local food legacy, the remarkable partners who have been essential to this journey, and the many environmental, economic, and nutritional outcomes that have accrued. But more important the book will serve as a local food economy road map for people wanting to launch a local food movement in their home region or take a nascent movement, or even a burgeoning movement, further.

Something beautiful, powerful, and profound in local food has happened in northwest Lower Michigan, and this publication will help people see that similar things can happen anywhere in America—most importantly, in their own hometowns. The publication will bring insight, instruction and urgency to making local food economies a foundation of our national food culture, health, supply chains, and systems.

We’ll present that message in 192 pages—researched and written by Diane Conners and beautifully photographed by Beth Price—using a mix of personal stories, partner profiles, program history and experience. Designed to succeed with everyday readers and local food leaders, the publication will transcend in every way the traditional idea of a “report,” and would look right at home in a bookstore.

To order a pre-publication copy, go to groundworkcenter.org/shared_abundance

Andrea and Ryan Romeyn, of Providence Organic Farm & Market. >>>

— Photos by Beth Price





LOOK AHEAD

In 2023, Groundwork heads into its 29th year, and as we do, we see ever stronger affirmation of the principles that have guided this organization: offer solutions, look deeply for leverage points where change can have the greatest impact, create change that is sustainable and that builds its own momentum, choose solutions that give forth multiple benefits and support the mission to protect the environment, strengthen the economy, and build resilient communities.

Food & Farming

2023 will be a very big year for the Food & Farming team as we take the local food practices we've honed for 20 years and begin working with people in six west Michigan counties. The goal is to replicate and innovate upon the systems that have built the nationally respected local food economy of northwest Lower Michigan. Further spreading the local food gospel will be our book "Shared Abundance," designed to inspire the expansion of local food farming and access across the state and nation. Meanwhile, we will continue to push for continued funding and expanded offerings for 10 Cents a Meal—especially to open funding to home daycare operations. Food equity is a key pillar of the 10 Cents a Meal program, and food equity also lies at the heart of our efforts to increase the amount of local food in food pantries, which we will continue to build upon. We will also be hosting a high-profile Farms, Food & Health conference in fall 2023, building upon the remarkable success of our past conferences and keeping momentum in this important movement in the Midwest.

Climate & Environment

In 2023, Groundwork will continue to publicly support and advocate for 100% clean energy commitments from municipal utilities, local governments, public school districts, community colleges, large businesses and others that have the influence and resources to drive change and speed Michigan's transition to a net zero carbon economy. Advocacy efforts focus on conversations with government and organization leaders to directly influence policy, while simultaneously meeting with community members, including students, to build a groundswell of support and loud voices calling for a rapid transition to a net carbon zero economy.

Community Design & Transportation

With \$2.3 million now available for Groundwork and its partners to manage the research and production of the next big phase of the north-south passenger rail study, much of our team's efforts will be focused on that project during 2023. The study funding does not guarantee passenger rail construction, but it is an unmistakable signal that the federal and state governments take the rail project seriously and see the Phase I study as making a compelling case that is worth taking to the next level.

The team will also continue the often behind-the-scenes meetings and conversations needed to keep resilient community ideas in the mix and pushing forward as Traverse City, in particular, launches on multiple far-reaching planning initiatives that will shape transportation, housing, and overall urban livability for decades to come.



— Photo by Beth Price

climate and environment



community garden



farm and farm market



farm to school



farmers support



food access



food and farming



food and health



grow solar



health and community center



housing



mobility lab



railway



school and early childcare



solar on schools



transportation and community



**access
MI solar**



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Public Sector Consultants

Rad.ish Street Food

S2S Sugar 2 Salt

Voss Equipment

Cindy Pineda, Superintendent,
Boyne Falls Public Schools and
farm to school advocate.

— Photo by Beth Price



ENVIRONMENT. ECONOMY. COMMUNITY.



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