

The Volunteer Center of Grant County

Update on Projects: The Commons Center for Food Security and Sustainability

The Commons Garden: managed by garden coordinator Kristin Lundgren:

- 1500 pounds of vegetables and herbs were harvested this year and distributed by the Food Pantry
- 300+ volunteers including Juvenile Probation community service youth, teenage interns, community service clubs, and local school children helped plant, tend, and harvest
- 700 local students learned about nutrition and our food system through gardening , harvesting, cooking at the Commons and the garden at Jose Barrios and Sixth St Schools
- 5 teens participated in a new summer youth internship program, Rooted, which used the garden and kitchen to teach youth about the food system
- 100+ plant starts were grown and distributed to food pantry recipients for their own home gardens

Local Food Pantries: managed by John Conway:

- 430 families receive food through our Silver City, Mining District, and Gila Food distributions each month
- 290,000 meals a year, on average, are provided in Grant County including senior commodities, emergency food boxes, and home deliveries for homebound individuals
- 7,000 pounds of beans, rice, and oats were purchased locally this year to ensure the highest quality nutrition food for our pantry
- 60 families received an Albertson's turkey dinner delivered by John and crew
- 250 school children receive weekend backpacks filled with nutritious food
- 100+ dedicated volunteers make the food pantry distributions possible throughout Grant County

Nuevos Comienzos Community Kitchen: run by Rita J Herbst:

- Supports a growing number of innovative food producers on the circuitous path to commercial production (e.g., Fickle Pickle, Friends Forever Salsa, and Minors' Menace Root Beer)
- Hosts events and meetings while managing all rentals of facilities.
- Coordinates with our many partners including local growers, Small Business Development Center, WNMU, New Mexico Environment Department, and the Grant County Extension Office
- Promotes local food vendors at events and markets around Grant County
- Created the Mesquitos, a diverse group of enthusiasts dedicated to exploring the economic viability and sustainability of native foods
- Encourages organizations and individuals to make the kitchen and the Commons their own