

*Since our groundviews newsletter focuses mostly on the people involved in and affected by Solid Ground, we are launching the semi-annual Big Picture News to give you an agency-level view of our work. ~the Editors*

## Feeding a hungry community

**Strong community support has enabled Solid Ground to increase services to address basic needs even while the past few years have been the worst economic crisis of our time.**

Additional efforts to help families maintain their housing when facing mortgage default, eviction or homelessness have manifested some of the most visible outcomes: In 2009 alone, we prevented 4,284 households from becoming homeless through counseling, loans and grants. Equally important, though perhaps less visible, is our priority to make sure that everyone has enough healthy food to eat.

Here's what we are up against: Over the past two years, Seattle **food banks report an 88% increase** in the number of visits.

According to a recent study, more than **50% of the households** surveyed in seven Seattle Housing

Authority sites **did not have enough food to eat**. Overall, these families and individuals were almost five times more likely than average U.S. citizens to be unsure where they would get their next meals.

A University of Washington study shows that **obesity rates in Seattle's poorest neighborhoods are as much as six times higher** than those in more affluent areas. South Park and Delridge have a dearth of grocery stores and farmers markets and an overabundance of convenience stores and fast food chains that promote cheap, high-fat, low-nutrient foods.

### Our work

**Solid Ground is responding with direct food support, healthy cooking and eating education, and advocacy for systemic change.**

More than 20 years ago, Solid Ground took the lead in changing the unstable model of food banks' reliance on corporate handouts. By coordinating volunteers to

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grow fresh produce for local food banks, **we created a sustainable, community-based model to feed hungry people healthier food.**

Ten years ago we launched a Giving Garden at Marra Farm to greatly increase our capacity to supply area food banks with organic produce.

In addition to produce, our Food Security for Children program expands resources for food banks to respond to the specific nutritional needs of families with infants and toddlers. And our Partners in Caring delivers food to homebound seniors in public housing.

**Getting more healthy food into the system is vital** – and our Operation Frontline and Apple Corps programs help people gain access and education to prepare it. Operation Frontline presents six-week courses on nutrition and preparing low-cost meals through partner agencies that serve people living on low incomes. Apple Corps confronts childhood obesity through nutrition and fitness programming, primarily in schools. It has expanded each year, reaching about 4,000 youth last year.

## Our vision

The Seattle City Council designated 2010 the Year of Urban Agriculture. **Solid Ground is an active partner.** We hosted the “Giving Garden Summit” last month, and continue to seek opportunities to engage the broader community in this effort.

This summer, Solid Ground is working with a number of partners to launch a **new Community Farm in the Rainier Valley.**

This project brings together the Seattle Housing Authority, Department of Neighborhoods and others to

develop a production garden where people from Rainier Vista housing and the surrounding community will come together to grow and share in the bounty of their work.

The produce grown at the new farm will feed many families in the Rainier Valley. And the work done to bring partners from the neighborhood, city government and other nonprofits to the table has created a sustainable model that can be replicated to **help neighborhoods throughout the region achieve food security.**

