

Grow It Forward's History, Mission & Vision

Grow It Forward Inc.—founded by Amber Daus in 2014—is a 501(c)3 non-profit charitable organization on a mission to grow, teach, feed, and connect our local food community.

We aim to improve our community's local food supply chain through the following strategies:

- Grow more local food at our community, school, public, and private gardens, and also expand urban agriculture.
- Teach, inspire, and increase more local food producers & growers, distributors, processors, culinary artists, end-product markets and local food consumers.
- Feed our local economy through system improvements and expansion of opportunities that provide affordable pathways for local food entrepreneurs to bring their produce, products, or culinary creations to consumers.
- Connect consumers to one another and to our finest local producers, distributors, processors, culinary artists, and end-product markets.

Our purpose is to carry out effective programs and services to reduce gaps in the local food system, and to improve and expand upon the local food supply chain.

Our vision is to be recognized as Manitowoc's community leader serving to improve and expand the local food supply chain.

Through the ability to leverage strong partnerships with mission-critical partners in our community and beyond, Grow It Forward will carry out effective programs and services to improve and expand the local food supply chain. Improving the local food supply chain leads to job creation, tourism, increased access and availability to local food, a healthier community, and a wide array of economic and ecological benefits.

Thank you to our many mission-critical sponsors, partnering organizations, supporters, volunteers, and community members who recognize Grow It Forward as the non-profit community leader in the local food system!!!



Grow It Forward's Programs & Services

Grow It Forward, a 501c3 non-profit organization, makes an impact in our community by increasing access and availability to local food. We're on a mission to grow, teach, feed, and connect our local food community. Since our inception in 2014, our programs and services have grown to include:

GROW

S. 14th Street Community Garden

- Established April 25, 2015 and built in ONE DAY with the help of 350 community members
- Utilized by 20 neighboring families, the garden features 50 raised garden beds, 27 fruit and nut trees, onsite water, and a combination tool shed with open air shelter.
- The community garden also serves as an outdoor classroom and has been visited by over 600 Manitowoc youth each season. Students participate in experiential learning and help pay it forward by seeding, weeding, planting, tending, and harvesting produce. Since 2015, students have grown and harvested over 3,500 lbs. of fresh produce utilized in further educational activities, donated to local pantries, and shared with local community meal sites.

Manitowoc Community Garden

- Beginning with the 2017 season, the Manitowoc Community Garden is managed by Grow It Forward
- Because of the generosity of Faith Evangelical Free Church and The Manitowoc Company, over 100 families have access to a total of 45 acres for garden use.
- We offer free garden space to any church or civic group who wishes to grow produce for local food pantries or free community meal programs.
- Retrieve spent brewers grain from PetSkull Microbrewery and other microbrewers in Manitowoc County to convert to compost
- Over 100 families utilize this garden.

Elliot Farm Land

- Donated by Bruce Elliot's family. Future development of 4.5 acre land donation pending

Garden Blitz

- Since 2015, installed 20 garden beds at other homes, schools, churches, shelters, and public spaces.

Future Program Expansion Ideas/Opportunities

- Greenhouse (year-round production)
- Cooperative Community Supported Agriculture
- Urban Farm Production—aquaponics, mushroom production, microgreens
- Onsite Farm Stand
- Garden space in other neighborhoods
- Expand compost program

TEACH

Farm to School

- Established in August 2015 with the support of the AmeriCorps National and Community Service program and private community donors to support the state's Farm to School goals which:
 - Strengthens local economies by expanding markets for Wisconsin agricultural producers and food entrepreneurs.
 - Promotes children's health by providing fresh and minimally processed foods in schools and supporting the development of healthy eating habits.
 - Increases children's and communities' knowledge about agriculture, food, nutrition and the environment.
- Program highlights since 2015:
 - Introduced 72 new local foods sourced from 30 local farms (goal 14 new foods, and 6 producers) to over 2,000 Manitowoc Public School District students through lunchroom tastings and in classroom lessons.
 - Delivered a series of five unique and age appropriate, 30-minute lessons about gardens, agriculture, food preparation, nutrition, and the environment to over 325 students in 13 individual classrooms in the Manitowoc Public School District.
 - Delivered experiential learning to 600 students at the community garden.
 - Served as an educational resource for 8 school gardens—both at public and private schools.

- Assisted in the instillation of a 8x12-ft. green house at McKinley Academy.
- Recruited and engaged 89 volunteers who provided over 896 hours of service to date.
- Participated in a local Farm to School/Farm to Table Coalition providing volunteer training and outreach.
- Sent 8 students from area high schools to the Wisconsin Local Food Summit.
- Sent 32 high school students and adults to tour Growing Power in Milwaukee to learn about urban agriculture and indoor growing.
- Prepared and served 5 healthy, locally sourced meals for an average of 20 families attending Family Night programming at Jefferson Elementary.

Adult Education

- Sponsored 2 community food leaders to receive a certification from Milwaukee's Victory Garden Initiative
- Sent 8 community educators to receive training at Madison's Community GroundWorks (leaders of the Wisconsin School Garden Initiative)
- Held an educational class for 10 individuals on preparation of teas, salves, and syrups
- Provided consulting to local florist and greenhouse to establish a microgreens operation

Future Program Expansion Ideas

- Urban Farming training/certification partnership
- Teacher/Educator training
- Summer programming onsite of community garden in partnership with Parks Department
- Youth Farm

FEED

Community Kitchen

- Established September 2017 at St. John's UCC, the Community Kitchen is a shared-use commercial kitchen dedicated to providing support to local food entrepreneurs, mobile food truck operators, caterers, and local farmers by providing access to an equipped, licensable commercial kitchen, which is necessary to safely and legally manufacture food products.
- The Community Kitchen will also serve as a facility to educate the community on a variety of food preparation topics including processing and preserving our season's best offerings.

Future Program Expansion Ideas/Opportunities

- Local food business incubator
- Food processing training
- Grow It Forward value-added products, processed goods, food recovery program
- Farm-to-table cafe

CONNECT

Manitowoc Farmers Market

- Beginning with the 2017 season, the Manitowoc Farmers Market is managed by Grow It Forward
- Located in scenic Downtown Manitowoc, you will find over 70 vendors at the peak of the season providing locally grown fruits, vegetables and flowers, farm fresh meats, dairy products, breads and baked goods. The market also features specialty foods and unique handcrafted items by area artisans.
- Over 25,000 Manitowoc residents and visitors attend each season who care about farm fresh food, healthy living, community, and supporting their local economy.
- Launched the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, which accepts EBT FoodShare at the market.
- Developed and held 5 farmers market tours to provide education on how to store fresh produce, discuss seasonality, and provide in depth information on our market vendors.
- Held 4 children scavenger hunt days to find unique fruits and vegetables at the market.
- Provided a no-cost opportunity for over 10 community groups and non-profits to showcase their programs and services.
- Collaborate with Downtown Manitowoc to sponsor Harvest Fest where we celebrate our market vendors and agriculture.
- Began to strengthen partnerships with "Food Movement" manufacturers—Briss Malt & Ingredients, Lakeside Foods, Chermake, Verns Cheese (Chilton)

Future Program Expansion Ideas/Opportunities

- Manitowoc Night Market/Food truck rally & entertainment expansion
- Two Rivers Farmers Market
- Year-round facility/shelter structure, improved access to power, water, lavatories, comfort of guests and vendors
- Mobile Farmers Market for rural communities
- Weekly program offerings (National Farmers Market Week, Kids Day, Seniors Day, Job Fairs, Cooking/BBQ competitions, Fish Fry)
- Double-bucks EBT FoodShare
- Expanding food donations to pantries

VOLUNTEER & INTERN NEEDS

- Marketing
- Graphics & Web Design
- Social Media
- Newsletter
- Outdoor Education at Community & School Gardens
- Indoor Education on nutrition and local foods/farmers
- Grant Writing
- Non-profit Management/Board Development
- Accounting, Quickbooks, Payroll
- Human Resources
- Volunteer Recruitment
- Event Planning
- Fundraising
- Urban Farming/Production/Market Gardening
- Farmers Market Management & Expansion
- Sales
- Adult Education
- Translation Services (Hmong, Spanish)
- Photography
- Administrative Support
- Creation of Program Materials, Brochures, Posters, Documents
- Food Preparation, Meal Planning, Café Experience, Food Processing/Preserving

Board of Directors

Amber Daus, CEO & Founder

Ron Kossik

Erica Strauss

Meredith Sauer

Jason Prigge

	GROW	TEACH	FEED	CONNECT	GENERAL OPERATIONS
Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• S. 14th Street Community Garden• Manitowoc Community Garden• 4.5 acres farmland (S.14th/S.18^t_h)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Farm to School• Adult Ed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shared-use Kitchen	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Manitowoc Farmers Market• Two Rivers Farmers Market	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Resource Development<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Grant Writingb. Fundraising• Marketing• Communications & Outreach• Volunteer Coordination• Event Planning
Program Coordinator/Staff	Amber Daus	Amber Daus	Amber Daus	Amber Daus	Amber Daus
Intern(s)	Kyle B. September 2017 Volunteer	Ann S. October 2017 Grant paid through Lakeland	Vacant	Natasha Z. June 2017 Grant paid through UWGB	Hannah V. October 2017 Grant paid through Lakeland
Board Focus Area(s)	Amber Daus Ron Kossik	Amber Daus Erica Strauss Meredith Sauer	Amber Daus Ron Kossik Meredith Sauer	Amber Daus Ron Kossik	Amber Daus Erica Strauss Jason Prigge

CEO/Founder Background

Amber Daus has worked diligently over the last 3 years to connect community partners and has laid a framework for Grow It Forward to serve as a local food hub within the City of Manitowoc.

She is extensively involved and is a leader in the local food movement. For 2 years, she served on the founding steering committee of Clipper City Co-op (a developing member-owned grocery in downtown Manitowoc), is currently involved with the local farm to table/farm to school coalition, served as an AmeriCorps Farm to Community Outreach Coordinator and Educator, and is the manager of the Manitowoc Farmers Market. Amber's professional and educational experience includes urban agriculture, food service, non-profit management, public and business administration, finance, business and project management.

Amber has earned many educational and professional accolades. She was inducted into two honor societies-Phi Theta Kappa and Sigma Beta Delta, graduated with highest honors-Summa Cum Laude and achieved a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration from Franklin University of Ohio, and has earned certificates from:

- Victory Garden Initiative of Milwaukee Food Leader program, and now serves as mentor for this program over the past 2 years,
- Growing Power's Commercial Urban Agriculture program,
- Community GroundWorks Growing Minds: Garden-Based Learning From the Ground Up program,
- ServSafe Certified Food Manager through Wisconsin Restaurant Association

Her hobbies and interests include: agriculture and the local food movement, life-long learning, grass roots organizing, sustainability, art, music, civic involvement and social advocacy, gardening and growing delicious produce, canning, preserving, fermenting, cooking and baking.