



# **Madison Area Food Pantry Gardens**

**Public Relations Plan**

**By J464 Class**

Spring 2023



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# 1

## Public Relations Opportunities



Madison Area Food Pantry Gardens is a volunteer-based nonprofit organization dedicated to growing and harvesting fresh vegetables to Dane County area food pantries. Through the management of ten garden locations and community gleaning, MAFPG donated approximately 113,000 pounds of fresh vegetables in 2022.



“After 22 years in the Dane County community, Madison Area Food Pantry Gardens (MAFPG) will establish a permanent home in the Town of Middleton called *Forward Garden*. ”

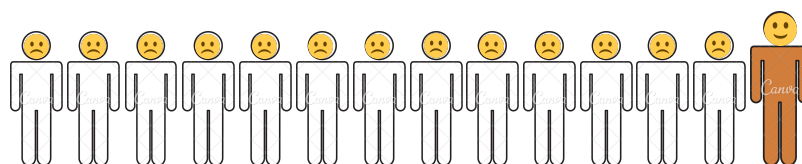
Located on Old Sauk Road, this garden is a 12-acre site that will be purchased from the Pope/Zoerb family in April of 2023. The purchase of the property will be possible, in part, because MAFPG will meet its Phase I Capital Campaign Project goals through a generous conservation grant from the Dane County Park Commission. The Future Garden site joins a portfolio of nine other garden sites ranging in size from a quarter acre to two acres also managed by MAFPG.

Prior to purchasing the property, the Pope/Zoerb family rented the land for three years to MAFPG as its garden leaders and volunteers proved to themselves and donors that they could manage the larger number of acres. Managing the property has allowed MAFPG to provide approximately 80,000\* additional pounds of fresh, nutritious, and culturally relevant fruits and vegetables to the local emergency food system during that three-year time frame. The 2023 goal is to increase yearly vegetable production of the Future Garden from 29,000 pounds to 34,000 pounds, helping drive the total 121,000 pounds the organization plans to donate to local food pantries.



Photo: Forward Garden

Supporting our community through this type of nutrition security access remains incredibly important as only 1 in 14 adults in Wisconsin with low income consume adequate fruits and vegetables. As a volunteer-powered non-profit, these community needs must be supported by an increase in volunteers and donors.



“ As only 1 in 14 adults in Wisconsin with low income consume adequate fruits and vegetables. ”

Other key donors who have contributed to Phase I of the Capital Campaign include: Arndt Family Foundation, Caritas Foundation, Dan and Natalie Erdman, Dave and Linda Longenecker, Endres Mfg. Company Foundation, Irwin A. & Robert D. Goodman Foundation, Kwik Trip, Madison Community Foundation, MG&E Foundation, Nimick Forbesway Foundation, Pleasant T. Rowland Foundation, Richard Pavelski, and Springs Window Fashions.

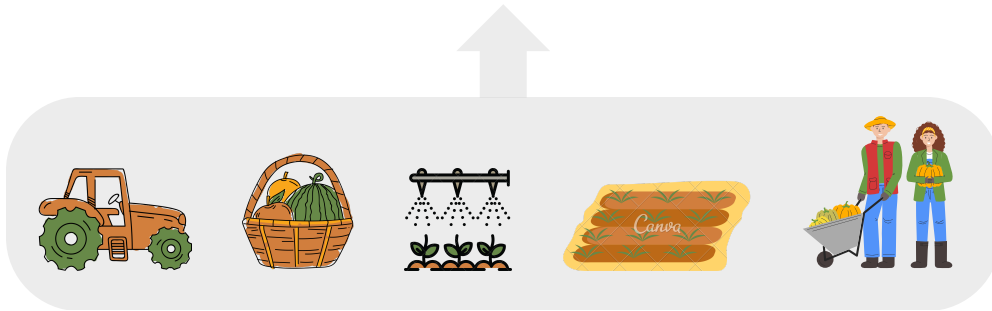


## OUR DONORS



In April, after officially closing on the purchase of the property, MAFPG will kick off a new Phase II \$425,000 Capital Funding Campaign. Monies received through Phase II will go toward improving the infrastructure at Forward Garden to better support fruit and vegetable production and education. These investments include a new well for watering the garden, improved vegetable processing space, and modifications to the farmhouse on the property to support classes and volunteers.

## \$425,000 Capital Funding



**The Madison Area Food Pantry Gardens has an opportunity to capitalize on the April 2023 announcement of the Phase II Capital Funding Campaign to not only complete the funding gap, but build brand awareness in the greater Dane County community amongst key stakeholders and recruit new volunteers.**

\*23,000 pounds in 2020, 26,500 pounds in 2021, and 29,000 pounds in 2022

# 2

## Situation Summary





## Macro-Environment

### **Economy:** Fear of recession, layoffs and inflation

Although economists and financial analysts disagree on the likelihood of a recession in the next 12 months, it is evident that the threat of a recession remains alive in 2023. According to David Mericle, Chief U.S. Economist at Goldman Sachs, the probability of a recession in the next year hovers around 35% likelihood (1). In the event of an economic downturn, nonprofits may lose staff members as organizations undergo funding losses and subsequent payroll reductions. While Madison Area Food Pantry Gardens (MAFPG) is volunteer-powered, many of the organization's partners rely on their staff members for success in their missions. Therefore, a recession could pose business challenges for MAFPG even if the nonprofit maintained all of the employees and volunteers that make up its workforce.

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According to Google Trends, the search for “US Recession 2023” has increased by over 5000% since February 2022. It is possible that the perceived threat of a recession may pose equally challenging obstacles for MAFPG. Citizens are concerned about the economic state of the US, which may make people less inclined to work for free. Google Trend data also shows a 300%

increase in the search term “layoff” since this time last year. This could affect volunteer turnout through a shift in general mood/attitude toward working for free as well as a decline in corporate-sponsored volunteer trips. According to the MAFPG annual report, 203 different groups (corporate, school, church)

#### Steady Workforce



#### Reliable Volunteer Groups



volunteered between April and November of 2022. TIMES magazine explains that technology firms—including Amazon, Google, Microsoft, and Meta—have been especially hard-hit by the economic downturn. Tech firms cut 159,786 jobs last year and an additional 98,100 so far in 2023 (2). This could greatly impact corporate volunteer turnout for both MAFPG itself and its partners. It does not help that Epic Systems, which sends many volunteers, is in the technology sector.

Food prices and inflation can also impact food pantries and their ability to serve communities. Food inflation causes economic stress on food pantries, as when prices increase, pantries must



**Food prices  
+9.9% in 2022**

pay more to provide for their clients. In 2022 food prices increased by 9.9 percent, and food-at-home prices increased by 11.4 percent. Food pantry gardens like MAFPG, in growing their food rather than purchasing it, are less adversely impacted by inflation.

### **Cultures:** Emphasis on sustainability and DEI

Data shows that interest in sustainability is at an all-time high for both corporations and consumers. In April 2022, right around Earth day, “sustainability” was searched on Google at an all-time high. **If the trend continues, April 2023 should be a prime opportunity to generate buzz about MAFPG’s environmental impact.** According to the Harvard Business Review, global businesses have reached a sustainability inflection point. As interest in sustainability grows, stakeholder expectations and increased pressure from investors are forcing organizations to prioritize environmental and social objectives within their

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business strategies. Additionally, there is pressure to be able to articulate environmental goals and clearly demonstrate progress (3). The growing concern about leaving a positive impact on the planet puts MAFPG in a good spot to receive funding, publicity, donations and attention. If a recession occurs and the economy is struggling, sustainable endeavors are sure to be prioritized more highly than in the past.

## DEI

Diversity

Equity

Inclusion



More than ever, **employees are assessing their employment decisions by an organization's purpose, culture, ESG goals, and diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) priorities.** In the past 5 years, Google Trends data shows that search terms “diversity, equity and inclusion in the workplace” and “what does diversity, equity, and inclusion mean” have increased by over 5,000 percent. This makes sense considering 72 percent of CFOs say their company has a formal diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) program, according to the Wall Street Journal. This information is useful for

MAFPG in its mission to grow culturally relevant foods and generate publicity and buzz more generally. Three weeks ago “The Teen Mag” Teen Magazine published an op-ed about the difference between cultural appropriation and cultural appreciation.

Another factor affecting food pantries is the disparity of nutrition insecurity among different races. **Researchers in Wisconsin found a 26 percent difference between white individuals and both Black and Hispanic experiencing nutrition insecurity.** This data suggests race can influence one’s likelihood of experiencing nutrition insecurity.

## **Social:** Shifting Social Norms

People are interacting face-to-face much less than they used to. The combination of a global pandemic, the rise of social media and remote work options has led newspapers, including the Wall Street Journal and the New York Times, to publish articles about the American increase in alone time within the last year (4). A few months ago, Psychology Today published an article about the loneliness people continue to experience post-pandemic (5). There is an opportunity here for MAFPG to position its volunteer programs as a fun way for people in the area to make friends, bond, and enjoy each other's company. As time passes since the pandemic, MAFPG has an opportunity to address the issue head-on and provide a method of relief.



## Industry

MAFPG participates in the nonprofit industry. The primary goal of the nonprofit industry is to serve the community through a specific mission, without gaining profit. Mission statements vary across different organizations, but each operates with volunteer support and funding from donations and grants. According to a 2022 Mintel Report on Attitudes toward Nonprofits in the U.S., we're seeing an increase in consumers that pursue brands with ethical missions (6).



“ We’re seeing an increase in consumers that pursue brands with ethical missions. ”

This is contributing to a trend of brand and nonprofit interconnection, as more brands are focusing on strengthening their relationship with nonprofit organizations. **The Mintel Report also highlights how 59 percent of millennials think buying from a brand that supports a cause is equal to donating to the cause itself** (7). What does this mean for MAFPG? The PR plan lists one of MAFPG’s key issues as lacking brand awareness (8). With the increase in consumers’ pursuing brands with ethical missions, MAFPG has the opportunity to address this lack of brand

awareness by promoting its specific ethical mission. Furthermore, MAFPG can appeal to key stakeholders that are looking to create a relationship with a nonprofit that represents their values. By creating more brand relationships, our client can appeal to people buying from brands that support causes, possibly leading to more donations from key stakeholders.

However, the Mintel Report also states that economic struggles and inflation are hindering consumers' ability to fund nonprofit organizations (9). In fact, **it states that 47% of consumers donated less in 2022 due to such economic turmoil** (10). The report also explains how consumers have endless nonprofit organizations to choose from, making it difficult for one specific organization to stand out (11). This makes it significantly more difficult for MAFPG and its competitors to receive donations. If consumers are decreasingly able to donate, our client must clearly stand out from other nonprofits in order to gain more support and funding.

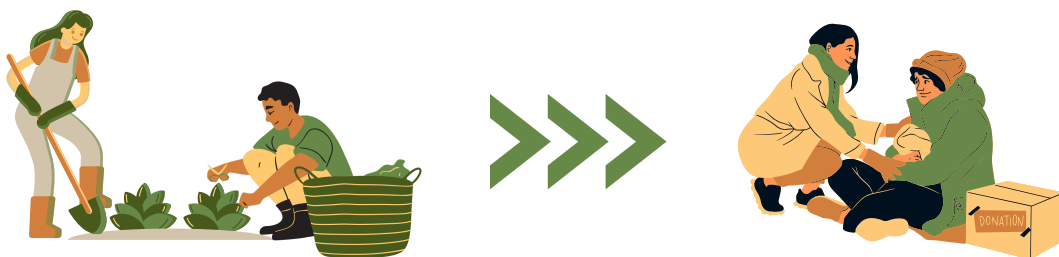
“ One way MAFPG can appeal to donors and consumers during a time of economic uncertainty is by connecting to its sense of identity. ”

One way MAFPG can appeal to donors and consumers during a time of economic uncertainty is by connecting to its sense of identity (12). Furthermore, consumers are split in their support for causes that help people like them, and for causes that help people unlike them (13). Essentially, appealing to identity doesn't need to be extremely personal, but rather a sense of shared values and identity within a community (14). If a consumer is

passionate about helping those with nutrition insecurities, then our client's business can cater to that passion and interest in order to gain more tailored support.

## Category

MAFPG grows and harvests fresh produce for local food pantries. That would put their products in the competing category of food pantries and their suppliers. The food pantry category includes numerous nonprofit organizations which aim to eliminate hunger and nutrition insecurity in the community. While nonprofit organizations have a collective goal of benefitting and serving the public, they still compete with one another, especially when it comes to volunteers, funding and/or location.



“ MAFPG grows and harvests fresh produce for local food pantries. ”

According to a government study on the “Needs and Preferences Among Food Pantry Clients,” the food pantry industry has been historically neglected in areas such as health promotion, research and client data (15). Many food pantry clients have diet-related illnesses, and they often seek out healthy foods. The study explained how more often than not, food pantries are not

always able to fulfill the clients' needs, or they perceive their clients' needs as preferring convenience food (16). They measured the needs of food pantry clients in Minnesota, and a majority of clients specifically reported their need for more fruits and vegetables (17). **This is where our client stands out within the food pantry category.** They grow and provide only fresh fruits and vegetables to local food pantries, meeting the nutritional needs and desires of many clients.

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*Our client can utilize the data from this study to expand upon their organization. Since the needs of food pantry clients are leaning toward healthy foods such as fruits and vegetables, our client can base their marketing and promotion strategies around their entire mission.*

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According to the study, another important factor to consider within food pantries is client reliance and frequency of visitation (18). Most clients reported visiting the pantry at least once a month for a year or more. Furthermore, most clients reported getting at least half of their total food supply from food pantries (19). This goes to illustrate how significant of a role these food pantries play in their clients' lives. Our client can utilize the data from this study to expand upon their organization. Since the needs of food pantry clients are leaning toward healthy foods such as fruits and vegetables, our client can base their marketing and promotion strategies around their entire mission, which is to grow and provide nutritional produce to food pantries.

## **Client: Organization, Brand, Product/Service Offerings and Marketing Efforts**

### **Mission:**

**MAFPG is dedicated to providing fresh, nutritious, culturally relevant food to members of the greater Madison area community who need it most.** The organization has provided over 2 million pounds of food to over 30 food pantries, community organizations, and schools in the greater Madison area since its inception. With food prices up 9.9 percent and a record number of people facing nutrition insecurity, the MAFPG's work has never been more important (20)(21).



*Photos: Volunteers work in Forward Garden*



## Brand:

MAFPG's brand exudes overwhelming positivity and gratitude for its supporters. The brand is one of inclusivity, and it attempts to bring to light all the positive change it has done for the greater Madison community. **Its tone is empathetic, friendly, and welcoming in order to evoke emotion in consumers and earn donations and volunteers.** The brand centers around helping others and thanking supporters for their contribution in that help.

## Services:

MAFPG grows and donates healthy, fresh, first-choice, nutritious and culturally relevant produce to food pantries and local organizations around Madison. Since its inception MAFPG has provided food to over 30 food pantries, community meal programs, and school programs. The organization grows at 11 different farms across the Madison area and gleans from local businesses in order to help emergency food services in the community. Additionally, the organization conducts research to better understand the emergency food system in Madison so they can meet the needs of the community.

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*The organization grows at 11 different farms across the Madison area and gleans from local businesses in order to help emergency food services in the community.*

”

## Marketing:

MAFPG does a number of things to market itself. The first thing it does is employ content on its website that evokes emotion from community members. It markets itself as a brand with positive values, showing the community coming together for a good cause. Additionally, MAFPG creates and publishes newsletters and has a mailing list to keep the community informed and updated. The organization also publishes press releases on its website and has an active social media presence on Facebook and Instagram.



## Content and Messaging:

Consistent with its mission of aiding the Madison community and encouraging volunteers to do the same, MAFPG maintains an informative, enthusiastic style in its messaging.

Across its website, social media pages, press releases, newsletters and emails, MAFPG offers a simple lineup of content. This includes:

- Statistics about produce output, volunteer involvement and fundraising accomplishments.
- Images featuring volunteers and crops grown at MAFPG's member gardens.
- Promotion of relevant events, such as PBS Wisconsin's Garden and Landscape Expo on Feb. 10-12.
- Updates on ongoing fundraising efforts, such as the silent auction fundraiser in Sept./Oct. 2022.
- Promotion of summer internship positions.
- Call to action for volunteers and donors.
- Thank-yous to volunteers, interns, donors, etc.

This content consistently includes clean, simple copy which clearly outlines the essentials of MAFPG's operations: where fundraising money goes, where produce ends up, why volunteers are essential and more. **The messaging carries a positive and appreciative tone, presumably to generate good will and excitement about MAFPG's work in the community.** MAFPG incorporates a bit of humor and garden-themed puns as well, specifically in its social media captions.

## **Website:**

MAFPG's website is simple and fairly user-friendly – with a white background and black text, it avoids any eyesores or other distracting elements. The home page offers a video summarizing MAFPG's work before linking to internship opportunities and overviewing the organization's mission and basic statistics. The bottom of the page includes a form to sign up for emails and links to MAFPG's socials – those links need some updating, though (see Social Media below).



### Our Mission

Help our neighbors by providing local food pantries with first-class, fresh, nutritious and culturally relevant produce.

### Our Motto

We plant. We grow. We feed.

### Our Members

Community members just like you along with businesses and farms engaged in the local food system make MAFPG possible.



Photos: Current MAFPG website

**Some areas of the website are linked to one another, but not with much consistency or logical organization.** For example, clicking “About Us” on the menu bar leads to a page with nothing but four links, only two of which (Our History, In the News) are included in the “About Us” dropdown menu. As such, MAFPG’s website is best navigated through the menu bar and its dropdown menus.

“ MAFPG’s website is simple and fairly user-friendly — with a white background and black text, it avoids any eyesores or other distracting elements. ”

The “Our Gardens” page lists each of the five member gardens and the six affiliate gardens, all alongside a map of nine locations. The individual garden pages lack consistency, though. Where applicable, they all offer a volunteer contact and an address, but other information — photos, garden leaders and background info — vary from page to page, as does the formatting and organization. This complicates the user experience when learning about MAFPG’s gardens (22).

## Email/Newsletter Marketing:

MAFPG uses Mailchimp for its email marketing. During gardening season (until late Oct.) they send a weekly “In the Garden” email with photos, stories from the past week and volunteer opportunities for the coming week. MAFPG’s newsletter, delivered monthly during gardening season and less regularly in late fall/winter, offers more detailed stories and statistical recaps. These emails all link back to the MAFPG website. The website offers easy access to the monthly letters, but not the weekly ones – finding the weekly ones requires accessing and navigating the external Mailchimp page (23).

## PR and Promotions:

The website’s “In the News” page lists past press releases and news coverage. Either it hasn’t been updated in a while, or MAFPG’s most recent press release/news exposure was in Nov. 2020. The page also provides Volunteer Marketing Coordinator Katie Schmitt’s contact information, inviting media members to reach out about stories (24).

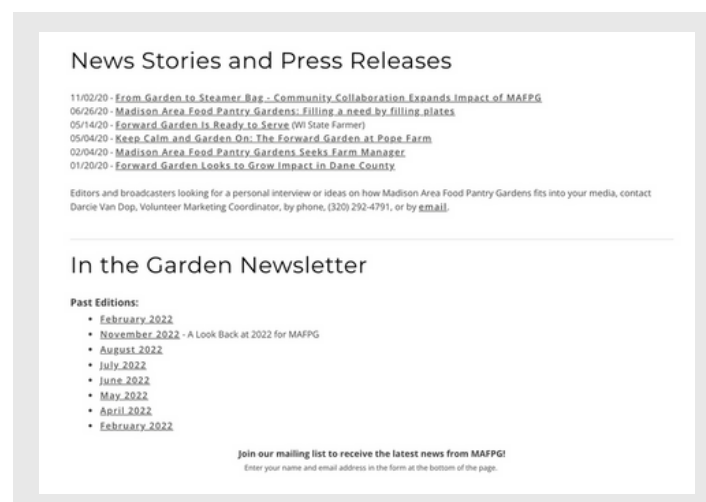


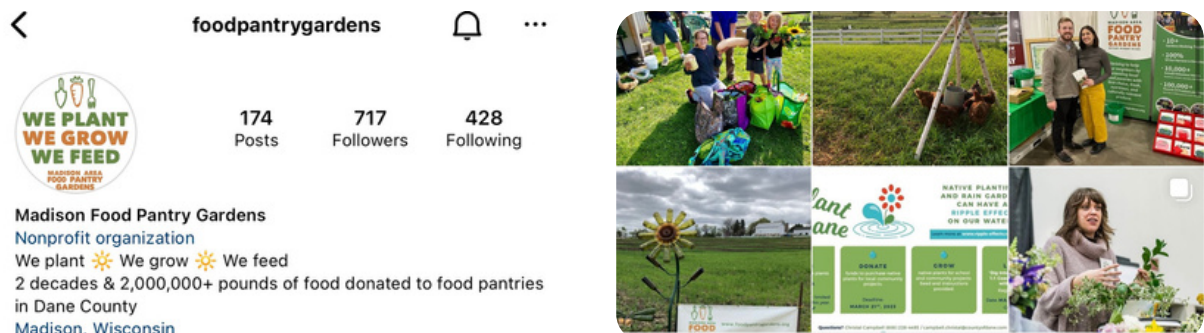
Photo: Website screenshot of "In the News"



## Social Media:

### Instagram | @foodpantrygardens | 687 followers

MAFPG receives between 4-10 likes on most posts, which consist of event and internship promotion, crop images and various announcements. Comments are extremely rare – all comments in recent months are from either @mrs.loribrown (a gardening video account with 750 followers) or bots. The account did not post between 10/3/2022 and 1/30/2023 (25).



Photos: Current MAFPG Instagram

### Facebook | @foodpantrygardens | 952 followers, 820 page likes

MAFPG's Facebook posts receive a similar, 4-10-like total on most posts. Compared to Instagram, the Facebook has been more regularly active since October. The last post to receive a comment was on 9/14/2022, so engagement is low here as well (26).

Since January 30th and during the 2022 gardening season, MAFPG's Instagram and Facebook appear to be totally in sync, posting identical content on identical schedules. This plan, while convenient, has its flaws. A September 17th cucumber photo on Instagram prompts followers to "Show off your pickle recipes or

those beautiful canned pickles. Post ‘em below!” (27) Instagram doesn’t allow photos in comments, so this detracts a bit from MAFPG’s social media credibility.

### **Twitter | @Grow\_Plant\_Feed | 57 followers**

The bottom of MAFPG’s website still links to its Twitter account, which hasn’t posted a tweet since August 2016 (or a reply since Feb. 2017). The Twitter icon isn’t included on MAFPG’s Mailchimp content (28).

### **Flickr | One follower**

The last post was in April 2015. Like Twitter, Flickr is still linked from the MAFPG website but not from Mailchimp (29).

## **Competition**

### **Food Pantry Gardens:**

**Door Creek Church Food Pantry Garden (DCC):** The DCC runs a Food Pantry Garden that donates its harvest to local Dane County food pantries. This organization is one of the only food pantry gardens in Dane County which isn’t affiliated or partnered with our MAFPG, but it has the same goal as MAFPG. Their 7,500lbs of produce donated in 2022 directly competes

with MAFPG's produce yields. Madison food pantries have to decide who to take donations from, making the DCC a competitor. The key audiences of this organization are its partner schools (Bird Elementary, Blackhawk Middle School, Eagle Point Elementary, Mendota Elementary, Sandburg Elementary, Westside Elementary, Windsor Elementary (44)) and Christian families in the Madison area. **The DCC markets itself as a strongly religious / faith-based organization that welcomes everyone, regardless of criticisms / beliefs / skepticism surrounding Christianity.**

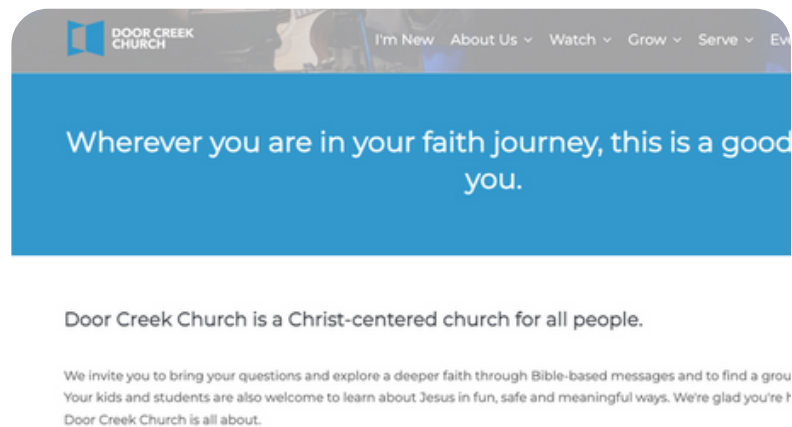


Photo: Website page from DCC

**Madison Christian Community Food Pantry Garden:** Like the DCC, this organization shares MAFPG's goals but isn't partnered or affiliated with MAFPG. The Madison Christian Community Food Pantry Garden grows 5,000 pounds of produce annually to donate to local food pantries. Because Madison food pantries can only accept a certain amount of produce, this organization competes directly with our client for local food pantry support. This organization defines its key audiences as "people of all ages, denominational backgrounds, abilities, races, gender identities

and sexual orientations.” In that same regard, the Madison Christian Community Food Pantry Garden markets itself as a welcoming, accepting organization willing to embrace anyone “regardless of ethnic or national identity, citizenship status, legal standing, or criminal history.”

## **Other Competitors**

**For nonprofit organizations like MAFPG, competitors are often collaborators on greater projects.** MAFPG competes for land and for volunteers, rather than the direct service they provide within the community. With a mission to bring nutrition to a community, competing against organizations with the same goal would defeat the whole purpose. That said, organizations

“ Organizations still face roadblocks and competition for limited resources within a community. MAFPG does not have a lot of promotion or awareness within the community to attract volunteers. ”

still face roadblocks and competition for limited resources within a community. For MAFPG, the main product of competition is the limited number of volunteers and donors.

There are many important places to volunteer in Dane County, and MAFPG does not have a lot of promotion or awareness within the community to attract volunteers.



Local competition for volunteer hours is fueled by the City of Madison’s volunteer program. This offers a variety of ways for community members to get involved through ‘Earth Day Challenge,’ ‘Flower Garden Volunteers,’ ‘Volunteer at Olbrich Botanical Garden,’ and ‘Volunteer in Parks.’ **Olbrich Botanical**

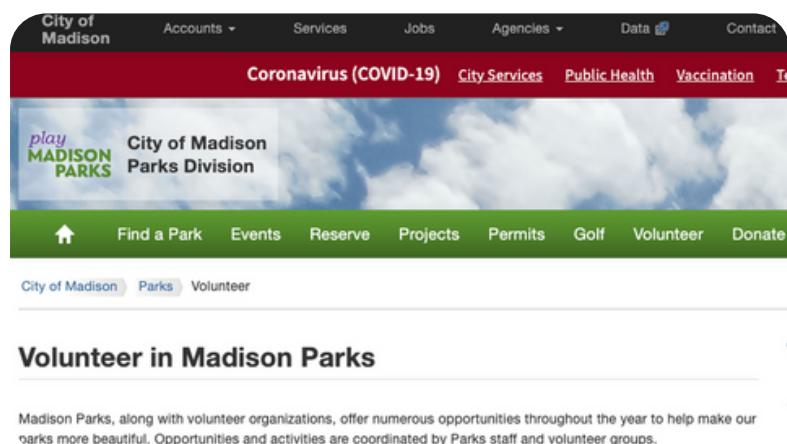


Photo: Website page from *The City of Madison* volunteer

**Gardens** (53) pulls a lot of nature or garden-related away from MAFPG into these more promoted projects. **The key audience is middle to upper class Madison locals, specifically those involved in civic processes around Madison, or those who live close to these gardens and parks.** MAFPG could potentially partner with the city and earn a spot on that list of best volunteer opportunities. The City of Madison volunteer website comes up as the second search result when Googling, “Volunteer in Madison, WI.” The first result is Dane County volunteer programs, which has broader programs and also links to the City of Madison’s page.

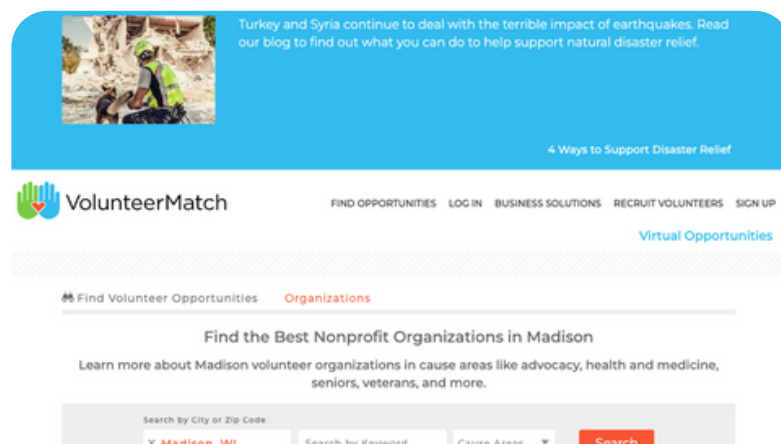


Photo: Website page from *VolunteerMatch*

**VolunteerMatch** (54) is another competitor of MAFPG’s. This website comes up as the third Google search result for “Volunteer in Madison, WI.” VolunteerMatch promotes a variety of volunteering opportunities in a given area, but Madison-area searches return nothing about MAFPG or its gardens. VolunteerMatch’s key audiences are people of all ages looking



for volunteer opportunities, possibly more high school and college students who may need volunteer hours and need a place to start. These audiences are a competitor because MAFPG is losing a large share of its target audience. Attaining their audience will help further our reach of awareness and capacity of volunteers. They market themselves as a site that will allow visitors to “Find The Best NonProfit Organizations in Madison.” **They provide information on Madison volunteer organizations helping causes such as “Advocacy, health and medicine, seniors, veterans and more.”** When typing in the location as Madison and the keyword as garden, MAFPG isn’t in the first five results or on the first page. More media exposure could earn MAFPG a spot on this site alongside the other competitors offering volunteer opportunities in the environment, health, and community.

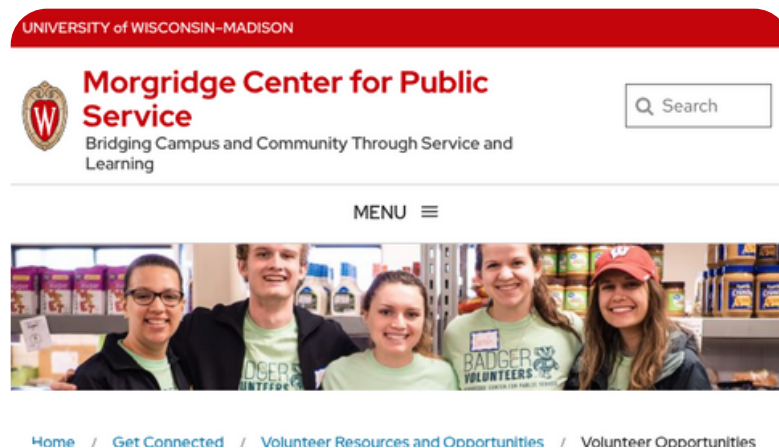


Photo: Website page from *Morgridge Center for Public Service*

**The Morgridge Center for Public Service** (55) and **Badger Volunteers** (56) are two partner organizations on UW-Madison’s campus, and they’re primary ways for UW students to volunteer

in the community. Their key audience is UW-Madison students and they market themselves as a student oriented organization that helps people looking to find the ideal volunteer opportunity to meet their interests and availability. They offer opportunities specific to campus groups like student organizations and Greek life. This is an attractive aspect to this

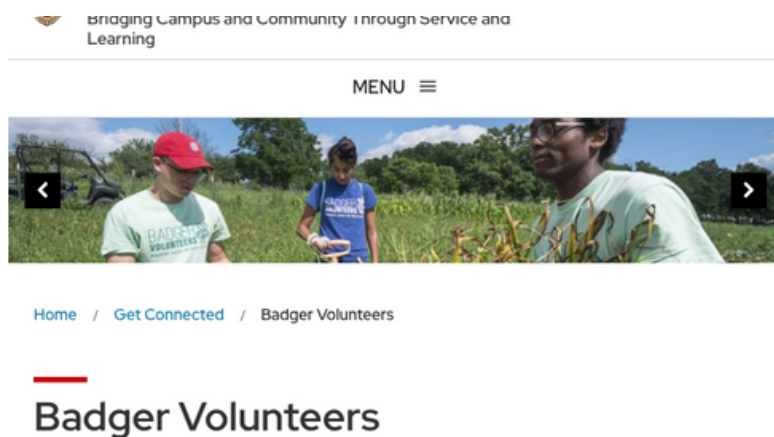


Photo: Website page from *Badger Volunteer*

“ Their key audience is UW-Madison students and they market themselves as a student oriented organization that helps people looking to find the ideal volunteer opportunity to meet their interests and availability. ”

specific avenue of volunteer opportunities. This page is located through “Get Connected” and “Volunteer Resources and Opportunities” on the UW-Madison main website, so it is accessible and easy to find for students looking to get involved.

When searching under the tab of “environmental studies” there is no link or reference to MAFPG. UW-Madison would be another great resource for MAFPG to partner with and incorporate its volunteer opportunities, because MAFPG works directly with these students’ community.

**United Way of Dane County** is another organization competing with MAFPG, pulling volunteer and donation resources to other organizations and promoting a variety of charitable organizations – but not MAFPG. United Way’s key audiences include those who reside in the Madison area as they have opportunities ranging from coaching sports, volunteering at



Photo: Website page from *United Way of Dane County*

nearby churches, assisting in community schools and centers and working at food pantries. Currently, the only food pantry opportunity they have is the Vera Court Neighborhood Center Food Pantry. **They market themselves as a community driven resource to help the well-being of those in Dane County who need it.** By not including MAFPG on its website, United Way of Dane County serves as a competitor.

This Madison-area competition could provide opportunities for MAFPG to find volunteers. Through promotion and outreach, MAFPG could place itself on these volunteer opportunity hubs.

## **Two Role Models**

**MAFPG can gain insight from other nonprofit organizations' marketing efforts.** Networking, which can be done through an online and social media presence, is essential to accessing new resources, volunteers and donors. This can be especially important for nonprofit organizations like MAFPG to connect with volunteers, increase donations and educate and engage with the community. MAFPG can also create partnerships with businesses around the community which may offer new opportunities.

“ Networking, which can be done through an online and social media presence, is essential to accessing new resources, volunteers and donors. ”

### **Second Harvest Foodbank of Southern Wisconsin**

The first food bank that comes up in the Google search “food banks in Madison, Wisconsin” is the Second Harvest Foodbank of Southern Wisconsin. The website is very professional with a consistent logo and color scheme. One aspect of their website

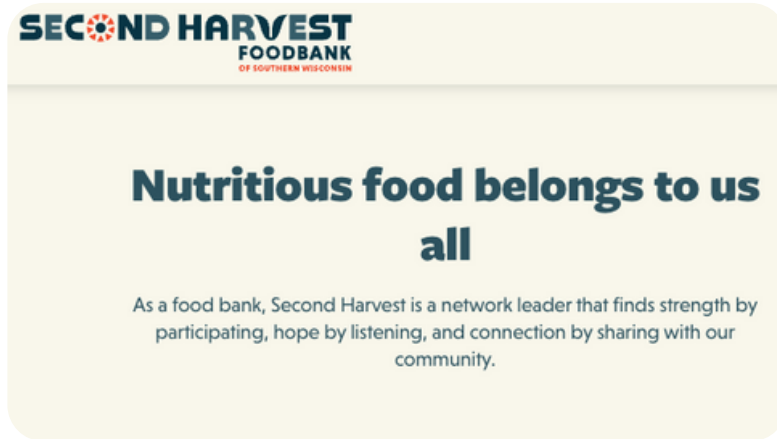


Photo: Website page from *Second Harvest Foodbank*

that stands out is the link to their mobile pantry schedule at the top of the home page. This is updated frequently and outlines where and when community members can gain access to food (57). When you go to the “donate” page, there is a list of FAQs regarding how money will be used, if it is tax deductible and other questions about donating or getting involved with the organization. It even provides an option of donating through cryptocurrency (58).

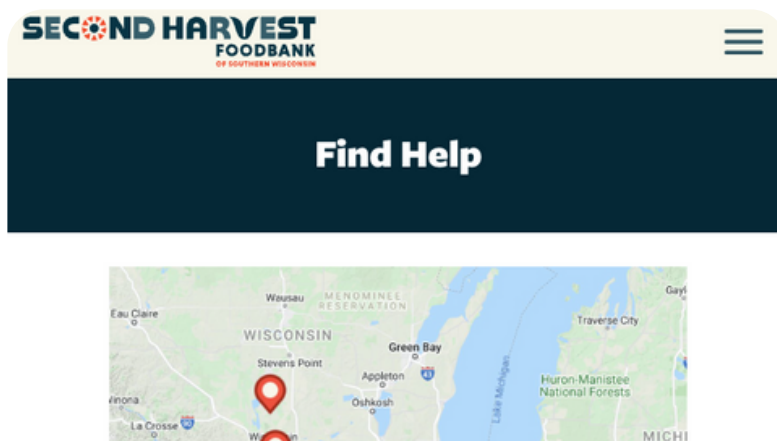


Photo: "Find Help" Website page from *Second Harvest Foodbank*

The “find help” page on the Second Harvest Foodbank of Southern Wisconsin website provides resources about government programs people may be eligible for (59).

The website also features a “news page” with recent information on nutrition insecurity and safety. By providing general information not only about their organization, it can get more people to engage with their site and therefore gain more brand awareness (60).

Another unique aspect of the website is their “strategic plan” which outlines the organization’s goals, mission, priorities, values, and vision. It summarizes what Second Harvest Foodbank of Southern Wisconsin wants to accomplish and how they are achieving it (61).

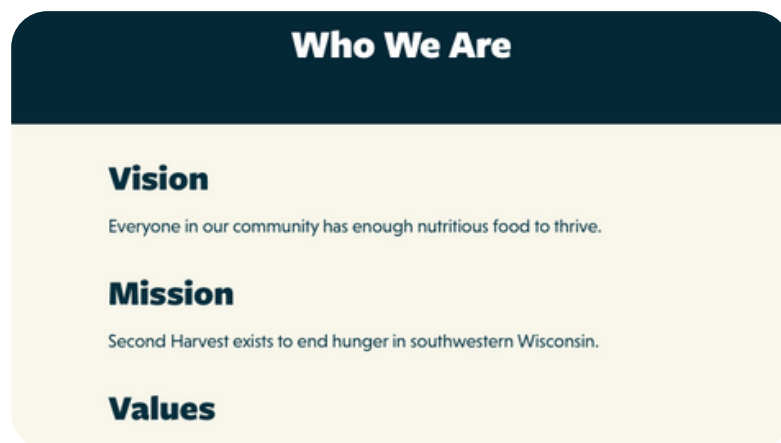


Photo: Website page from *Second Harvest Foodbank*

The Second Harvest Foodbank of Southern Wisconsin has a great following on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. The accounts post almost every day, or multiple times a day about events the organization is doing with other businesses, general information about nutrition insecurity, changes in their food delivery schedule and other information about the organization and the community. The account follows local businesses, other nonprofit organizations and donors /



volunteers. This is a great way to keep in touch with what other organizations are doing and communicate with their donors or those in need.

**Second Harvest Foodbank of Southern Wisconsin describes itself as a “network leader (63)”. It’s well-known throughout the community** because of its relationships with local businesses. An annual event called Share Your Holidays, put on by the news channel NBC15, benefits Second Harvest Foodbank of Southern Wisconsin (63). They also partner with businesses like Milio’s sandwiches (64).

## **Goodman Community Center**

The Goodman Community Center provides programs and activities which empower the Madison community. The website is detailed, easy to navigate and full of helpful features which MAFPG can learn from. Examples include an activities calendar, articles featuring the center, event-planning opportunities and options for donations and involvement. The Goodman Community Center has a community garden and food pantry, which come up on the first Google page when you search for “food pantry Madison, Wisconsin” or “community garden Madison, Wisconsin” Once you click on the link, it takes you to the Goodman Community Center website. This brings more engagement to their organization as a whole (65).

The Goodman Community Center has over two thousand followers on Instagram, Twitter, and eleven thousand on Facebook. They are very easy to find on these platforms. Even



Photo: Website page from *Goodman Community Center*

just by searching “goodman” their accounts come up. **They post day-to-day happenings at the center, and educate followers about topics important to the community (66).**

Similarly to Second Harvest Foodbank of Southern Wisconsin, Goodman Community Center also partners with local businesses to help raise money for their cause. They have partnered with health and beauty brands, artists, museums, restaurants, and many others. The Goodman Center also partners with national and local nonprofits such as the Madison Reading Project and Girls Inc. Their social media accounts document activities done with other organizations and tags them, which brings more engagement and brand awareness (67).

MAFPG can learn from these two organizations in how they have marketed themselves through their website, social media accounts, and relationships.

3

**S.W.O.T.**

## **S.W.O.T.**

### **Strengths**

- Overall tone and mission shows MAFPG's commitment to the community, which builds brand loyalty and earns community members' trust.
- Unique value proposition separates the organization from other local Dane County nonprofits in the same sector, increasing chances of earning funding.
- Meeting demand for first-choice, nutritious, culturally diverse foods will keep MAFPG relevant.



### **Weakness**

- Lack of brand uniformity across social media channels limits credibility and reach.
- Website suffers from inconsistent and infrequent content.

## Opportunity

- Improved social channels could grow a stronger, more interactive following and connect with a younger demographic in the Dane County area.
- Forward Garden acquisition will attract local media interest and grow brand awareness.
- New suburban development (in proximity to the gardens) brings in upper-middle class families with disposable income who could donate and volunteer.



## Threats

- Inflation and economic downturn creates lack of stability for citizens, which could lead to a decrease in donations and volunteer labor
- Lack of marketing resources and support from May 2023-on.



# 4

## Key Issues & Opportunities



## **Lack of Brand Awareness:**

Many key stakeholders, from media to potential volunteers, social support organizations, are not aware of the mission and role of MAFPG.

## **Lack of Social Media Presence**

With limited staffing and a lack of social media knowledge, Madison Area Food Pantry Gardens is missing a thorough social media strategy, significantly limiting their online brand awareness and donor and volunteer potential.

## **Opportunity to Leverage Partners and Influencers**

Madison Area Food Pantry Gardens has the opportunity to leverage its relationship with other organizations, businesses, and influencers to increase brand awareness and earn media exposure.

## **Opportunity to Implement a Close-the-gap Fundraising Strategy (Phase II Capital Plan):**

MAFPG has been soliciting funds in a silent phase of a capital campaign. As the purchase of Forward Garden moves forward, additional fundraising is required to close the gap.

# 5

## Public Relations Goal





“ For MAFPG to be known as a community- and volunteer-based nonprofit organization dedicated to growing and harvesting fresh vegetables to Dane County area food pantries. ”



# 6

## Audience



## Target(s) and Stakeholders

### Volunteers:

Since 2000, MAFPG has had 13,000 volunteers (30). The individuals are all ages with different levels of experience and include “students, churches, businesses, civic groups, and more (31).” According to Spring 2020 Simmons Connect Plus data, 64.8 percent of total respondents said they are willing to volunteer time for a good cause (32). **Of the respondents that are retired, 67 percent said they are willing to volunteer time for a good cause** (33). Of the respondents that are employed, 63.6 percent said they would volunteer time for a good cause (34). Of the respondents that identify as male, 10.4 percent said they would not volunteer time for a good cause, while only 6 percent of



“ The individuals are all ages with different levels of experience and include “students, churches, businesses, civic groups, and more. ”



respondents that identify as female said they would not (35). Of the respondents that do not have a child under the age of 18, 28.7 percent said they agreed a lot that they would volunteer their time for a good cause, while of the respondents that do have children under the age of 18, 32.3 percent said they would (36).



**This data shows that a majority of the population claims that they are willing to volunteer time for a good cause.** Retired people could be a good target, but people who are employed weren't a much lower percentage. People who identify as male are less likely to volunteer their time for a good cause than those who identify as female, but it is not a substantial difference. People who do not have children under the age of 18 are less likely to agree a lot that they would volunteer time for a good cause than those that do have children under the age of 18.



According to other Spring 2020 Simmons Connect Plus data, of the respondents that agree with the statement that “each of us has a personal obligation to do what we can to be environmentally responsible,” 77.6 percent are willing to volunteer their time for a good cause (37). This statistic gives us insight into the attitudes of willing people to volunteer. **The majority of these people are eco-friendly and care about the environment.**



According to a 2022 Mintel Report on the Attitudes toward Nonprofits in the US, the highest method of support for internet users 18+ overall is “the organization helps my local community” with 42 percent of respondents selecting that method. The method of donating physical items came in a close second at 41 percent and the method of the cause helping the environment was at 31 percent (38). This data indicates that people who support charities or nonprofit organizations are most attracted to organizations like MAFPG which help their local community. The Mintel Report also recommends that nonprofits should

allow donors to choose the method for how they want to support the organization, which would “gamify” the experience and make it more compelling. **Only 23 percent of respondents had volunteered time to a charity or nonprofit organization in the past year with 66 percent of respondents claiming that they have donated money** (39). This shows that the majority of people are not willing to donate their time, but instead are willing to donate money, therefore MAFPG should target people who already are willing to volunteer their time.



“ Therefore MAFPG should target people who already are willing to volunteer their time. ”

## **Media:**

The media will spread the information about MAFPG and will reach a bigger audience than MAFPG would alone. For the

media, we want to target local media channels such as NBC15, where Dr. Arndt was interviewed in December. In that interview, Dr. Arndt discussed how nutrition insecurity impacts health and introduced “Wisconsin EATS Healthy.”(40) Other news outlets we could target include WKOW 27 News, the Wisconsin State



Photos: MAFPG in the news

Journal, Channel 3000 and Fox (47). A few reporters who may be interested in our story include Samara Derby (who has written stories pertaining to food for the Wisconsin State Journal (41)), Olivia Herken (an education reporter for the Wisconsin State Journal (42)) and David Wahlberg (the health and medicine reporter for the Wisconsin State Journal (43)).

## Donors:

MAFPG's donors are mainly organizations that have large amounts of money to donate and want to help those in need. A key donor which has made purchasing Forward Garden possible



was a conservation grant from the Dane County Park Commission (44). Donors who have provided over \$100,000 in funding to MAFPG include the Arndt Family Foundation, Equitable Recovery Grant WI Dept. of Administration and the Pleasant T. Rowland Foundation (45). Donors who have provided between \$50,000 and \$99,999 include the Caritas Foundation, compeer Financial, Dan and Natalie Erdman, Epic, Irwin A. & Robert D. Goodman Foundation, KwikTrip, Madison Community Foundation, MGE Foundation, Nimick Forbesway Foundation, and Richard Pavelski (46).



## OUR DONORS



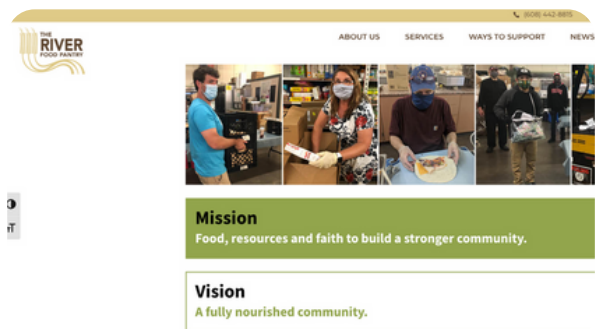
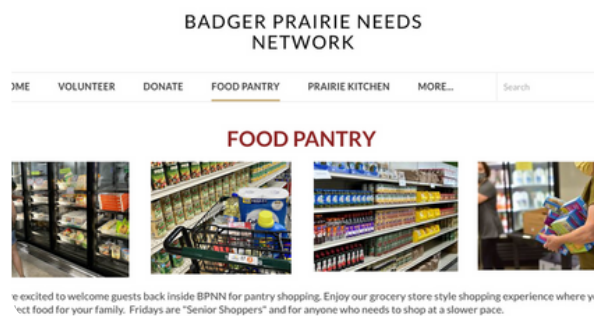
Photo: Donors

## Food Pantries:

**In 2022, 30 pantries received produce from MAFPG (47). One of those pantries, Badger Prairie Needs Network, is one of the busiest food pantries in Dane County.** The pantry wants to focus on fighting poverty and ending hunger in the community.<sup>48</sup> Another pantry, Middleton Outreach Ministry Pantry, partners with social workers to provide extra food for children who

“express hunger” during school (49). MAFPG also works with The River Food Pantry, which provides groceries and meals to over 2,500 people every week (50). Some other food pantries MAFPG provides produce for are St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry, Bethel Lutheran Church and Oregon Area Food Pantry (51).

The types of organizations that MAFPG gleans products from are “local farms and markets. (52)”



Photos: Website pages of *Badger Prairie Needs Network* and *River Food Pantry*

# 7

## Public Relations Objectives





In April of 2023, introduce Forward Garden as the new home of MAFPG and announce the Phase II Capital Funding Program, to **generate media attention and social media engagement**, so that our targeted audiences establish a connection with the importance of our cause that will help lead to donations.



By the summer of 2023, **increase brand awareness** of MAFPG amongst key stakeholders, so that they understand the important role the organization plays in food and nutrition security in the Dane County area.



By the Summer of 2023, **generate additional volunteer sign-ups**, so that MAFPG has enough support to plant and harvest the additional produce grown at Forward Garden.



# 8

## Public Relations Strategies

## **Inform and connect with key stakeholders about MAFPG's mission**

Understanding the importance and role of MAFPG's mission in food and nutrition security is an important first-step.



## **Utilize key influencers to attract attention to MAFPG**

By utilizing influencers who reach MAFPG's key stakeholders, the organization will be able to form a stronger bond with those most likely to donate to its mission and/or volunteer.



## **Leverage media and stakeholder attention around “Earth Day” and the announcements of the launch of Phase II Capital campaign and Forward Garden**

Environmentally- and socially-conscious stakeholders frequently seek information related to Earth Day. Leverage this ‘aperture moment’ to gain media and stakeholder attention.



# 9

## Big Idea





## Big Idea


“ Share the **fun and impactful nature of volunteering** with MAFPG while showcasing **sustainable and eco-friendly practices** and highlighting the impact of fresh produce in the Madison community. ”

### Our Mission

Striving to help our neighbors by providing local food pantries with first-choice, fresh, nutritious and culturally relevant produce.

### Our Motto

We plant. We grow. We feed.



## General MAFPG Information

**MAFPG Slogan:** “We Plant. We Grow. We Feed.”

**Mission statement:** “Striving to help our neighbors by providing local food pantries with first-choice, fresh, nutritious and culturally relevant produce.”

**Members:** Community members, businesses, and organizations engaged in the local food system make MAFPG possible.

**Stats:** 2 million pounds and counting, 13k volunteers, 10 gardens, 1 network, supplied food to 30 food pantries, community meal programs, and school programs (2022).



## **Consumer research learnings:**

- People want to give back to their community and make sure their contributions are affecting people directly. MAFPG offers that opportunity to and for the community.

## **Category and Competition research learnings:**

- There are many other local organizations and opportunities for volunteers to choose from when it comes to figuring out how to give back to Madison, WI. Some of these include food banks, churches, and local pantries. MAFPG can increase their social media presence to directly target those who are looking to help and give back to the Dane County community.

## **Consumer insight:**

- I want to help out and give back to the community because it is important to use my time helping those in need.

## **Key campaign premise:**

- MAFPG offers a unique opportunity for people of all ages to volunteer and contribute in many different ways, despite people thinking gardening is the only way to be a part of MAFPG.

## Big Idea:

- Show (not tell) all of the different ways people can volunteer, and how that leads to direct impact on the community through MAFPG.
- Demonstrate that people have options with MAFPG when it comes to volunteer opportunities.
- Don't just tell people how they can impact, show real life examples, maybe using anecdotes, quotes, or statistics to help supplement.

## Ideas:

- **Make it look fun - purpose is to draw in volunteers.**
- Clearly sustainable and eco-friendly practices and values communicated.
  - Many people feel strongly about fighting for food security and environmental sustainability, but they don't know where to begin or if there are others who share their vision. **MAFPG allowing people to begin with the local and participate in person from the earliest stages of food production.** Being a part of a volunteer family and seeing the effects of the shifts, the improvements, and the work you put in firsthand.
- Community-focused:
  - Include direct quotes from those who have volunteered at Forward Garden.

## To consider:

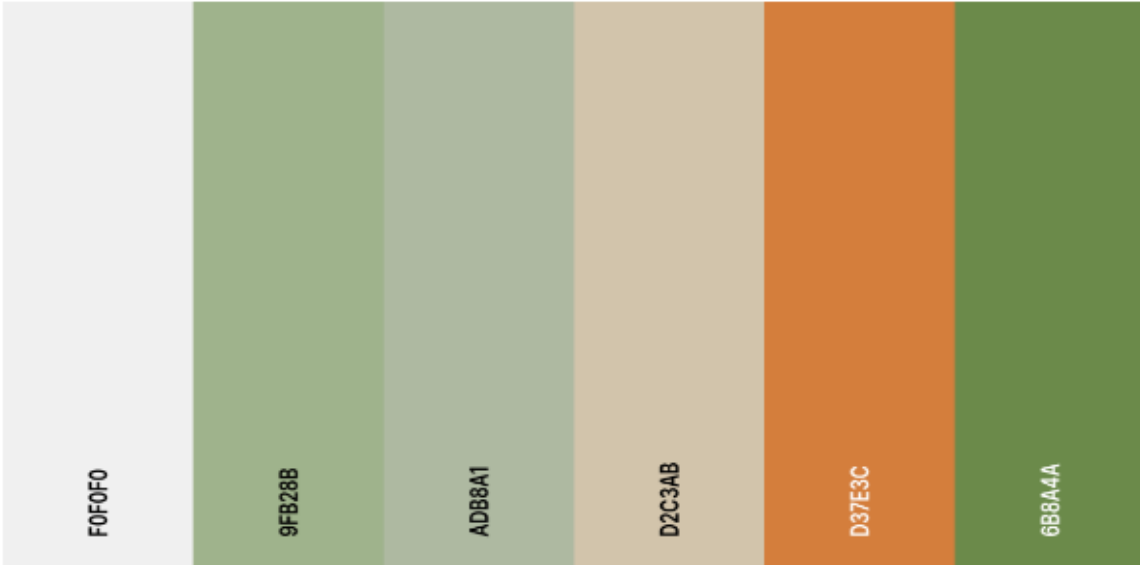
- People don't find volunteering fun.
  - No prior farming experience is required, as all volunteer work is designed to be welcoming to all. Learn and observe how plants are grown and how food is produced.
- People don't know why it matters.
  - MAFPG encourages volunteers of all ages from the community to join in on the action, get to know one another, and work together to improve the group's atmosphere in the hopes of making more locals concerned about issues of food insecurity and environmental sustainability. In your local area, you can find environmental actionable that you can take part in.
- People don't know WHAT they can do and how easy it can be.
- People don't know about MAFPG or their impact.
  - No matter how small an individual's impact, working with MAFPG will pool everyone's resources to ensure the desired outcome of being sustainable and environmentally friendly is achieved.

## The result:

- Creation of video that emphasizes real community impact that MAFPG has been providing over the years.
- Entice people to hear from past and present volunteers as well as those who run MAFPG.
- MAFPG now will have a statement video they can post either on social media or their website.

Creative Guide

Colors:



# 10

## Content Strategy



content pillars and clusters

“ Our recommendation is to restructure MAFPG's website with a focus on search engine optimization. By strategically incorporating relevant key phrases such as "get involved," "sustainability," and "our community," we can enhance the visibility of MAFPG's website and increase its chances of being discovered by potential customers. This initiative can help improve the online presence of MAFPG and contribute to its overall success. ”

Get Involved	Volunteer	Food & Nutrition Security	Food Security	
	Group Opportunities		Nutrition Security	
	Donate		Culturally Relevant Produce	
	Educational Programming		Food Deserts	
Sustainability	Sustainable Practices		Resources (external)	Our Community
	Composting	Food Pantries		
	Land Sustainability	Our Partners		
	Sustainability at Home	Our Supporters		
	Community Sustainability in Madison			
About Us	Mission Statement			
	Our Impact			
	Phase II Capital Plan			
	Garden Locations			
	Our Practices			
	Contact Info			



# 11

## Social Media Plan



## Role of Each Medium

### Facebook:

Facebook is the second most popular platform in the U.S., behind YouTube (68). This platform reaches a broader audience and an older demographic (69). It's the preferred social medium amongst 35-44 year olds, for both men and women (70). **We can use this platform to access donors and older volunteers who may prefer this social platform over Instagram or Twitter.** This platform is also great for promoting events (71).

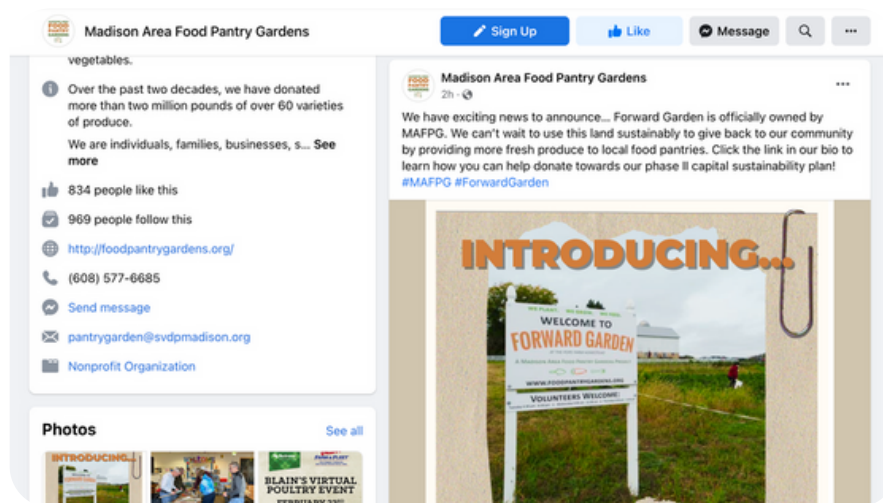


Photo: MAFPG Facebook Page

Facebook will be a great platform for MAFPG to reach stakeholders and volunteers, especially as it is the #2 in U.S. popularity. **The visual aspect of Facebook makes it a great platform for spreading easy-to-read, concise information that can reach older demographics.**

## Instagram:

This medium is one of the fastest growing social media platforms (72). It can help us reach wider audiences in terms of age range. Contrary to popular belief, Instagram is not just Gen Z users: 23 percent of 50 to 64-year-olds say they're using Instagram while 8 percent of Americans 65 and older say they're using Instagram today (73). Story, post and reel features can increase content circulation, which is great for high impact visuals (photos and videos).

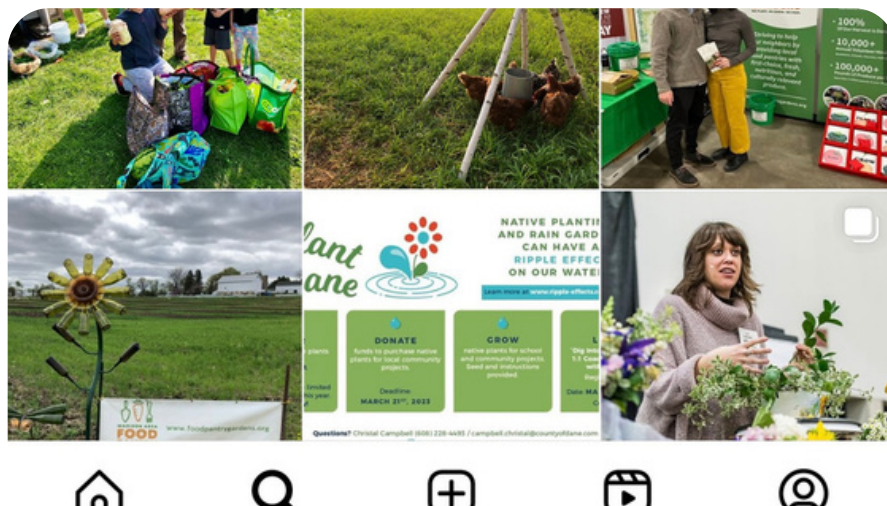


Photo: MAFPG Instagram Page

## Stories:

- Only lasts 24 hours and it's an easy way to bring older information to the forefront of followers' feeds. You can repost your own original content, reminding followers about upcoming events, contact information, etc.

- You can also assess follower engagement rates with story features such as offering a “poll” with different answers to any questions, provide direct links to donation/volunteer sign ups, etc.
- Stories also offer easily digestible content.

## Posts:

- Since we operate with a public account, we have access to the “insights” feature on this platform. We can see the total amount of likes, comments, shares, and saves on each post to track follower engagement. **This is a more permanent way of providing information to followers since posts live on your feed unless deliberately deleted.**



Photo: MAFPG Instagram Post

- Posts are also a great way to communicate more complex information through captions or infographics.



## Reels:

- Reels offer a way to visually and audibly communicate with followers with short video clips that can last up to 60 seconds. This way, we can go into detail about agricultural practices, tours of the farmland purchased, etc. in more detail than a post or story might offer.



7 likes  
madisonfoodpantrygardens It might not feel like it today, but spring is on its way! 🌱🌻🌻🌻🌻... more



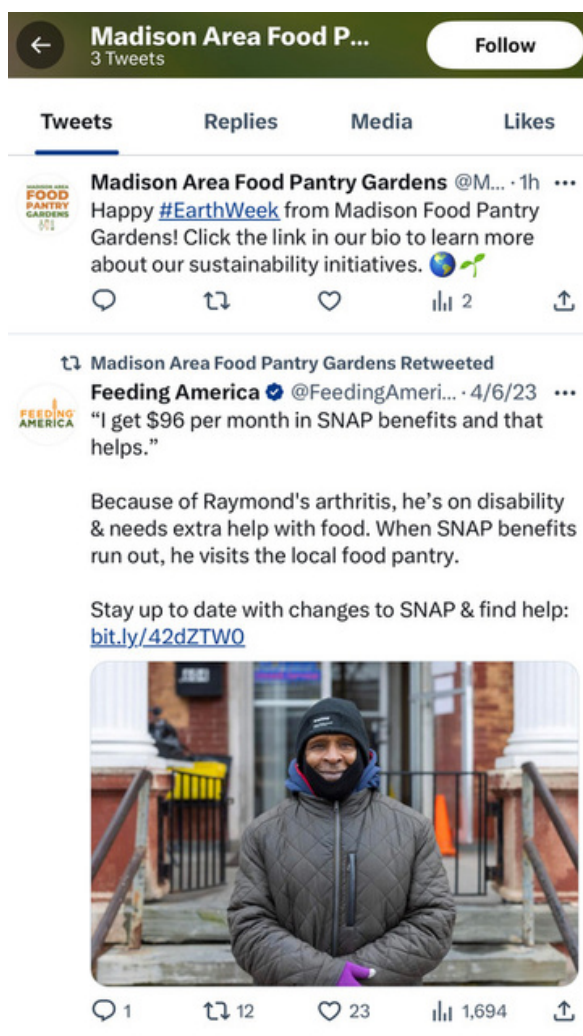
22 likes  
madisonfoodpantrygardens Are you or is someone you know looking for an exciting way to work this summer... more

Photo: MAFPG Instagram Post

**Instagram will help MAFPG reach potential volunteers, stakeholders, and media through its fast-growing popularity.** The wider age range will give MAFPG a better chance at reaching more people. The visual aspect of Instagram gives MAFPG the opportunity to create high impact visuals that can widely promote the organization.

## Twitter:

This platform is popular to spread news and short “tweets” that convey concise info (and/or links and photos). **It can leverage conciseness to attract stakeholders/volunteers, breaking news, and communication with journalists. 23 percent of all Americans use Twitter today (73);** However, most U.S. adult Twitter users don’t tweet much and a large majority of original tweets come from a small minority of tweeters. 80 percent of tweets come from only 10 percent of all Twitter users, limiting the amount of people that actually curate and circulate content (74).



Twitter is a great way for MAFPG to reach its stakeholders of media personnel and news outlets in order to attract news coverage. In addition Twitter works well as a way to make current announcements and keep volunteers and stakeholders up to date on events and volunteer opportunities. **While Twitter is great to reach journalists and make real time announcements, it lacks the visual power of mediums like Instagram and Facebook.** Because of this, MAFPG should focus tweets on breaking news and interacting with journalists.



## LinkedIn & TikTok:

We recommend that MAFPG utilize both LinkedIn and TikTok in the future. **Both platforms have a good reach and would bring a lot of potential exposure. However, given the short time frame to develop and execute the Phase II Media Announcement** during Earth Week, our agency recommends launching these social mediums at a different future date.

## Role of Each Medium

### Instagram:

Current profile picture:



This current Instagram profile picture is difficult to see and contains too many words for a user to realistically read. While the “We Plant, We Grow, We Feed” slogan is clear, the MAFPG title gets lost in the small font at the bottom.

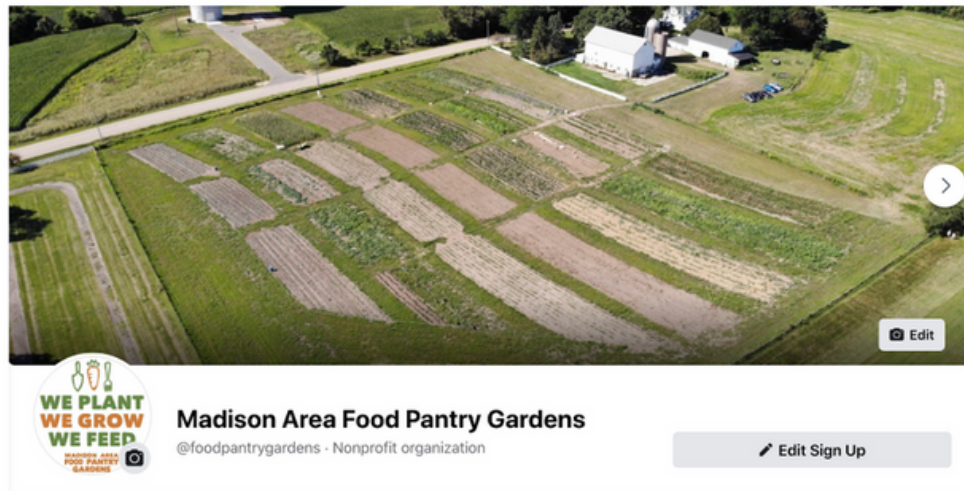
**We suggest making the profile photo just the MAFPG logo, eliminating the slogan and allowing it to stand on its own in the bio.** The name of the organization is incorrect in the bio, as it reads "Madison Food Pantry Gardens" instead of the "Madison Area Food Pantry Gardens" name featured in the crowded profile photo. The name and branding of MAFPG must be consistent across all platforms, so making sure that the "Area" is added will clear up any confusion for users. Moreover, the current username is just @foodpantrygardens which could refer to any food pantry garden anywhere. **We suggest placing Madison/Madison Area at the start of the username to make it more specific to the location and easier for users to recognize.**

Recommended profile picture:



## Facebook:

Recommended profile picture:



The profile imagery includes graphics, text and the company title, which is too much information to be contained in such a small area. **We recommend cropping this image to be just the logo in the profile picture and including the text in the banner photo instead to attain a cleaner and more professional look.**

Recommended profile picture:



**We Plant. We Grow. We Feed.**



**The current profile statement is three paragraphs, which is too long for a social media profile:**

*"We strive to help our neighbors by providing local food pantries with first-choice, fresh, nutritious and culturally relevant vegetables.*

*We are a non-profit organization that plants, grows and provides area food pantries with fresh, nutritious, and culturally relevant, first-choice vegetables. In 2020, our network of nine gardens donated more than 80,000 pounds of fresh produce to local food pantries.*

*We are individuals, families, businesses, student and youth groups, civic and church groups who generously share our time to plant, tend and harvest vegetables. We make a difference by gleaning produce from farm fields and orchards. These fruits and vegetables are rescued from farm fields that would otherwise be plowed in. Food pantries and ultimately our neighbors in need benefit from these efforts."*

**Our agency recommends cutting down the statement by eliminating repetition:**

*"We are a non-profit organization that plants, grows and provides area food pantries with fresh, nutritious, and culturally relevant, first-choice vegetables. Over the past two decades, we have donated more than two million pounds of over 60 varieties of produce.*

*We are individuals, families, businesses, student and youth groups, civic and church groups who generously share our time to plant, tend and harvest vegetables. We make a difference by gleaning produce from local organizations, like farms, orchards, and restaurants. Food pantries and ultimately our neighbors in need benefit from these efforts.”*

## **Twitter:**

Similar to its presence on other platforms, the bio photo (as seen above) has too many words for such a small asset with “we plant we grow we feed” as well as the carrot, knife and fork logo.

Our recommended bio photo does not include text. While we recommend a change in photo, the bio statement does a good job in stating the goal **“providing local food pantries with first-choice, fresh, nutritious and culturally relevant produce”** as well as a call to action “join us today!” and an associated link to join the cause.

## Social Media Analysis

### Instagram:

The MAFPG Instagram currently follows 400+ accounts across a number of categories. In the community category, MAFPG follows local/Madison organizations. In the governmental category, MAFPG follows accounts that relate to gardening, sustainability, agricultural practices, etc. **MAFPG also follows a broad range of both local and national, formal and informal news publications that either center around general news reporting, or specifically food and drink reporting.** Under the civic category, MAFPG follows other volunteer and gardening accounts. Although MAFPG has done a good job of engaging with relevant accounts, there are still more organizations that we recommend following. Below is a chart that shows some example accounts for each category.



Photo: MAFPG Instagram Page



### **Accounts Currently Followed by MAFPG**

Community	Governmental	Publications	Civic
The Sylvee (@thesylvee)	Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (@wisdatcp)	PBS Madison (@pbsmadison)	Inheritance of Hope (@inheritance_of_hope)
Madison Sourdough (@madisonsourdough)	U.S. Department of the Interior (@usinterior)	Food & Wine Magazine (@foodandwine)	Denver Urban Gardens (@denverurbangardens)
United Madison (@unitedmadison)	National Park Service (@nationalparkservice)	The Capital Times (@captimesmadison)	Madison Reading Project (@madisonreadingproject)
The Madison Club (@themadisonclubwi)		New York Times Cooking (@nytcooking)	

Next, we have laid out some accounts which we feel that MAFPG would benefit from following for different reasons. We recommend that Madison Area Food Pantry Gardens follow the following organizations on Instagram **to gain inspiration and observe the practices of an extremely influential nonprofit social media account.**

**Recommended Accounts MAFPG Should Follow**

Account Name	Followers	Mission	What MAFPG can learn from them
Feeding America @feedingamerica	150k	Feeding America is an organization that has a network of 200+ food banks with the mission of ending hunger in communities nationwide.	Their account is structured and organized in a digestible way, where users are easily able to donate, volunteer, and advocate using buttons and hyperlinks in their bio. MAFPG should follow and look at the Feeding America account for inspiration and potential collaboration.
Hunger Task Force @hungertaskforce	13.8K followers	Hunger Task Force is Wisconsin's leading anti-hunger organization.	Their Instagram account has a clean and consistent design, showcasing their produce, information about the organization, and providing followers with updates and important alerts about food banks and foodsharing. Following this organization could potentially lead to collaborative work between Hunger Task Force and MAFPG, and provide inspiration for their own Instagram account.

No Kid Hungry @nokidhungry	164K followers	No Kid Hungry is an organization dedicated to ending childhood hunger in the United States.	Aside from having a great logo, Instagram has easy donation, contact, and support links so their followers can easily help or get help. The content on Instagram is what every nonprofit organization should strive for; the content is interesting, engaging, informative, cleanly presented, and easily digestible. Furthermore, as MAFPG donates food to local schools and other youth organizations, there is potential for a collaboration between these two organizations to feed children in the Madison area.
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**We also recommend that MAFPG follow all the partners they work with including donors, food banks, community organizations, local restaurants, and local businesses.** Having a direct link with these organizations on social media will increase our likelihood of getting tagged in posts, effectively increasing our brand awareness. For example, if Epic Software were to send a group of volunteers, connecting on social media allows the company to tag us in a post on their Instagram which will make our account visible to Epic’s followers, and hopefully increase our follower count.

Lastly, we recommend that the MAFPG Instagram account follow the following politicians who are working toward improving food security around the state:

- **Senator Tammy Baldwin (@senatorbaldwin).** Senator Baldwin is a United States Senator for Wisconsin, who has championed efforts to donate to food banks around the state of Wisconsin. Building a relationship with her could lead to increased press and donations to MAFPG.
- **Rep. Abigail Spanberger (@repspanberger)** is a member of the U.S. House Agriculture Committee; she plays an integral part in curating farming and agricultural legislation.



## Facebook:

MAFPG's Facebook page currently uses Meta Business Suite, which is extremely beneficial since our agency can use it to track insights and boost engagement. The account only follows Katie Schmitt, so there are many accounts that our agency would want to follow in order to promote the page and spread brand awareness.

MAFPG should follow accounts focusing on sustainability or volunteerism that are located in Wisconsin and in the Madison area, since MAFPG is a local non-profit organization. The Facebook account should also follow pages that are brand-aligned and give back to their communities. A few pages that our agency recommends liking include the [Willy Street Co-op](#), [Culinary Ladies Collective](#), [Wisconsin Ag in the Classroom Program](#), [PBS Wisconsin](#), and [Madison Public Market](#).

Other organizations or people that the Facebook page should be following are food pantries and companies that MAFPG are already in collaboration with. A good start would be following the food pantries that MAFPG has donated to in 2022 because these organizations are strongly tied to MAFPG and would have followers that support MAFPG's mission. These organizations include: [Allied Wellness Center](#), [Badger Prairie Needs Network](#), [Bayview Foundation](#), [Belleville Food Pantry](#) and [Bethel Lutheran Church](#).

MAFPG already collaborates with numerous companies, and following these companies would open a connection to their followers, who may also want to connect with MAFPG. These companies may also post about their involvement with MAFPG on their Facebook page. Some of these organizations include: [Knight Hollow Nursery, Inc.](#), [Little John's](#), [UW-Madison College of Agricultural & Life Sciences](#) and [The Hmong Institute](#).

MAFPG can grow followers by interacting with other Facebook pages that are similar to theirs or share a similar mission. Those pages will have followers who are interested in organizations like MAFPG.

## Twitter:

There are currently two different Twitter accounts. One username is @Grow\_Plant\_Feed and the one we were given access to is @MAFPGardens. **We recommend deleting the @Grow\_Plant\_Feed account to ensure there is no confusion about which account is active.**

**Madison Area Food Pantry Gardens is very new to Twitter, and thus has a lot of potential for growth.** It currently follows 77 accounts which consist of users that fall under the categories of agriculture, sustainability and education and media spokespeople and reporters/ News.

In the agriculture category, MAFPG follows the WI Farmers Union @wifarmersunion, farmer @WhyIFarm, Sassy Cow Creamery @Sassy\_Cow and agriculture research center UMASH @UMASHcenter. In addition they follow users who value sustainability like the National Education Center for Agricultural Safety @NECASAG, Yahara Pride Farms @YaharaPride, and Peel Back the Label @PeelBackLabel.

In addition, the majority of users followed by MAFPG can be categorized as media or spokespeople, this includes keynote speaker Farm Babe @thefarmbabe, YouTuber Ryan Kuster @HowFarmsWork, freelance writer Katie Vaughn @Katiemv, agriculture newsletter Morning Agriculture @Morning\_Ag and more. Finally, they also follow news stations and reporters such as NBC15 News, WKOW 27 News and Channel 3000.



In regards to following strategies, MAFPG should follow other food pantries or gardens across the country to connect with a larger community, see how they can learn from their social strategy and potentially even target some similar stakeholders. Some of these accounts include [Earth Community Garden and Food Pantry](#), [Interfaith Food Pantry Network](#), [Berkeley Food Pantry](#) and [Minnies Food Pantry](#) and [The River Food Pantry](#) which is a pantry they already donate to. Additionally they should connect with [Badger Prairie Needs Network](#), a local Madison food pantry that MAFPG has donated to in the past. This account posts announcements about pantry hours, closures, and infographics on nutrition.

MAFPG should follow local reporters on the Media List. These include [Natalie Yahr](#), [Lindsay Christians](#), [Scott Girard](#), and [Nicholas Garton](#) from the Capital Times and [Daniela Jaime](#), [David Wahlberg](#), and [Lucas Robinson](#) from the Wisconsin State Journal. From Channel 3000 we recommend MAFPG follows sustainability reporter [Logan Rude](#) and reporter [Shane Hogan](#). Also, news anchors [Leigh Mills](#) and [Erin Sullivan](#) from NBC15 have a great community following on Twitter. We believe that following these reporters in the Madison community will allow MAFPG to build more engagement by retweeting, sharing, and replying to their posts.

In addition to other food pantries, MAFPG should follow churches, school groups, clubs and community groups that would allow them to gain volunteers. Some of these accounts are VolunteerMatch @VolunteerMatch, which connects people

to causes that matter to them. United Way of Dane County @Unitedwaydaneco, an organization that pairs local nonprofits with volunteers in order to create systemic change. Badger Volunteers, the volunteer network utilized by many UW students would be a great partner as they have a more engaged social following which could bolster the social strategy for MAFPG by retweeting and interacting with content. **We also recommend connecting with First Baptist Church of Madison (@FBCMAdison) and Door Creek Church (@DoorCreekChurch). Additionally, we recommend engagement with Madison NonprofitDay (@nonprofitday) as a way to showcase MAFPG to the community and get visibility from an audience interested in volunteer opportunities.**

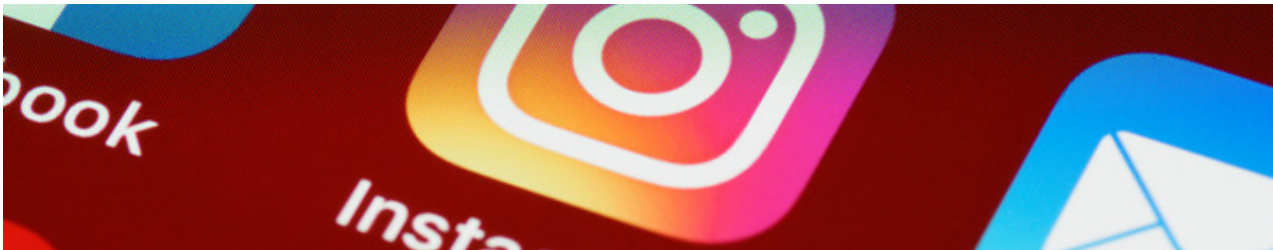
## **Follower Strategy**

### **Instagram:**

In order to gain new followers on Instagram, we suggest multiple actions that MAFPG can undertake to grow their account, reach a wider audience, and build brand loyalty.

**Our first suggestion is for MAFPG to connect with fellow nonprofit organizations** (such as those highlighted earlier) **on Instagram.** We feel that collaborations with larger organizations like this, will help to promote the organization and allow MAFPG's content to reach a broader audience.

Second, **we recommend that MAFPG consider allowing relevant, local spokespeople/influencers do account takeovers for a day to increase our social media engagement.** Media "events" such as takeovers create a more personalized and detailed account of what MAFPG does daily, which we feel will draw in more followers/attention.



**We recommend the following:**

- Reach out to **local food influencer Bria Lemirande** (135K Instagram followers / 1.8 million TikTok followers), in hopes that she will agree to attend the media day or make some mention of MAFPG on her social media platforms. We feel that this will engage both local and national audiences with the food bank, potentially garnering donations and volunteers. We think that her sustainable eating habits that she presents on TikTok will correlate easily with the media launch/Earth Week content we will be promoting!

- We could have someone such as **Matt or Tom take over Instagram for a day** so that followers can witness “expert” detailed explanations about the agricultural and sustainable practices that are used everyday at the Forward Gardens. This way, they can associate the sustainability goals of MAFPG with the real-time solutions that are in place on a deeper level.
- We could contact any **willing and experienced volunteer to take over the Instagram** account during one of the volunteer sessions held on Saturdays. This way, followers can get the perspective of a dedicated volunteer and discuss how to potentially get involved with the agricultural efforts made by MAFPG volunteers.

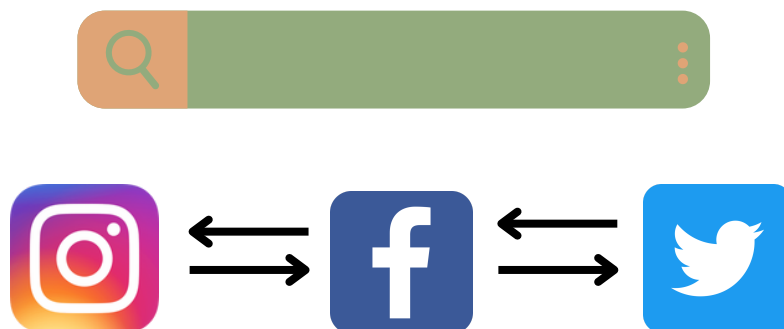


Currently, MAFPG is already a creator account on Instagram. We suggest switching from a creator account to a business account, as it unlocks a wider range of features and allows greater access to insights. Some of the functions of a business account that we feel that MAFPG should utilize are:

- the ability to add contact information directly into the bio,
- create Instagram ads, and
- add donation buttons to their bio and Instagram stories.

Integrating these features will make the account cleaner, more consistent, and will be attractive to potential followers, and allow users to easily donate or get in contact with MAFPG. Utilizing these features opens the doors for more people to reach out to MAFPG to volunteer, donate, give land, or request help for their community organization.

Additionally, **we recommend that the MAFPG Instagram be linked to the MAFPG Facebook, allowing consumers to easily navigate between channels.** This link would also allow us to see who follows MAFPG on one platform but not the other, making it easier to request they follow us on all their platforms.



Some other actions we recommend in order to grow follower counts and increase brand awareness are:

- Increasing the frequency of Instagram stories and Instagram reels.
- Improving hashtags to drive more outside engagement.
- Tagging businesses, local orgs, and people who contribute to MAFPG through donations and volunteering, on Instagram posts to increase awareness.

## Facebook:

In order to gain new followers on Facebook, our first suggestion for MAFPG is to strategically schedule their posts through the Meta Business Suite feature. By utilizing data from the MAFPG Facebook Analytics page, we can see the best times to post based on when users are active or interactive. **Currently, Sundays between 3-4 pm and Fridays at 6 pm are when MAFPG followers are most likely to be online.** This can be a starting point for the timing of the scheduled posts on Meta Business Suite. The more we look at engagement analytics, the more we can personalize our post times based on when people are most likely to see it.

“Currently, Sundays between 3-4 pm and Fridays at 6 pm are when MAFPG followers are most likely to be online.”



Second, **we recommend that MAFPG constantly circulate calls to action such as volunteer sign-up or ‘donate now’ links.** An example could be ‘Sign-up Sundays,’ where every Sunday we post a link to volunteer opportunities on our story and homepage. Not only does this utilize the Sunday slot in which



in which MAFPG fans are most active on Facebook, but it promotes weekly social media and volunteer engagement as well.

Another suggestion we have for the MAFPG Facebook is to **promote events**. We learned earlier that Facebook is one of the best platforms to do so. We recommend that MAFPG consistently make their events public on Facebook as it can increase engagement and networking opportunities (75).

Other recommendations we have for the MAFPG Facebook follower strategy include:

- regularly interacting with followers (comments and reactions),
- posting funny, visual and inspirational content (76),
- utilizing the 'boost post' feature, and
- following other related pages and organizations.

## **Twitter:**

In order to increase followers on Twitter, we recommend MAFPG interact with accounts that are relevant to their mission in the local and national community. This can be done by retweeting, commenting, and posting in order to be a part of the community conversation.

Twitter users primarily use the platform to keep up with the news. Our second recommendation for MAFPG is to use Twitter

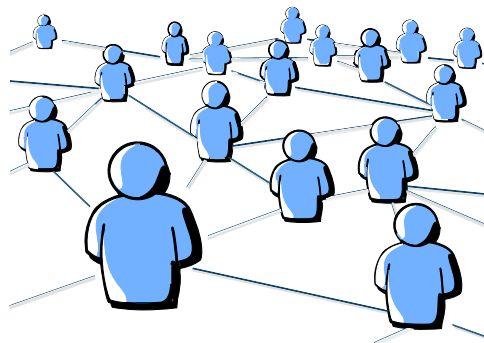
to use Twitter to post announcements about the organization such as who is volunteering that day/week, what produce they are growing, or more general information about sustainability, food security, and agriculture. **We learned the best time to post on Twitter is at 9 A.M. Wednesday and Friday,** so we recommend MAFPG schedules at least two posts per week at this time (78).



We also recommend retweeting posts about important Madison area news. We feel this will put MAFPG in a position where they are engaged with what is happening in their community. More specifically, **retweeting important announcements from local Madison food banks such as ones like Badger Prairie Needs Network where MAFPG has donated produce in the past.** We also recommend quoting tweets from these organizations. Quoting tweets is similar to a retweet, but it also includes a comment about the post you are retweeting. Examples of this can include supporting other local non-profits with a reply to their posts or responding to someone that posted a tweet about MAFPG. This way MAFPG engages with their community and keeps up with the conversation about their organization.

We feel MAFPG can also use their account to post donation links and volunteer opportunity sign ups. We recommend these posts to be concise and have a clear call to action such as, **“Learn more about volunteer opportunities” or “Donate today to help us garden”**. We believe these copies should be paired with a photo and a navigable link.

Another recommendation we have for MAFPG is to come up with and consistently use a unique brand hashtag like **“#MadisonAreaFoodPantryGardens” or “#MAFPG”**. We learned hashtags boost engagement and discoverability on Twitter (79). By having a brand hashtag, MAFPG will be able to track who is talking about their organization. We recommend MAFPG use this hashtag in their posts in order to amplify their organization’s mission and brand.



Our final recommendation to boost engagement and followers on Twitter is to utilize visuals. We learned that tweets with photos get up to three times more engagement compared to those that don’t (80). Photos, videos, and infographics are important to boosting engagement on Twitter because you

are only allowed 280 characters. **We recommend MAFPG uses infographics about the industry such as Madison food security and agriculture or post photos of their gardens and volunteers.** Other recommendations to increase followers and brand awareness include engaging with replies on posts, retweeting posts from accounts MAFPG follows, and to be original by refraining from posting the same thing over and over.



## **Follower Strategy**

Facebook is different in that the platform has the option to join groups, so MAFPG should utilize this opportunity and join groups related to their brand and mission in order to grow their followers.

MAFPG is currently not a part of any groups on Facebook. Our agency recommends that in order for MAFPG to grow their following and brand awareness they must join certain groups on Facebook. Joining groups is an important part of our strategy as it increases personal engagement and provides a call to action for users (81).

MAFPG could join Facebook groups that promote volunteer opportunities, particularly in Wisconsin and/or the Madison area, including:

- **Wisconsin Fundraising Events and Volunteer Opportunities.** The group, which has 705 members as of present, claims that it is a space to “post upcoming Fundraising Events and Volunteer Opportunities anywhere in Wisconsin! (82)”
- **Volunteer Opportunities in Madison, WI and Surrounding Areas (83).** This group has 43 members and “is a space where we can share volunteering opportunities. You may post anything you need help with or post what kind of volunteer opportunities you're looking for.” Since MAFPG welcomes volunteers who are children/families, groups that reach parents and kids looking for volunteer opportunities would also be a good opportunity.
- **Kid Volunteer Opportunities,** which has 2,800 members, is “a place to share with parents & kids our passion to help our community through volunteering and having fun. All families welcome. (84)”

Facebook groups that share similar interests to the organization would also be beneficial to join since these groups would allow MAFPG to reach **people who have similar interests** as the organization:

- Food and Gardens “is a good place for garden and food lovers. You can share your experiences & creations about gardening and food which others enjoy. (85)” The group has over 22,400 members.
- Outdoor Gardening, Plants and Seeds, Madison WI “focuses solely on outdoor gardening and plants, such as those grown for food or enjoyment, including annuals, perennials, natives, and landscaping (86)” and has 463 members.
- Midwest Garden Community features posts that are “related to gardening in the Midwest, tips and tricks to develop better gardens, and sharing everyone's wonderful gardening ideas, success, and failures. (87)” The group has over 28,400 members.

**MAFPG could join groups that share a similar mission to them. Non-profit organizations also want to help people in need, and, by following these organizations,** MAFPG could get more exposure to the inner workings of other non-profits, such as:

- Nonprofit Connection has 19,500 members and is “a place for nonprofits to connect to their constituents, donors, board members, volunteers, other nonprofits and the world at large (88).”
- Your Thriving Non Profit could also be beneficial to MAFPG since the group offers “peer support in the nonprofit sector.” The group has over 41,200 members and “as part of this



group you'll have the opportunity to interact with thousands of others who believe in the power of nonprofits to make positive change happen (89).”

Additional categories and recommended groups:

Sustainability	Farming	Education	Nutrition and Food Security
Sustainability	Agriculture/Farming the Modern Way	Department of Education	Nutrition
Small Farm, Sustainability & Homestead Living	Agricultural Farms Learning and Training Development	Education Group	Food Security
Eco-friendly, Sustainability, Ethical & Going Green	Farming hacks	Kids-Education	Sustainable Agriculture and Food Security
Sustainability and Environmental Conscious Community	Farming Ideas and Solutions	Kids Education	Food Security for Everyone

## **Social Media Post Ideas & Assets**

To carry out our social media plan, we recommend the following types of curated content and story ideas during the launch period. Below, there are post/tweet ideations and the images we need from our Creative Team before posting. **This includes a combination of unique posts about certain events at MAFPG and regular categories such as “Spokesperson Spotlight” that can be implemented to their social media strategy.**

### **Created Content:**

- Land sustainability and how MAFPG uses their land: given current events, we recommend emphasis on this the week of April 17th as a top priority.
- Spokesperson spotlight (Instagram & Facebook): photo of spokesperson with a short bio and a fun fact. By April 17
- Food insecurity infographic (Instagram & Facebook): visually appealing and easy to read
- How the food is grown reel (Instagram): video at the site to show how the food is grown and harvested
- Volunteer spotlight: (Instagram and Facebook): photo of volunteer with short bio and fun fact

- Food Pantry/ Who is impacted by MAFPG (Instagram/Facebook/LinkedIn): highlight food pantries/people impacted through photos and short captions about how MAFPG has helped.
- Timely announcements (Twitter, LinkedIn): promote events and important announcements.
- Where does our food go? Highlight pantries and other spots food from the gardens is delivered to.
- Quick and easy volunteer/donate sign-up link (regularly posted to engage with potential volunteers).
  - Sign-up Sunday.
- Our impact in the past: how many lbs of food, how many people helped, infographic.

### **Curated Content:**

- Reposts from media sites (announcements).
- Stories about sustainability - repost stories/posts from other accounts regarding Earth Day, sustainability in Madison, the benefits of food pantries, etc.
- Stories about food insecurity - repost from our recommend following list of Churches, nonprofits, and other organizations that post relevant infographics regarding food insecurity.
- Stories about food pantries and how they work.

Social Media Calendar April-May

Our suggested social media calendar covers social content for the months of April through May on the platforms Instagram, Facebook and Twitter.

Instagram

Facebook

Twitter

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>9th</b>  sign up sunday (story)  sign up sunday  sign up sunday	<b>10th</b>  Updated infographic showing all the different types of produce grown at MAFPG	<b>11st</b>  retweet story about sustainability	<b>12nd</b>  Meet Matt!  Meet Matt!	<b>13rd</b>  press day	<b>14th</b>  food pantry spotlight  food pantry spotlight retweet from local food pantry	<b>15th</b>
<b>16th</b>  sign up sunday (feed carousel post) sign up sunday sign up sunday happy earth week! happy earth week!	<b>17th</b>  Forward Garden & Phase II Capital Announcement Forward Garden & Phase II Capital Announcement Forward Garden & Phase II Capital Announcement	<b>18th</b>  earth week post  earth week post  earth week post	<b>19th</b>  earth week post  earth week post  earth week post	<b>20th</b>  sustainability spotlight  sustainability spotlight	<b>21st</b>  how MAFPG grow their produce (reel/videos)  how MAFPG grow their produce (reel/videos)	<b>22nd</b>  earth day sustainability  earth day sustainability  earth day sustainability

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>23rd</b>	<b>24th</b>	<b>25th</b>	<b>26th</b>	<b>27th</b>	<b>28th</b>	<b>29th</b>
sign up sunday (story)	volunteer spotlight volunteer spotlight		sustainability farming story retweet sustainability farming story retweet		impact MAFPG of impact MAFPG of Impact MAFPG of	

### Best times to post:

- Twitter: Wednesday and Friday at 9am
- Instagram: Wednesday 11am and Friday 10-11am (according to lecture)
- Facebook: Sunday 3-4pm and Friday 6pm (according to when current MAFPG fans are online)

## Social Media Guidelines

**General Theme:** Green and orange colors (ex: logo) with block sans serif fonts.

**Logo:** The logo keeps similar imagery as before, however we have removed the text "we plant we grow we feed" and replaced it with just the words of MAFPG. We have made this change in order to make the logo more recognizable on socials and easier to read as it appears small when viewed from a mobile device.



**Brand Personality & Tone:** Educational, positive, encouraging

**Posting frequency:** We aim to post on most days, however focusing most scheduled posts for Sunday, Monday, Wednesday and Friday with timely content, reposts and retweets in between. This schedule works the best to provide users with content and gain social traction without making users overwhelmed or posting unnecessary content.

**Posting duplication:** We will duplicate certain posts across mediums such as the sign-up Sunday links, spokesperson spotlights, and big announcements. Instagram Feed posts (excluding reels) will also appear on Facebook as it is relevant to both mediums. Twitter will focus more on interacting with other users' content through replies and retweets and will not push the same visuals as the other platforms. Overall, mediums will be



used differently based on the format of the platform with Instagram focusing on the production of high quality photos and videos, Twitter for local interaction, and Facebook for pictures and event promoting/ announcements.

**Time allowed to respond to comments:** We will aim to reply as soon as possible, but are committed to replying within 24 hours after initial comment.

**Which comments warrant a reply:** All comments from actual users (not bots) should be replied to on Instagram and Facebook in order to boost audience engagement whether they are positive, negative or questions. Tweets do not need to be replied to unless it is regarding a question that may be helpful to others users, however positive mentions should be liked or retweeted.

## **Social Media Posts**

### **April 9th: Sign-up Sunday**

- Story with MAFPG logo and photos of volunteers with a link to sign up to volunteer on the MAFPG website (Instagram & Facebook)
  - \*POST AT 4PM\*
- Copy: “Sign Up Sunday! Get Involved today” \*click here link that takes user directly to MAFPG volunteer sign up page.



## April 10th: Infographic

- Infographic detailing the different culturally relevant produce grown at the MAFPG gardens (Instagram, Facebook)
  - \*POST 12PM\*
- Caption: With the help of donors and volunteers we supply pantries with culturally relevant food such as okra, cilantro, mustard greens and more! Click the link in our bio to see all the ways you can help provide culturally relevant food to the Madison community.



## April 11th: Retweet

- Timely story about sustainable farming (Twitter)
  - \*POST 10AM\*

## April 12th: Meet Matt!

- Spotlight on Matt. Photo of Matt with a bio on the work he has done for MAFPG. (Instagram, Facebook)
  - \*POST 11AM\*
- Caption: Meet the person who makes it all possible, our farm manager Matt! Matt returned to Madison to
- help manage the Forward Garden in 2020 after working for the UC-Davis arboretum and small organic farms in California. When he is not at the garden Matt loves to enjoy nature and spend time with his two kids Hazel and Oliver! Click the link in our bio to help Matt in our newest Forward Garden!





## April 14th: Food Pantry Spotlight

- Spotlight of a local food pantry that is impacted by MAFPG (Extended Hands Mobile Food Pantry) (Instagram & Facebook)
  - \*POST 10AM\*
- Copy: Extended Hands Mobile Food Pantry is one of over 30 food pantries and community organizations that we provided fresh, first-choice produce to. The organization is a volunteer-driven, faith-based organization that provides groceries and essentials to those in need. In addition to their food pantry, Extended Hands provides tutoring to children in low-income neighborhoods.



## April 16th: Sign-up Sunday Feed Post

- Why volunteer? Infographic listing positives about volunteering for the community followed by link to sign up to be MAFPG volunteer (Instagram, Facebook)
  - \*POST 4PM\*
- Copy: Happy sign-up Sunday! There are so many benefits to volunteering with Madison Area Food Pantry Gardens, join us today by clicking the link in our bio and we can't wait to see you soon. #SignUpSunday #MAFPG



## April 16th: Happy Earth Week!

- Post reminding users that it's Earth Week (Instagram, Facebook, Twitter)
  - \*POST 12PM\*
- Copy: Happy #EarthWeek from MAFPG! Comment below ways you plan on making a positive impact on the earth this week :) #EarthWeek #MAFPG



## April 17th: Forward Garden & Phase II Capital Announcements (in same posts - focus on sustainability)

- Announce the purchase of Forward Garden with a photo of the garden (Instagram, Facebook, Twitter)
  - \*POST 10AM\*
- Copy: We have exciting news to announce... Forward Garden is officially owned by MAFPG. We can't wait to use this land sustainably to give back to our community by providing more fresh produce to local food pantries. Click the link in our bio to learn how you can help donate towards our phase II capital sustainability plan! #MAFPG #ForwardGarden





## April 18th: Earth Week Post

- Focus on produce and increased volume attributed to Forward Garden (Instagram, Facebook, Twitter)
  - \*POST 10AM\*
- Copy: Owning #ForwardGarden allows MAFPG to maintain the 12 acres for agricultural use and ensure sustainable practices. During the three-year rental period, Forward Garden has yielded approximately 80,000 total pounds of produce — 23,000 pounds in 2020, 26,500 pounds in 2021 and 29,000 pounds in 2022. In 2023, MAFPG aims to increase Forward Garden's output to 34,000 pounds #MAFPG #EarthWeek



## April 19th: Earth Week Post

- Focus on volunteering (Instagram, Facebook, Twitter)
  - \*POST 10AM\*
- Copy: During this #EarthWeek, look into spending some time outside and giving back to the community. Volunteers of all ages, backgrounds and group sizes are welcome, no previous gardening experience necessary. The organization schedules “open work sessions” four days a week where individuals can volunteer their efforts towards a wide array of gardening tasks #MAFPG



## **April 20th: Sustainability Spotlight**

- Ways YOU can live a more sustainable life (Instagram, Facebook)
  - \*POST 11AM\*
- Copy: In honor of earth week, take some time to think about the small changes you can make to make a positive impact on the earth! Whether it's using less plastic, recycling and composting or shopping organic there are many ways to help make the world a greener place! #EarthWeek

## **April 21st: How MAFPG grows and harvests their produce reel**

- Reel/video onsite showing volunteers planting/ watering crops (Instagram, Facebook)
  - \*POST 10AM\*
- Caption: Watch how our volunteers transform seeds into nutritious food! Wanna give it a try? Click the link in our bio for more information on how to become a MAFPG volunteer! #MAFPG #Volunteer #EarthWeek

## April 22nd: Earth Day sustainability

- How MAFPG uses sustainable farming practices. Water collection and conservation, crop rotation, composting, soil tilling. (Instagram, Facebook)
- Image: carousel post. First slide with text saying Earth Day. Additional slides showing 1. Water collection, 2. Composting, 3. Crop rotation, 4. Soil tilling
- Waiting for visual asset from creative
- Caption: Today is #EarthDay! On this day, we want to highlight sustainable farming, which is so important here at MAFPG. Scroll through the images to see some of the practices we utilize.
- Story Repost On Sustainability
- Repost a timely local post from a news organization talking about sustainable practices (Instagram)
- Retweet On Sustainability
- Retweet a local story about sustainability or farming practices. (Twitter)

## April 23rd: Sign-up Sunday

- Story post detailing FAQs with a link to sign up to volunteer. Add story to highlight section in Instagram bio. (Instagram)



## April 24th: Volunteer spotlight/story

- Picture of volunteer with small bio about their experience volunteering for MAFPG
- Caption: Meet \*FIRST AND LAST NAME\*— One of our MAFPG volunteers. \*NAME\* said \*QUOTE\*. By volunteering with MAFPG \*NAME\* is able to make a huge difference in the community by ensuring access to fresh produce for EVERYONE! Learn more about our mission and how you can help by clicking the link in our bio.



## April 26th: Sustainability Story

- How water collection and drip irrigation is used at Forward Garden
- Copy: To farm more sustainably, we use rainwater collection and drip irrigation at our Forward Garden in order to farm and harvest more sustainably! #MAFPG #FoodPantryGarden #SustainableFarming



## April 28th: Impact of MAFPG

- Highlight how much food MAFPG has provided to the community.
- Copy: With the help of volunteers and donors, we are able to supply over 100,000 pounds of produce per season to support the creation of statewide nutrition security. In 2022 our total produce donated was 118,893 pounds, valued at over \$230,000!! Click the link in our bio to find out how you can be a part of providing access to fresh produce to everyone!



# HAPPY EARTH WEEK!

APRIL 16TH - 22ND

## Social Media Results Report

## Change in # of followers:

Facebook and Instagram:



Twitter: Increase of 10 followers

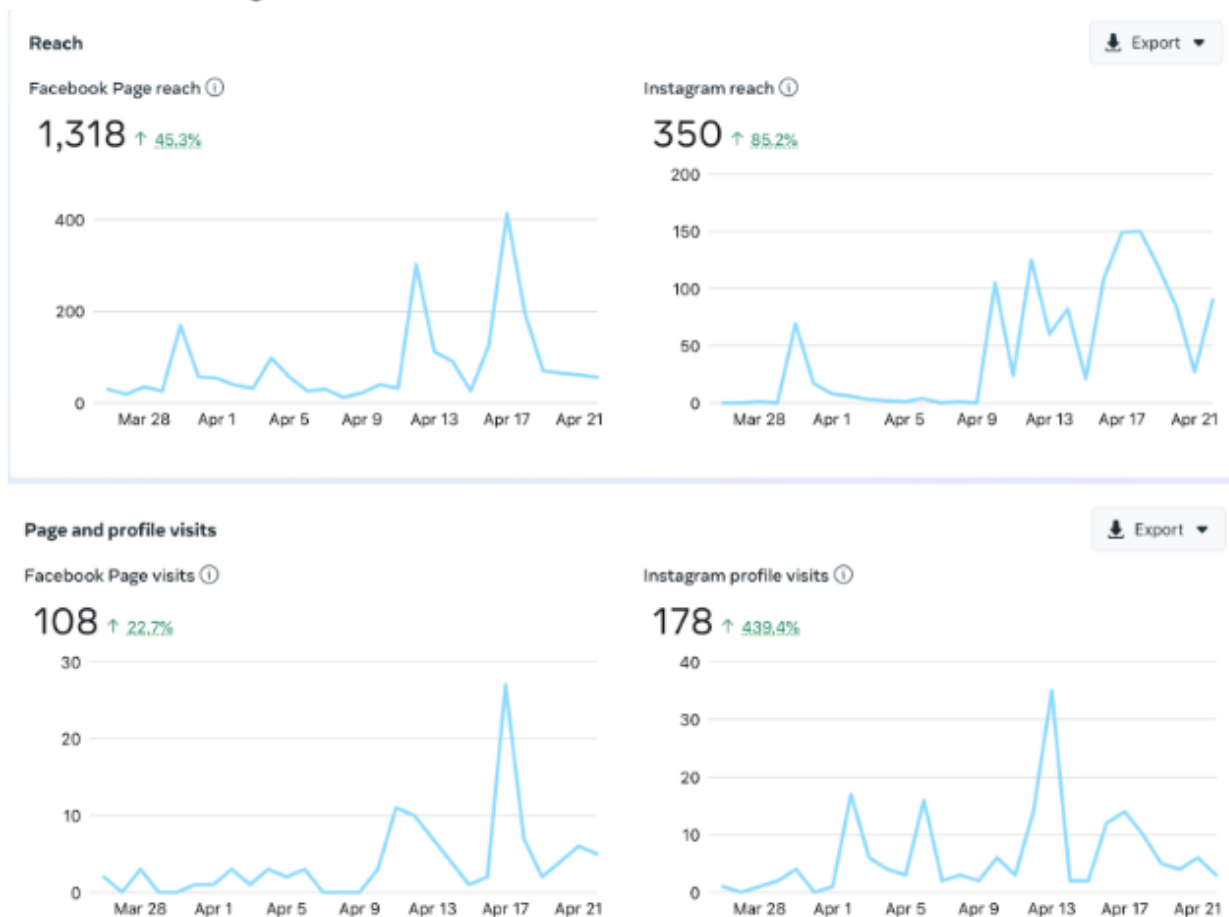
## Engagement rate and examples:

- **Instagram:** Since we've taken over the MAFPG Instagram, we have seen a 89.1% increase in accounts reached, a 190% increase in accounts engaged, and a 6.5% increase in total followers. We saw a 66% increase in accounts reached with our first post after taking over the account, showing an immediate increase in awareness and engagement. Overall, Instagram has been a valuable tool in establishing more brand awareness and increasing engagement with the brand.

- **Facebook:** Before we took over the Facebook account, the highest number of likes on a post was 10 since the start of 2023. Our highest liked post massively surpassed that number as it nearly tripled at 29 likes. Our posts have accumulated a total of 89 likes, seven comments and four shares.
- **Twitter:** While engagement is still low due to Twitters limited follower count, engagements on posts mentioning MAFPG is rising, thus bringing more attention to the account.

## Impressions/reach of posts:

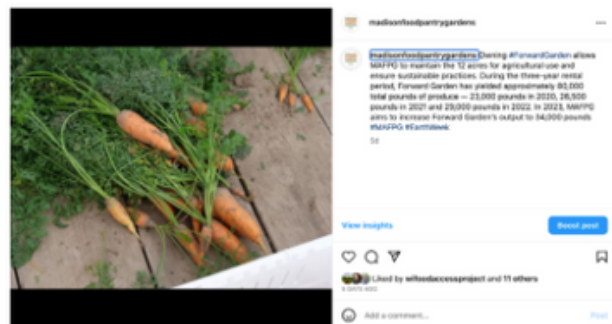
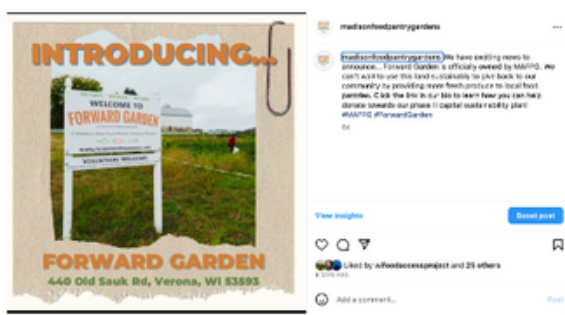
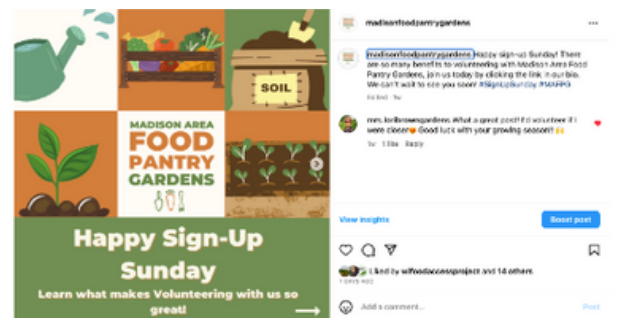
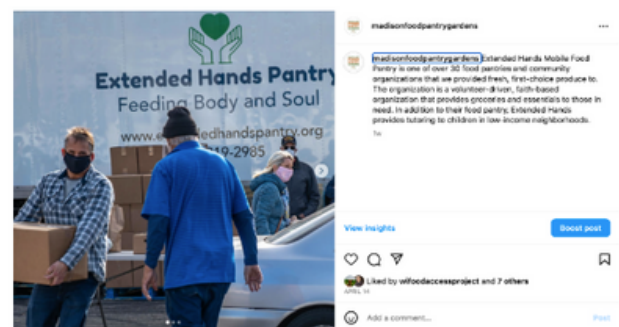
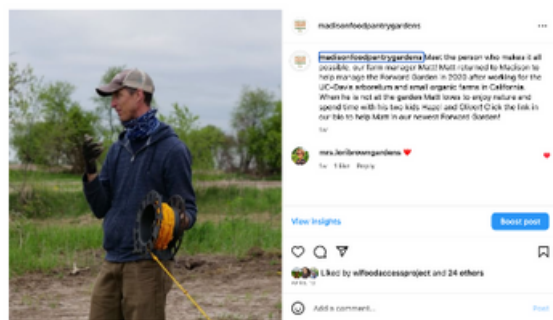
### Facebook and Instagram:

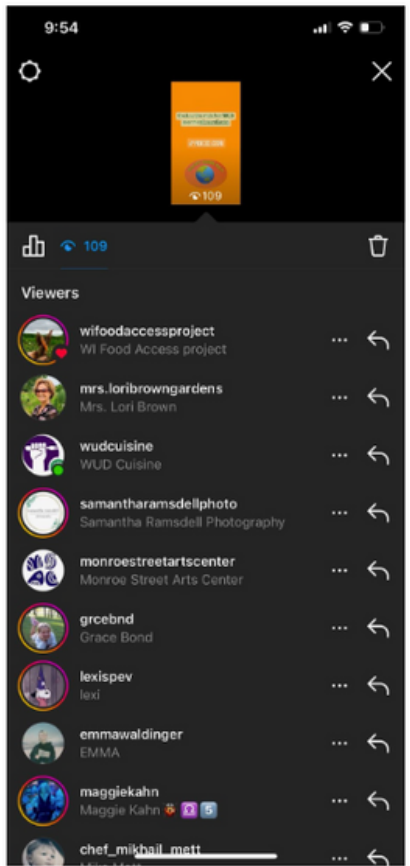


Twitter: On average each tweet is viewed 15-16 times

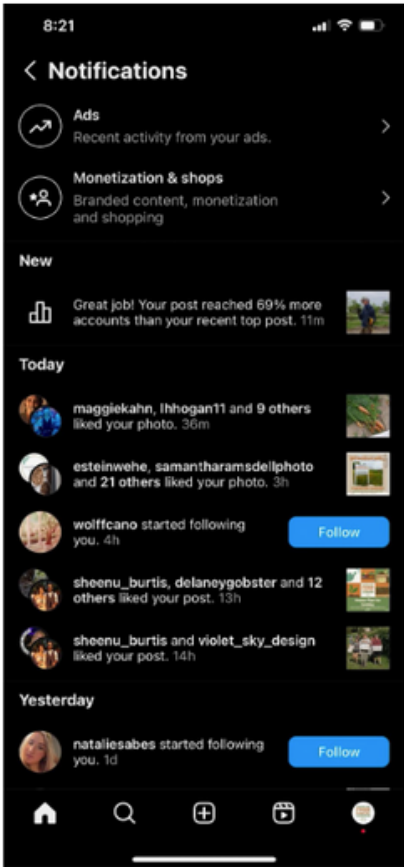
## Visual examples of final posts, retweets, shares:

Instagram:









Facebook:





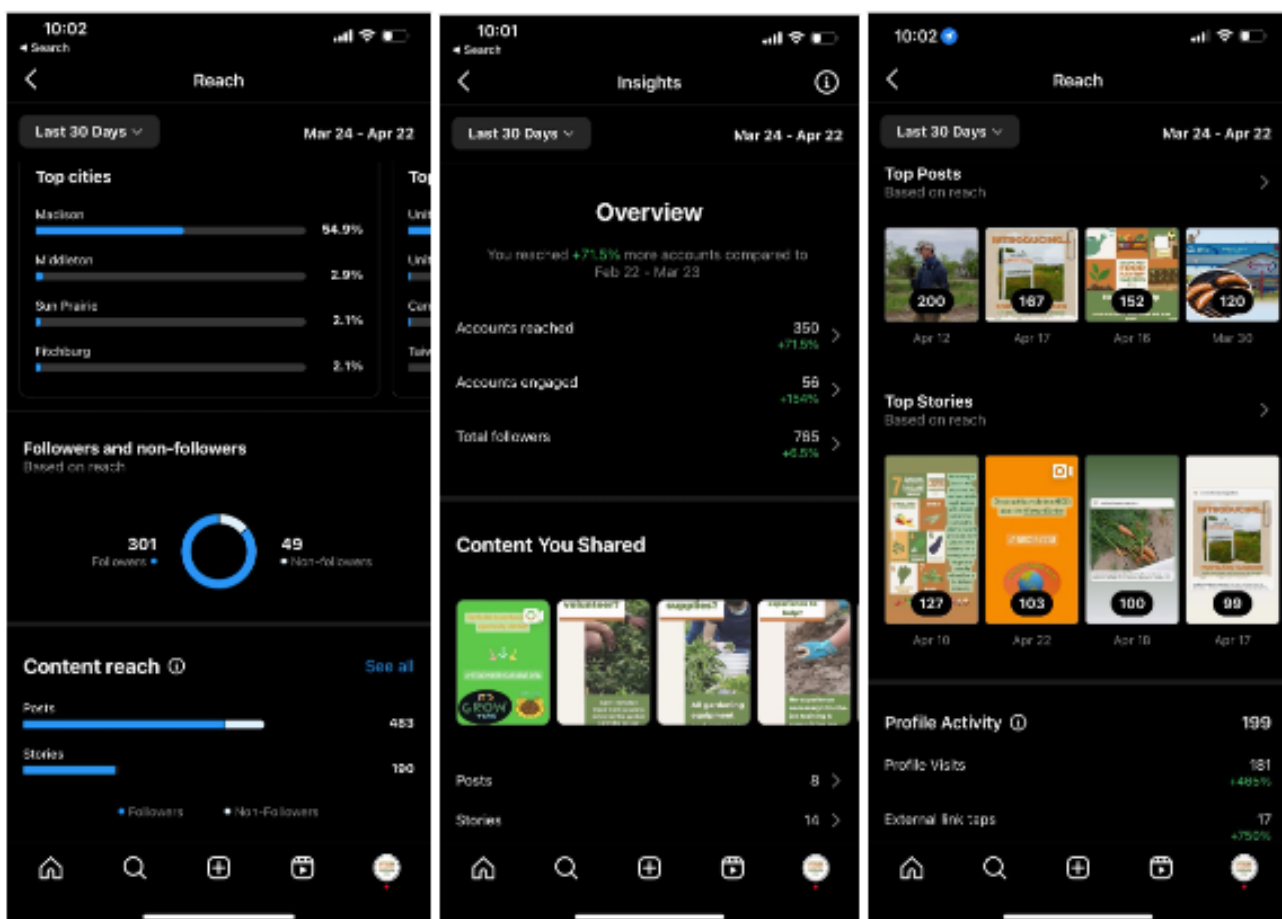
Twitter:



## Etc. - any other pertinent result:

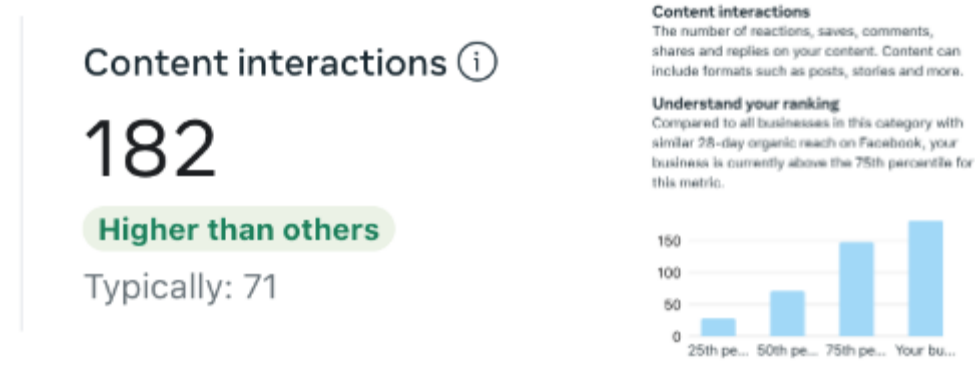
### Instagram:

As is indicated by our profile insights page, within the last month we've had success in reaching non-followers and getting them to engage with our content via shares, profile visits, and clicking the links in our bio or shared in stories!



## Facebook:

When comparing MAFPG against businesses in the Non-Profits & Religious Organizations category, the content interactions within the last month, when we had control of the social media, is at 182, which is more than double what the typical content interactions are for similar businesses.



## Twitter:

NBC 15 News shared their story on MAFPG on their Twitter account and reached 1,508 accounts and got 2 retweets and 5 likes. In addition, NBC 15 News has 63k followers who will potentially see the news coverage.




# 13

## Press Kit



## Diversity and Inclusion Fact Sheet



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### MAFPG's commitment to diversity and inclusion

Both Madison Area Food Pantry Gardens' (MAFPG) objective — providing first-choice, fresh, nutritious and culturally relevant produce to local food pantries — and its volunteer experience are tailored toward the diverse Dane County community. From ethnic minorities to those with disabilities, MAFPG strives to serve and accommodate everyone in the Madison area.

#### Diversity and nutrition insecurity in Dane County

Dane County is home to a diverse population of various races and ethnic groups. The July 2021 Census reported the following demographic breakdown in the county:

- 78.3 percent White (not Hispanic or Latino)
- 6.9 percent Hispanic or Latino
- 6.5 percent Asian
- 5.7 percent Black or African American
- 3 percent who identify as more than one race/ethnicity
- 0.5 percent American Indian

The State of Wisconsin has a lower nutrition insecurity rate than the US as a whole. That said, people of color are much more likely to experience nutrition insecurity in Wisconsin than their white counterparts. Further, minority groups face higher nutrition insecurity rates in WI than they do in the US overall. Here is the breakdown of nutrition insecurity by demographic in the US compared to Wisconsin.

- All households: 14.4 percent US, 11.6 percent WI
- White: 10.9 percent US, 8.7 percent WI
- Hispanic/Latino: 23.8 percent US, 34.5 percent WI
- African American: 25.5 percent US, 34.6 percent WI

### **Culturally relevant produce**

Madison Area Food Pantry Gardens (MAFPG) recognizes the diversity in Dane County and aims to help underserved communities develop and maintain nutritious diets. The organization periodically distributes a survey to clients of its food pantry partners to learn which specific items the community demands. In fact, a couple years ago MAFPG added this – providing local food pantries with culturally relevant produce – to its mission.

Currently, MAFPG serves the needs of minority cuisines with crops such as:

- Cilantro
- Okra
- Eggplant
- Mustard greens
- Bok choy
- Collard greens
- Jícama
- Sweet potatoes



Individuals and families are more likely to incorporate fruits and vegetables into their diets if those plants are familiar elements of their native cuisine(s). MAFPG will continue collecting community feedback and recommendations on new crops to grow.

### **Inclusivity at Forward Garden**

MAFPG encourages volunteers to visit Forward Garden and get involved, no matter their physical abilities. Plans to improve accessibility and inclusivity at Forward Garden include the following investments:

- Carts, dollies and other material-handling equipment to relieve volunteers from carrying heavy loads
- An ADA-compliant bathroom in the Farmhouse and an ADA-compliant portable toilet.
- Mobility support vehicle(s), such as a John Deere Gator or Polaris Ranger
- The Action Trackchair: an all-terrain wheelchair
- Additional raised, easy-access plant beds

MAFPG also plans to host special education students. This includes 18-21-year-olds in Madison Metropolitan School District's Transition Planning for Students with Disabilities, who will receive opportunities for vocational training.

###




### **About Madison Area Food Pantry Gardens**

Madison Area Food Pantry Gardens is a volunteer-powered nonprofit which provides more than 30 Dane County food pantries that serve low-income clients with fresh, nutritious and

culturally relevant fruits and vegetables from its 11 gardens. The organization aims to address nutrition insecurity while prioritizing sustainable gardening practices and community education about the food system. During the last two decades, MAFPG has donated more than 2.2 million pounds of produce to local area food pantries through the support of over 13,000 volunteers.

## Food Pantries Fact Sheet



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### **New Capitol I Campaign Helps MAFPG Better Serve Local Food Pantries**

Food pantries are located all around the world, but many lack nutritious food grown right in their respective communities. Dane County is an exception to this, thanks to the efforts of Madison Area Food Pantry Gardens (MAFPG). MAFPG has supplied more than 30 local food pantries since 2000 with fresh produce from its 11 local gardens, planted and harvested by area volunteers.

Currently, one in 14 people in Wisconsin is facing hunger and 11.8 percent of people in Dane County are facing nutrition insecurity. Food pantries are a key resource for those without access to nutritional food. Dane County is home to approximately 50 food pantries where individuals and families can directly receive food.

MAFPG is committed to providing these local food pantries with fresh, locally-grown produce. The organization has donated an estimated two million pounds from its gardens since 2000,

feeding thousands in the Dane County community. Dr. Brian Arndt, MAFPG's development director, notes that "produce consumption is essential to creating community-level nutrition security."

MAFPG's partnering food pantries offer a wide range of amenities, services, and cultural focuses. One of the biggest pantries MAFPG provides is St. Vincent de Paul, where clients can receive food through DoorDash, online orders, and a drive-through site. The addition of this food pantry in 2009, which is the largest in Dane County, gave MAFPG the opportunity to increase crop production and refrigerator capacity.

One objective food pantries also strive to accomplish is to understand how everything is connected in regard to nutrition insecurity. Arndt mentions, "It is critical to understand factors leading to low produce consumption among individuals in low-income communities in Wisconsin..." In addition to this, there is an immense amount of value "... to identify roles and relationships among partners in the emergency food system's produce supply chain who can collaborate to increase it." There is a goal to feed those in need but there is also a goal to find solutions and resources for people to ensure that fewer of them have to resort to food pantries due to food nutritional insecurity.

MAFPG recognizes the various cultures within the community and has made it a mission to supply food pantries with more diverse foods. Furthermore, they have paired with more food pantries that reflect a wider variety of the community for example such as the Catholic Multicultural Center, the Hmong Institute, and Badger Prairie Needs Network.

Food pantries serve as more than just food distribution centers. These pantries provide people with a sense of community, culture, and safety. It is not just a pick-up for food but rather an impactful

shopping experience. “They are dignified spaces... and are an opportunity for participants to stock up on their favorite items, try things they never have before... just as we all do when we pick our groceries,” said Bayview Foundation Outreach Program Leader Tess Stroh.

The impact food pantries can have goes beyond just the food. These organizations have grown to educate and represent all groups across the community. For example, the Badger Prairie Needs Network (BPNN) has formed a partnership with the Latino Academy to “expand their impact on the Latinx Community,” according to Dagny Knight, a BPNN volunteer. Food pantries also continue to pursue these culturally significant efforts through the food that they bring in. “There is always an abundance of apples, potatoes, and carrots, but these are not our resident’s preferred items,” says Tess Stroh. Instead, The Bayview Foundation looks for foods that pertain to Asian, African, and Central American cuisine, such as exotic leafy greens, okra, eggplant varieties, etc. to ensure that they are inclusive to all cultures within the area.

###

### **About Madison Area Food Pantry Gardens**




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insecurity while prioritizing sustainable gardening practices and community education about the food system. During the last two decades, MAFPG has donated more than 2.2 million pounds of produce to local area food pantries through the support of over 13,000 volunteers.



## Lead Release



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### **Madison Area Food Pantry Gardens launches Phase II Capital Funding Campaign to advance sustainability efforts**

Announcement follows recent purchase of 12-acre Forward Garden property

MIDDLETON, WI (April 17, 2023) - Madison Area Food Pantry Gardens (MAFPG) launched its Phase II Capital Funding Campaign today to further sustainability efforts at Forward Garden, the 12-acre Middleton property it recently purchased as its primary garden and new headquarters.

While MAFPG has already utilized several sustainable agricultural practices, the \$500,000 Phase II Capital Funding Campaign will allow the nonprofit organization to install a new ecologically friendly irrigation system, invest in superior soil conditioning equipment and expand its composting program, among other improvements – all of which will maintain Forward Garden as a productive, sustainable plot of land for years to come. MAFPG's March 29, \$1.57 million purchase of

Forward Garden allows the organization to double the production of fruits and vegetables it grows for local food pantries and increase education opportunities regarding sustainable agriculture.

“Phase II will help us reduce water waste and better care for Forward Garden’s soil,” said Forward Garden Manager Matt Lechmaier. “We do our best to be good stewards of the land, and this funding will aid MAFPG in that mission.”

MAFPG is a volunteer-powered nonprofit which provides more than 30 Dane County food pantries that serve low-income clients with fresh, nutritious and culturally relevant fruits and vegetables from its 10 gardens. MAFPG has grown and donated more than 2 million pounds of produce for the Dane County Emergency food system.

“Purchasing Forward Garden and continuing to invest in it will further MAFPG’s mission to farm sustainably, promote healthy diets and educate the community about the food system in the Dane County area,” said Dr. Brian Arndt, MAFPG Development Director and site lead of UW Health’s Verona Family Medicine Clinic.

## **Owning Forward Garden**

MAFPG’s purchase of Forward Garden was possible thanks to a successful Phase I Capital Campaign. This entailed Arndt’s fundraising work, a number of community donors’ contributions and the Dane County Parks Commission, which approved a \$660,000 grant on March 2.

“Taking ownership of Forward Garden and improving the infrastructure there will allow us to more than double our annual donation of locally grown produce and amplify our impact even further,” said Dr. Arndt, who’s also an associate professor in UW-Madison’s Department of Family Medicine. “We are excited to continue to make investments in improving soil health and sustainability practices.”

For three years MAFPG rented Forward Garden from its former owners, the Pope/Zoerb family, but owning the land offers several advantages. For one, it eliminates the potential for development on the 12-acre property – while housing developments fill the surrounding area, Forward Garden will be dedicated solely to garden space, infrastructure and any other additions MAFPG may make. Additionally, ownership allows MAFPG to employ a more sustainable long-term approach to cultivating Forward Garden.

### **Farming sustainably**

While renting, MAFPG hasn’t known its future on the property, so it has planted and cultivated Forward Garden with just the current growing season in mind. “With an annual lease, growers are typically tempted to get maximum yield each year at the expense of the long-term fertility of the soil,” Lechmaier said.

The Phase II Campaign will fund numerous sustainable upgrades to Forward Garden. One such improvement is the addition of hydrants and a drip irrigation system, which MAFPG was hesitant to install before owning the property. To date, the sloped Forward Garden has used a less efficient, gravity-powered irrigation system.

“Hydrants will make healthier crops and more productive yields,” Lechmaier said. “You’re not watering weeds or space you don’t have plants growing on. You’re putting water right at the base of the plants. It’s a really efficient use of natural resources and it minimizes negative impacts of adding water to soil on a slope, which can include runoff and erosion.”

Many growers (and MAFPG at times) use rototillers to quickly turn up soil and distribute fertilizer before planting, but this is detrimental to the soil’s long-term health. MAFPG plans to invest in more advanced soil conditioning equipment as Phase II funding rolls in.

“I have ideas of equipment to pursue in the future when we have the funding to do so,” Lechmaier said. “There are other things we’ve never had in our inventory which are much better at maintaining soil health and structural stability.”

Phase II will fund a new equipment shed to protect these investments and enable MAFPG’s sustainable farming practices for years to come.

MAFPG will also expand composting efforts at Forward Garden. The compost program collected 14,363 pounds of compost from its inception in April 2022 through the end of the year, partnering with the following local businesses: These Days Juice Company, BeneBlends, Forage Kitchen and EpleGaarden. In 2023, MAFPG hopes to establish additional partnerships and collect 35,000 pounds of compost, which replenishes soil’s nutrients while increasing its moisture-holding capacity.

Forward Garden’s sustainable practices have already included

minimizing rototilling when possible, using cover crops, adding pollinator-supporting native gardens and installing buffer strips to reduce erosion, among others.

## **Serving and educating the community**

Another product of Phase II fundraising will be improved volunteer accommodations such as mobility support vehicles, an ADA-compliant portable toilet and improvements to the Pope Farm Homestead at Forward Garden. MAFPG views volunteers not only as necessary farmhands, but also as students. Renovations to the homestead, including kitchen and classroom space, will ensure visitors, especially young ones, learn how their fruits and vegetables get from farm to table.

“I just think it’s so valuable that people know where their food is coming from,” said MAFPG President Tom Parslow, a former teacher. “That’s what we hope to accomplish with this purchase.”

“We have a serious disconnect in this part of the world,” Lechmaier added. “A lot of people, if you ask them where their veggies are coming from, it’s the corner store. They don’t really understand what goes into producing the things they’re consuming. A lot of things are highly processed and don’t even look like what they did initially. Having awareness of the work that goes in, and the nutritional value of the things they’re eating, is really important. Also, exposing students to fresh produce early in their lives helps develop an appreciation for those items early on and helps establish good eating habits.”

Children volunteering at Forward Garden, such as the Lussier Community Education Center group which visits weekly in the summer, can witness and participate in a crop's entire process, from planting it outdoors to processing it in the homestead. Phase II renovations will enhance this educational experience and attract more volunteers, rain or shine.

"There's a lot of empowerment to that," Lechmaier said. "If they come out a couple times, they feel a sense of ownership of that space. They feel like they're actually making a difference in the community, helping to serve the families they know and go to school with."

MAFPG also empowers community groups by catering to their specific cuisines. By growing culturally relevant ingredients, which it learns about through a survey distributed to food pantry clients, MAFPG strives to make healthy diets familiar and accessible to Dane County's Hispanic, Hmong, African American and other minority communities. Survey results have led MAFPG to grow crops including bok choy, cilantro, collard greens and okra, to name a few. Forward Garden and its Phase II

improvements will allow MAFPG to continue learning from the community and better respond to its needs, while still simultaneously educating its visitors about incorporating these vegetables into nutritious diets.

"This education is so valuable to the community," Parslow said. "Using public funds is the way to do it."

"We've come across so many people who have contributed to



our effort,” Parslow said. “I’m just so excited for them and the whole idea of owning this land.”

“MAFPG is incredibly grateful for the long-standing history of community support for our mission over the past 22 years,” Arndt said. “We are excited to continue to work with several community partners and donors who see MAFPG as part of the solution to increase the produce supply in the local emergency food system.”




###

### **About Madison Area Food Pantry Gardens**

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## Media Visual Advisory



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### **Madison Area Food Pantry Gardens to host media site visit day Thursday, April 13th**

Event to showcase sustainability impact of Forward Garden  
Purchase and Phase II Capital Funding Campaign

#### **WHAT:**

Media Site Visit Day

#### **WHEN:**

Thursday, April 13th, 2023, from 9:00 a.m. to Noon CST

Rain date: Friday, April 14th, 2023, from 9:00 a.m. to Noon CST

#### **WHERE:**

Forward Garden

7440 Old Sauk Rd, Verona, WI 53593

#### **WHO:**

Volunteers and board members associated with the nonprofit organization, Madison Area Food Pantry Gardens (MAFPG), will be on-site and available for interviews - both on and off camera:

- Tom Parslow: MAFPG President
- Dr. Brian Arndt: MAFPG Development Director and UW Health Verona Family Medicine Clinic
- Linda Hershberger: MAFPG Farm Manager and Land Doner
- Matt Lechmaier: MAFPG Forward Garden Farm Manager
- Darcie Van Dop: MAFPG Marketing and PR Team Lead
- Jane Mount: MAFPG marketing and PR specialist
- Nick Heckman: Public Health Planner - Policy and Food Security, Public Health, Dane County
- Jess Guffey Calkins: Community Food Systems Educator, Dane County Extension
- Natalie Erdmann: Volunteer & Donor
- Tom Linfield: Madison Community Foundation's Stephanie Berg: Exact Sciences employee engagement partner
- Jane Mount: MAFPG Board Member
- Dagney Knight: Badger Prairie Needs Network staff member

### **WHY:**

MAFPG is announcing its Phase II Capital Funding Campaign following its purchase of Forward Garden last month. Attending this media day will provide the opportunity to create a timely and compelling visual narrative of MAFPG's sustainability efforts and its impact on Madison and Dane County, in time for package stories to launch during Earth Week.

### **SEE:**

See Forward Gardens in action; camera crews can expect to see the following:

- The fields and soils of Forward Gardens, where MAFPG grows produce to feed Dane County
- The sustainable agricultural practices Forward Garden uses to protect the natural environment such as irrigation systems

and a compost pile

- MAFPG volunteers and board members in action and providing interviews
- Visual renderings of Forward Gardens layouts and future visual items
- Close-up shots of freshly harvested produce – colorful fruits and vegetables ready for distribution to Dane County food pantries
- Various shots of volunteers and board members working on various tasks such as composting, weeding, tilling

### **EXPERIENCE:**

Come explore the grounds of Forward Farms. Learn more about MAFPG's Phase II Capital Funding Campaign as you walk the fields of Forward Garden. Attendees will be able to learn about the agricultural practices Forward Gardens intends to use for this year's and future harvests. Experience the preparations for this year's planting season and learn more about how MAFPG intends to use sustainable practices in their agricultural practices. Come and see the grounds where MAFPG will grow produce that will feed Dane County.

### **HEAR:**

- Spokesperson interviews from key speakers discussing MAFPG's mission statement and plans for the future.
- Sounds of wildlife and birds that inhabit the local ecosystem surrounding Forward Garden




###

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## Sustainability Fact Sheet



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### Sustainability at Madison Area Food Pantry Gardens

Sustainable agriculture ‘best practices’ have been at the forefront of Madison Area Food Pantry Gardens’ (MAFPG) operations since the organization’s inception. Looking ahead, the launch of the Phase II Capital Funding Campaign, stemming from the March purchase of the 12-acre Forward Garden, will further sustainability efforts with the following:

#### Equipment shed

The Phase II Capital Campaign is targeted towards building a new equipment shed which will protect MAFPG’s sustainability-minded gardening equipment. Sustainability and green practices are essential to remaining a climate friendly organization. As climate change accelerates, conserving resources and gardening sustainably is as crucial as ever.

#### Drip irrigation system

Drip irrigation is often used in the summer, mainly for carrots and beets because they require frequent hydrating. A series of tubes are connected to the base of the plant and deliver water



on a timed schedule. This system conserves water – only irrigating where necessary – while simultaneously increasing the quality and yield of the crops. Part of Phase II will be installing hydrants and drip irrigation to consume water and irrigate more efficiently at Forward Garden.

### **Greenhouses**

Greenhouses will allow the organization to grow 9 months of the year. This requires less investment and gives the ability to extend the growing season to provide the community with fresh vegetables for most of the year, not only during the growing season.

### **Purchase of Forward Garden**

The largest overarching sustainable practice is the purchase of Forward Garden, which will feed many members of our community in need of nutrients. Keeping the sustainable efforts by the organization focused towards economic, social, and environmental sustainability makes the efforts a holistic and inclusive plan. Eating and buying local food is much more environmentally sound than using excess energy to transport food. Forward Garden is the first MAFPG owned land, which will allow them to use perennial crops, improve soil practices, install wells and create a memorable experience for volunteers.

### **Composting**

Composting is an effective initiative towards sustainability that the organization takes on a large scale. Volunteers are encouraged to bring in their food scraps from their own homes and add it to the gardens composting system. There is a 55-day turnaround from compost to nutrients in soil. Composting also reduces food waste because the leftover nutrients will be

soaked up by the growing vegetables, eliminating nutrient waste by carrying it on to the next batch.

### **Gleaning**

Gleaning is the process of collecting surplus food from local businesses – including farms, gardens, grocery stores and restaurants – and donating it to those in need while reducing food waste. About 21 percent of food waste comes from farms, which makes the volunteer position of gleaning at the organization essential to remaining sustainable and environmentally sound. Zero food is wasted, all produce is donated to banks, churches, and many various organizations. In 2022, 30 entities received produce from the organization as a whole, including six new locations.

### **Crop rotation**

Crop rotation is a practice which minimizes pest issues and improves soil nutrients. Without crop rotation, the likelihood of disease developing in the produce is much higher, leaving the produce inedible and leaving many without nutrients. This practice contributes to social sustainability because the organization ensures that the produce will be edible for those experiencing nutrient insecurity.

### **Buffer strips**

Buffer strips are an essential practice by the organization to slow runoff and prevent soil from being washed away. They are 15-foot wide grass strips that allow infiltration of water, but gradually slow erosion down.

### **Watering practices**

The organization uses a lot of water to grow its plants. To

minimize the use of hose water, rainwater is caught in buckets, a natural and zero energy way to water the crops. There is an on-site well which services the two houses on Forward Garden property. New wells are projected to be developed in Phase II because the existing one does not reach all the land. MAFPG is considering using a silo to store rainwater and use it for irrigation purposes.

### **Natural fertilizers**

Petroleum based fertilizers use huge amounts of energy, as well as petroleum and various fossil fuels. The organization is focusing on a more sustainable way to fertilize the garden by partnering with dairy farms and composting to naturally fertilize the land.

### **Minimizing rototilling**

Rototilling makes it difficult for plants to grow by creating a layer which plant roots struggle to get through. The process churns the soil making a hard layer at the bottom that becomes impervious to water infiltration. The organization wants to stray from rototilling, and use composting measures to create a sponge- like soil material to hold more moisture and to easily recover the soil. Phase II will give the organization an opportunity to purchase and utilize sustainable equipment like a bed shaper to designate specific growing areas, organic matter, and a rotary hero to stir the soil laterally versus inverting the soil like rototilling does.

### **Cover crops**

Cover crops are planted in the place of seasonal crops that have been harvested and are done for the year. The practice of

planting cover crops stabilizes the soil instead of having a vacant garden. Examples of cover crops are winter wheat, nitrogen fixing legumes, clovers and daikon radishes. Additionally, the microbes that are broken down from the cover crops become nutrients in the soil for the next crop to use.

### **Pollinator-supporting native gardens**

Native pollinators support more diversity and aid in pest control throughout the garden. The pollinators that frequently visit the gardens are ground nesting bees and parasitic wasps as they do not gather in a hive. The gardens additionally stand as a habitat for birds and other insects. Forward Garden houses two native gardens with plans to implement another this spring.

### **Earth Week**

Earth Day is quickly approaching, and is a fantastic opportunity to highlight sustainable gardening practices, which are at the forefront of Madison Area Food Pantry Gardens' (MAFPG) operations. 2022 was an outstanding year for them on improving sustainability, extending their volunteer service and completing their mission by serving the community. As the spring months roll around, the harvesting season is soon to commence, as are sustainable practices.

###




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## Volunteer Fact Sheet



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### Volunteering at Madison Area Food Pantry Gardens

As a non profit organization, Madison Area Food Pantry Gardens (MAFPG) relies largely on volunteers to provide the community with fresh and culturally relevant foods. Volunteers of all ages, backgrounds and group sizes are welcome, no previous gardening experience necessary. The organization schedules “open work sessions” four days a week where individuals can volunteer their efforts towards a wide array of gardening tasks. Many volunteers come from churches and civic groups, while many are just individuals looking to get involved. During the 2022 harvest season, the non-profit held 300 open work sessions, welcoming 2,090 individuals and 203 groups resulting in 10,542 volunteer hours according to the 2022 annual report.

#### Opportunities

The organization offers opportunities for volunteers of all ages to safely get involved, such as:

- **Gardener:** Volunteers weed, plant and water to keep crops healthy and productive.



- **Gleaner:** Volunteers harvest a surplus of produce from farms and farmers markets in the area to donate to the community.
- **Produce deliverer:** Volunteers are responsible for transporting up to 1,000 pounds of produce per trip to food banks and pantries across Dane County.
- **Bucket tender:** Volunteers wash the pails used to carry produce from the garden after every harvest and return them before the next.
- **Greenhouse helper:** Volunteers plant, water and perform everyday maintenance at MAFPG's greenhouse(s).
- **Produce processor:** Volunteers extend produce's shelf life by supplying partners with steamer bags of vegetables.
- **Tool care (in the fall):** Volunteers clean, sharpen and paint tools to prepare them for the following growing season.
- **Garden coordinator:** Volunteers will need some prior knowledge harvesting produce.
- **Tractor operator:** Volunteers with prior experience drive a tractor and perform various garden tasks. Volunteers must go through a safety training program before operating a MAFPG tractor.

### **When to volunteer**

Volunteers are in highest demand during the growing season, which runs from April through October. Volunteering with the organization requires little commitment – the website invites people to “come as you’re able and leave as you must.” The goal of volunteering is to provide a fun, educational and productive experience for all the volunteers who generously devote their time to the gardens. Many committed volunteers return year after year – or multiple times in a single growing season – and often return with company, offering invaluable help to the organization and its gardens.

## **Learning through volunteering**

Volunteering is an incredible way to give back to the community, bond with fellow volunteers and spend some time outside. The organization is committed to teaching young volunteers about harvesting, nutrition and the importance of getting involved. Children should understand where their food comes from – this knowledge fosters enthusiasm and promotes healthier diets. Agricultural education is something that the Madison Food Pantry Gardens strive to provide to the local youth, and it is provided in different ways.

For example, in 2022, 14 students from an environmental studies capstone course at UW- Madison worked with MAFPG by testing the soil, creating compost, managing weeds and offering outreach suggestions. In addition, the volunteer program welcomed over 700 children to help raise chickens and plant and harvest pumpkins for a local elementary school fundraiser, according to the 2022 annual report.




###

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## MAFPG Fact Sheet



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### Madison Area Food Pantry Gardens

Madison Area Food Pantry Gardens (MAFPG) is a nonprofit organization that supplies first-choice fresh produce to Dane County food pantries. MAFPG is a volunteer-based organization that grows fresh produce specifically for donation to local food pantries that serve low-income residents. MAFPG supplies an estimated 100,000 pounds of produce per season from both growing produce and collecting surplus produce from the community. In the 2022 season, MAFPG was able to donate 118,893 pounds of produce valued at over \$230,000 according to Second Harvest Foodbank of Southern Wisconsin.

MAFPG is not a community food garden where individuals plant and harvest produce; rather, the nonprofit welcomes hundreds of volunteers each growing season to plant and harvest fruits and vegetables exclusively for donation to local food pantries. MAFPG grows first-choice produce for the Dane County emergency food system community, providing food pantry clients with much more than unwanted food items.

MAFPG is proud to provide food pantry clients with first-choice produce, rather than just leftover food items. Providing first-choice produce allows food pantry clients to have the first pick of the fresh produce, and access to an overall greater variety of produce.

Additionally, MAFPG uses the process of gleaning, which is collecting surplus produce from neighboring farms to help meet demand. Gleaning provides first-choice produce that is grown in abundance and exceeds the needs of the grower. Commonly gleaned crops include potatoes, peppers and cabbage from the UW Arlington Agricultural Research Station and peppers, tomatoes and fruit from the UW West Madison Agricultural Research Station. Organic vegetables are gleaned from Troy Farm and apples and winter squash are gleaned from Eplegaarden.

## **Gardens**

MAFPG grows produce in 10 different gardens ranging in size from a quarter acre to two acres. MAFPG recently purchased its first property, the Forward Garden. Some of the gardens have direct relationships with specific pantries that inform them of their clients needs. Almost all of the produce from the Shulte Garden goes to the Catholic Multicultural Center. A similar partnership exists between the Lacy Garden and St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry. Forward Garden serves twenty-five outlets that communicate what and how much produce they want.

## **Member Gardens**

Member gardens utilize land that is rented, or in the case of

Forward Garden, owned, by MAFPG. Forward Garden is unique in that it is the first property MAFPG has purchased and now owns. Forward Garden is the largest site at 12 acres and is the headquarters of MAFPG's operations. Forward Garden supplies produce to more outlets than other gardens, but the work of all the gardens allows MAFPG to expand the overall number of outlets served with produce from Forward Garden.

- **Forward Garden**
  - Location: Pope Farm Homestead, 7492 W. Old Sauk Rd, Verona, Wis.
  - Work Sessions: Tuesday & Thursday: 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m., Wednesday: 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.
  - Contact: Matt Lechmaier, (530) 650-5301
- **Emmett Shulte Garden**
  - Location: 11214 Midtown Rd, Verona
  - Volunteer Sessions: Monday 4:00 to 7:00 pm and Wednesday 5:00 to 7:00pm.
  - Contact: Laura Green- Catholic Multicultural Center, (608) 661-3512
- **Hershberger Perennial Garden**
  - Location: 11214 Midtown Rd, Verona WI
  - Contact: Kyle Friedow, (608) 212-2337
- **Ken Witte Garden**
  - Location: 3266 Mound View Rd, Verona
  - Contact: Tom Parslow,  
thomasparslow@foodpantrygardens.org

## **Affiliate Gardens**

Affiliate gardens operate under their own management and are not supervised by MAFPG board or staff. Unlike member

gardens, affiliate gardens are responsible for their own governance and funding. Expenses of affiliate gardens are covered by the food pantry being served rather than by MAFPG.

- **Anderson Farm Center**
  - Location: Anderson Farm County Park, 805 Union Rd, Oregon, WI 53575
  - Contact: Roe Parker, roeparker@charter.net, (608) 835-3580
- **Good Shepherd Lutheran Church Garden**
  - Location: 7291 County Rd PD, Verona, WI 53593
  - Work Sessions: Sunday 4:00-6:00pm and Wednesday 5:00-7:00pm
  - Contact: Dara Schuller- Hanson, (608) 497-3644
- **Lacy Garden**
  - Location: 5897 Whalen Rd, Fitchburg (0.5 miles east of Seminole Hwy)
  - Work Sessions: Mondays 5:00-6:30pm and Thursday 5:00-6:30 pm.
  - Contact: Peg O'Donoghue, (217) 649-7210
- **Madison Christian Community Garden**
  - Location: 7118 Old Sauk Rd Madison, WI 53717
  - Work Sessions: Monday, Wednesday & Friday: 9:00-11:00am
  - Contact: Anne Ward, (608) 358-4384
- **Middleton Outreach Ministry Garden**
  - Location: 3502 Parmenter St, Middleton, WI 53562
  - Contact: Dan Johnson, (608) 836-1638
- **UW Health Verona Clinic Garden**
  - Location: UW Health Verona Family Medicine Clinic, 100 N Nine Mound Rd, Verona, 53593.
  - Contact: Mark Wirtz, mwwirtz@gmail.com



## What MAFPG Grows

Accross the 10 gardens, MAFPG is able to grow thirty-six different varieties of vegetables and twelve varieties of fruits. Almost all gardens grow tomatoes, broccoli, carrots, peppers and cabbage but the produce grown differs at each location.

MAFPG works to empower food pantry clients by catering to their specific cuisines to assure that pantry clients are getting produce they would normally prepare. By growing culturally relevant ingredients, MAFPG seeks to make healthy diets accessible and familiar to Dane County's Hispanic, Afrian American, Hmong and other minority communities. The culturally relevant produce grown at MAFPG includes bok choy, mustard greens, eggplant, collard greens, okra and sweet potatoes.

<b>Vegetables(36)</b> Asparagus Basil (Italian, Thai holy) Beans(pole,bush) Beets Bok choy Broccoli (packman,calabrese) Brussels sprouts Cabbage (green,red) Carrots Cauliflower Celery Chives Cilantro Collard greens Cucumbers (Marketmore, pickling) Eggplant(Asian) Fennel Garlic (scaped included) Green onion	Kale (red Russian, curly/lacinato) Leeks Lemongrass Lettuce Mint Okra Onions (yellow, red) Oregano Parsley Peas (snap, snow) Peppers (banana, bell, habanero, jalapeno, lunchbox, poblano, serrano, Thai chili) Popcorn Potatoes Squash (summer and winter varieties) Sweet corn Tomatillo Tomatoes (cherry and slicing)	<b>Fruits(12)</b> Apples Blackberries Bitter melon Blueberries Cantaloupe Cherries Honeydew Melon Peaches Raspberries Rhubarb Strawberries Watermelon
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### **About Madison Area Food Pantry Gardens**

Madison Area Food Pantry Gardens is a volunteer-powered nonprofit which provides more than 30 Dane County food pantries that serve low-income clients with fresh, nutritious and culturally relevant fruits and vegetables from its 11 gardens. The organization aims to address nutrition insecurity while prioritizing sustainable gardening practices and community education about the food system. During the last two decades, MAFPG has donated more than 2.2 million pounds of produce to local area food pantries through the support of over 13,000 volunteers.

## Spokespeople Bios



 [www.foodpantrygardens.org](http://www.foodpantrygardens.org)  
 PO 5116 Madison, WI 53705  
 [@foodpantrygardens](mailto:foodpantrygardens)

For More Information, Contact:  
Darcie Van Dop  
Marketing and PR  
989-621-9391  
[mafpgmarketing@gmail.com](mailto:mafpgmarketing@gmail.com)

### Spokespeople — Madison Area Food Pantry Gardens

**The following spokespeople will be available for live or taped interviews from 9:00 a.m. to noon on the media site visit day at Forward Garden. Interviews outside of this timeframe can also be arranged.**

#### **Tom Parslow**

**Madison Area Food Pantry Gardens (MAFPG) President  
608-577-6685 | [Thomasparslow@foodpantrygardens.org](mailto:Thomasparslow@foodpantrygardens.org)**

Tom Parslow, a Dane County resident since 1991, has been involved in the Lacy garden in Fitchburg for the last 13 years, ever since Emmett Schulte, one of the founders, invited him to help run it. Prior to this, Parslow had been an agricultural agent and a high school agriculture teacher, giving him extensive knowledge of growing vegetables and the necessary techniques. Parslow has since retired and is focusing on his work with MAFPG. His main responsibilities evolved over the years, from doing everything himself to now focusing on managing volunteers and overseeing the growing process. His favorite part of his

involvement is meeting volunteers and connecting with new people, especially youth. In his free time, he enjoys watching squirrels climb his trees and seeing them grab corn from his trees.

**Brian Arndt**

**MAFPG Development director**

**Phone # | bgarndt10@gmail.com**

Dr. Arndt is a professor in UW-Madison's Family Medicine residency program and he serves as site lead of the UW Health Verona Family Medicine Clinic. He has formed many partnerships with the intent to create community-level nutrition security and a vision that "Wisconsin EATS Healthy." Dr. Arndt was instrumental in starting a food pantry garden at his clinic in 2007 that has since grown thousands of pounds of culturally appropriate produce for the Badger Prairie Needs Network. Dr. Arndt is a regular volunteer with MAFPG (primarily at Forward Garden) and serves on the board in the role of development director (volunteer). He was recently awarded the Mike McKinney Community Volunteer Award as he embodies McKinney's spirit and passion for food access, youth development, and HIV/AIDS awareness.

**Matt Lechmaier**

**Forward Garden farm manager**

**530-650-5301 | Matt@foodpantrygardens.org**

Lechmaier, a graduate of Memorial High School and the Wildlife Ecology program at the UW-Madison, joined MAFPG as the farm manager at Forward Garden in May 2020. Prior to this, he spent two years working for the UC-Davis Arboretum and eight years managing a Youth Environmental Program for the Center for

Land-Based Learning. Additionally, he founded and oversaw a small organic farm in Winters, CA for seven years. Being back in the area, Lechaimer is happy to live closer to his family. When not at work, he enjoys exploring nearby parks and natural areas with his wife, Lauren, and their two young children, Hazel and Oliver.

### **Darcie Van Dop**

#### **MAFPG marketing and PR specialist**

**989-621-9391 | [mafpgmarketing@gmail.com](mailto:mafpgmarketing@gmail.com)**

Van Dop is MAFPG's Marketing Specialist. Her role focuses on facilitating community communication, coordinating volunteer opportunities within MAFPG and assisting Garden Leaders in their mission to provide local food pantries with nutritious and culturally relevant produce. Prior to her role with MAFPG, she spent ten years in public relations, marketing and graphic design for the healthcare and banking industries. She's also done freelance marketing and design work for organizations across the country. She originally connected with MAFPG in February of this year as a site volunteer. After a short time with the organization, she knew she wanted to be further involved with MAFPG's and took the Marketing Specialist opportunity in March. Van Dop has enjoyed every minute with MAFPG and is constantly inspired by the organization's mission and the volunteers' passion.

### **Jane Mount**

#### **MAFPG Board of Directors member**

**608-772-0311 | [jane@foodpantrygardens.org](mailto:jane@foodpantrygardens.org)**

Mount is a member of the MAFPG Board of Directors, where she brings a unique perspective as a volunteer-turned-board member. She joined MAFPG as a Forward Garden volunteer in

2020 and was immediately drawn in by the organization's community and passion. She primarily helps with optimizing the volunteer experience, scheduling volunteer groups and leading groups on-site. Prior to her work with MAFPG, Mount specialized in early childhood development and implemented Child Life Programs in hospitals in Chicago. She was also a part of a community-supported agriculture system for ten years, and she's thrilled to be focusing on growing food for Madison's culturally diverse community once again.

**Jess Guffey Calkins**

**Community Food Systems Educator, UW-Madison Extension  
Dane County**

**608-224-3712 | [calkins.jessica@countyofdane.com](mailto:calkins.jessica@countyofdane.com)**

Guffey Calkins is the Community Food Systems Educator for UW-Madison Extension Dane County, where she connects with local residents and organizations to understand and address community food-related needs. She works with MAFPG to tackle these issues and create solutions to improve food access and security throughout Dane County. She has previously been a program co-director for Sustainable Food Center in Austin, Texas, and has done youth program coordinating for UW-Madison Extension prior to her current role. Both Guffey Calkins and UW-Madison Extension Dane County have supported MAFPG's missions and values in producing culturally-relevant foods and building community networks. She's excited to continue partnering with MAFPG and combine efforts as they address food access in Dane County. She enjoys eating delicious food with family and friends, and spending time outdoors.

**The following individuals have played key roles at MAFPG and are available for separately scheduled interviews. Please contact them directly.**



**Linda Hershberger**

**MAFPG Marketing Team lead and landowner/donor of use of land**

**Phone # | [lin.hersh@gmail.com](mailto:lin.hersh@gmail.com)**

Hershberger has volunteered and supported nonprofits in Madison for over 20 years. She and her husband met at UW-Madison while pursuing their MBA, and they raised three children in Middleton. In 2000, her family donated land for Ken Witte to grow fresh vegetables for local food pantries. Though they split time between Wisconsin and Florida, Hershberger remains connected to the Madison community. She's been involved with MAFPG for 23 years, serving on the board from 2015 to 2022 and leading the marketing team. As a "starter," Hershberger was instrumental in MAFPG's early brainstorming in 2017 and co-led the implementation team, finding the right location for the Forward Garden. Her commitment to improving lives in Dane county is unwavering.

**Natalie Erdman**

**MAFPG volunteer and donor**

**Phone # | [nlbock@aol.com](mailto:nlbock@aol.com)**

Erdman, a donor and volunteer at MAFPG, was introduced to the organization by Jim Welsh, former executive director of Groundswell Conservancy. As advocates for sustainability and helping others, Erdman and her husband Dan supported MAFPG's purchase of the Forward Garden. Erdman also works with MAFPG's composting team, collecting kitchen scraps from local restaurant partners BeneBlends and Forage Kitchen to provide organic material for the garden's soil. She's lived in Madison since 1973 and has held key roles in the community, including executive director at Community Development Authority, director of Planning and Community and Economic

Development, and interim Metro Transit general manager. Erdman appreciates the Pope Farm Homestead, a beautiful part of Wisconsin's history and culture.

### **Tom Linfield**

**Director of Grantmaking, Madison Community Foundation**  
**608-446-5942 | [tlinfield@madisongives.com](mailto:tlinfield@madisongives.com)**

Linfield is a veteran in the nonprofit sector, having worked on both the development and program officer side throughout the entirety of his professional career. Linfield started as a grant writer raising money for the Massachusetts College of Art, later doing grant writing for Edgewood College and then for Wisconsin Public Television – where he helped to establish the National Center for Outreach. He currently is the Director of Grantmaking at Madison Community Foundation, where he oversees all of the competitive grantmaking in Dane County. Part of Madison Community Foundation's mission is to help all people thrive in the county, and food insecurity is one of its focus areas. The Madison Community Foundation has helped fund food pantries for over a decade, including engaging with a coalition of community garden agencies and funding a three-year grant to help strengthen the system during the Great Recession. This grant helped more than triple the existing gardens in the Madison area. Linfield and Madison Community Foundation have contributed a grant to MAFPG's capital campaign for the Pope Farm.

### **Stefanie Berg**

**Exact Sciences employee engagement partner**  
**Phone # | [sberg@exactsciences.com](mailto:sberg@exactsciences.com)**

Berg is the Community Relations and Employee Volunteer Manager at Exact Sciences, a global leader in cancer diagnostics. Berg identifies meaningful, high priority opportunities in the

Madison area, where Exact Sciences employees can engage, volunteer and give. She has expertise in volunteer engagement and workplace giving. MAFPG has become one of our leading partners in connecting employees with volunteering opportunities over the past few years. Employees enjoy getting outside, getting their hands dirty, and seeing the impact the garden is having in the community. The garden has been great to connect individual employees to their open volunteering hours as well as specific opportunities for larger teams looking to take part in an offering together. Last year, employees volunteered over 120 hours.

### **Nick Heckman**

**Public Health Planner, Public Health Madison & Dane County  
(608) 620-5332 | [nheckman@publichealthmdc.com](mailto:nheckman@publichealthmdc.com)**

Heckman has had a robust career in food security and nutrition-related work in Wisconsin. A Badger alum, he's currently the Food Security Policy Analyst for Public Health Madison and Dane County, where he develops local programs to create a more healthy and affordable food system. Heckman addresses root issues that affect the community through a systems change lens. His focus is on hunger prevention and nutrition policy- examining local, state and federal policies related to food security and its community impacts. Heckman also staffs the Madison Food Policy Council and facilitates the Dane Food Access Network, where he has connected with the MAFPG team. Heckman supports MAFPG for its ability to increase the access and availability of fresh produce while simultaneously connecting people to the food they consume, supporting volunteerism and engaging the public with the green spaces in an urban environment.

## **Dagny Knight**

**Badger Prairie Needs Network staff member**

**Phone # | [dagnyknight@msn.com](mailto:dagnyknight@msn.com)**

Knight is a dedicated leader who has made significant contributions to addressing food insecurity in Dane County through her work at Badger Prairie Needs Network in Verona. Collaborating with Matt Lechaimer and MAFPG, Knight has worked to provide culturally appropriate produce options to guests, and she was also able to add a Bonus Produce Day on Monday afternoons through the summer to give BPNN guests an additional day, outside of regular pantry hours, to select produce. With a background in aquaponics, Knight stepped into a leadership role at the pantry when her family's greenhouse business changed direction. Knight believes that the planning, planting, harvesting, delivering, and maintaining that goes into feeding people who are food insecure is humbling. She says that she has the easy part of passing this amazing food grown by MAFPG on to people who need it! Through her leadership and dedication, Knight is making a real difference in the fight against food insecurity.

## **Tess Stroh**

**Outreach Program Leader, Bayview Foundation**

**Phone # | [tessstroh@bayviewfoundation.org](mailto:tessstroh@bayviewfoundation.org)**

Stroh is new to Dane County and MAFPG partner, the Bayview Foundation. Before moving to Madison and starting as an outreach program leader with Bayview, she was a full time student at Tulane University and manager of the Broadmoor Food Pantry Garden. Stroh uses this background in community run agriculture to inform her work with Bayview's food access programs. Bayview partners with the MAFPG to increase their residents' access to fresh and healthy produce. The produce

supplied by the gardens supplements regular donations from the Southern Wisconsin Second Harvest Food Bank. At its core, Bayview's Food Access Program aims to foster food as a means of empowerment and community building. Many of Bayview's residents are growers themselves, further contributing to the robust role that fresh produce plays within the community. As summer approaches, Stroh is excited to make the most of her first harvest season in Wisconsin with the help of the MAFPG!




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### **About Madison Area Food Pantry Gardens**

Madison Area Food Pantry Gardens is a volunteer-powered nonprofit which provides more than 30 Dane County food pantries that serve low-income clients with fresh, nutritious and culturally relevant fruits and vegetables from its 11 gardens. The organization aims to address nutrition insecurity while prioritizing sustainable gardening practices and community education about the food system. During the last two decades, MAFPG has donated more than 2.2 million pounds of produce to local area food pantries through the support of over 13,000 volunteers.

## FAQs



 [www.foodpantrygardens.org](http://www.foodpantrygardens.org)  
 PO 5116 Madison, WI 53705  
 foodpantrygardens

For More Information, Contact:  
Darcie Van Dop  
Marketing and PR  
989-621-9391  
[mafpgmarketing@gmail.com](mailto:mafpgmarketing@gmail.com)

### What is Forward Garden?

Located on Old Sauk Road in the Town of Middleton, Forward Garden is now the headquarters of Madison Area Food Pantry Gardens' (MAFPG's) operations. The 12-acre site joins 10 other, smaller gardens – which range in size from a quarter acre to two acres – in MAFPG's efforts to provide fresh, nutritious and culturally relevant produce to the local emergency food system.

### How did MAFPG acquire Forward Garden?

Forward Garden is not an entirely new site for MAFPG. In fact, MAFPG has rented the land from its owners, the Pope/Zoerb family, for three years. Now, having proven its ability to cultivate and manage the 12 acres, MAFPG is purchasing the land from the Pope/Zoerb family. The purchase is possible thanks to a successful Phase I Capital Campaign Project, which was highlighted by a \$660,000 grant from the Dane County Parks Commission.



Other key donors who contributed to Phase I of the Capital Campaign include Arndt Family Foundation, Caritas Foundation, Dan and Natalie Erdman, Dave and Linda Longenecker, Endres Mfg. Company Foundation, Irwin A. & Robert D. Goodman Foundation, Kwik Trip, Madison Community Foundation, MG&E Foundation, Nimick Forbesway Foundation, Pleasant T. Rowland Foundation, Richard Pavelski, and Springs Window Fashions.

### **How does Forward Garden impact nutrition insecurity in Dane County?**

During the three-year rental period, Forward Garden has yielded approximately 80,000 total pounds of produce – 23,000 pounds in 2020, 26,500 pounds in 2021 and 29,000 pounds in 2022. In 2023, MAFPG aims to increase Forward Garden's output to 34,000 pounds. That, combined with the other member gardens, adds up to a goal of 121,000 pounds of produce donated in 2023.

As MAFPG's headquarters, Forward Garden will be more than just a garden. A Phase II Capital Funding Campaign will fund infrastructure for equipment storage, as well as indoor spaces for volunteers, educational classes (field trips, summer camps, etc.) and vegetable processing. These additions will further MAFPG's mission to not only provide fruits and vegetables to those in need, but to also educate the community on agriculture and the local food system.

### **Why launch the Phase II Campaign during Earth Week?**

Sustainability – protecting the gardens' long-term health and reducing waste, among other practices – is fundamental to MAFPG's mission. Phase II funding will support significant

advancements in these efforts, so sustainability-minded community members should keep MAFPG in mind with Earth Day (Saturday, April 22) on the horizon.

### **What is the benefit of owning (rather than continuing to rent) Forward Garden?**

Owning Forward Garden allows MAFPG to maintain the 12 acres for agricultural use, without risk of residential, commercial or other development.

Further, the security of ownership empowers MAFPG to employ a forward-thinking approach to gardening the land. On a lease, Forward Garden Manager Matt Lechmaier explains, growers tend to maximize short-term crop yields at the expense of long-term land health and fertility. Now at Forward Garden, MAFPG can avoid rototilling, invest in more advanced soil equipment and install hydrants for targeted drip irrigation, among other improvements.

Forward Garden's compost pile, which collected 14,363 pounds from its inception in April 2022 through the end of the year, will continue growing at MAFPG partners with more Madison-area businesses — in 2022, partners included These Days Juice Company, BeneBlends, Forage Kitchen and EpleGaarden, as well as MAFPG staff members' households. MAFPG aims to collect 35,000 pounds of compost in 2023, using it to maintain soil health.

Sustainability is a top priority for MAFPG, which will now be able to cultivate Forward Garden more efficiently and responsibly thanks to the purchase and the Phase II Capital Funding Campaign.

## **How will MAFPG staff Forward Garden?**

Lechmaier, a summer intern (25 hours/week) and two summer associates (35 hours/week, compensated by a partnership between Americorps and Hunger Free America) will remain the backbone of Forward Garden's operations for much of the 2023 growing season.

In 2023, MAFPG also aims to hire an associate farm manager to work part-time for 12 weeks. They will support Lechmaier from August through October on volunteer coordination, late-season harvesting and end-of-season cleanup, among other tasks. Another new role will be a part-time marketing professional to better publicize Forward Garden and attract volunteers.

MAFPG will continue relying on volunteers from Madison-area corporate offices, schools, summer programs and more. Of course, an elementary school-age volunteer offers less than an adult, but Lechmaier and MAFPG encourage people of all ages to get involved.

## **How is MAFPG providing culturally relevant foods to community groups?**

Since Lechmaier took over Forward Garden in 2020, MAFPG has twice distributed a survey to clients of food pantries it provides for. Through that survey MAFPG has learned what crops people want and how they want to receive them, better positioning itself to support healthy, ethnic diets in the community. Such crops include cilantro, okra, eggplant, mustard greens, collard greens, bok choy, jícama and sweet potatoes, all of which are essential components of prominent Madison-area ethnic groups' cuisines.

## **How will Forward Garden help educate visitors about the food system?**

As a product of the Phase II Capital Campaign, renovated indoor space — including the kitchen at the Pope Farm Homestead — will allow MAFPG to educate volunteers and visitors regardless of the weather. Engagement with the crops, however, is the best way for young visitors to learn where their food comes from, what goes into cultivating their food and how it gets from farm to table. By helping seed, plant, water, weed, harvest, process and distribute produce, children gain an appreciation for fruits and vegetables and develop healthy eating habits.

## **What are MAFPG's other gardens?**

MAFPG rents four other member gardens: Emmett Schulte Garden, Hershberger Perennial Garden and Ken Witte Garden, all of which are in Verona, as well as the Knight Hollow Nursery greenhouse in Middleton. The organization also collects and donates produce from six affiliate gardens, which are run independently and funded by local food pantries. These include the following; Good Shepherd Lutheran Church Garden and UW Health Verona Clinic Garden in Verona; Anderson Farm Center in Oregon; Lacy Garden in Fitchburg; Madison Christian Community Garden and Middleton Outreach Ministry Garden.

## **How can volunteers get involved at MAFPG's gardens?**

Open work sessions take place four days a week during the growing season (mid-April through October) and allow groups or individuals to drop in and help out. Interested parties can also schedule visits to particular gardens. Volunteer tasks include

gardening, gleaning, produce delivery, produce processing, tool care, grant writing and tractor operating, among others. While helping MAFPG plant, harvest and distribute its produce, volunteers also gain valuable education about the food system and nutrition.

### **Which food pantries does MAFPG serve?**

MAFPG provided fresh produce to the following 30 food pantries in Dane County in 2022: Allied Wellness Center, Badger Prairie Needs Network, Bayview Foundation, Belleville Food Pantry, Bethel Lutheran Church, Cardinal Nest Middleton High School, Catholic Multicultural Center, Community Action Coalition Food Bank, Elver Park Neighborhood Center, Extended Hands Mobile Food Pantry, First United Methodist Church Pantry, Good Shepherd Food Pantry, Grace Episcopal Church Food

Pantry, Healthy Food for All / FEED Kitchens, Heights Unlimited Community Resource Center, LCEC Grab and Go Cooler, Little John's Kitchens, Lussier Community Education Center, Madison College Food Pantry, MCPASD Weekend Food Program, Meadowood Neighborhood Center, Middleton Outreach Ministry, Middleton Youth Center, Neighborhood House Community Center, Oregon Area Food Pantry, St. Mark's Lutheran Church Pantry, St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry, The Hmong Institute, The River Food Pantry and The Vine Church Food Pantry.

# 14

## Media Plan & Media Day Result





## **Spokespeople Bios**

We crafted a Press Kit with nine documents to forward to reporters. This kit included documents that would be of value to the press- including spokespeople to connect with for further interviews, fact sheets about Madison Area Food Pantry Gardens, information about sustainability and the new Forward Garden initiatives, FAQs and more. We simultaneously developed a Media List that included over 100 news sources in the Madison and greater Dane County area. This list had magazines, newspapers, digital publications, radio stations and TV networks – all with an emphasis on targeting a diverse audience subset. This Media List included the reporter's name, beat, contact information and a summary of their work and previous stories to refer to.

After weeks of developing the Media List and ensuring there were no gaps in sources, we then formulated targeted pitches to email to reporters. These targeted pitches focused on the topics of breaking news, community and multicultural connections, health and food security and sustainability and agriculture. Through these four lenses, we were able to tailor the story to the specific source and preemptively help them craft an angle. These four different emails had a related, newsy headline and the body copy included useful facts and information, details about the Media Event and how this story connects to the Madison community as a whole.

A short 24 hours after emailing, the Media Team started making phone calls to follow up with reporters. We left many voicemails further emphasizing the importance and newsworthiness of

the story, focusing on the potential impacts for each general pitch topic. Earth Day being a week after the Media Site Day was also an element we included to touch on the timeliness of this story. For those we did reach on the phone, we shared more details about the event, MAFPG and our student work to connect with the reporters and encourage their attendance on the site day. We continued to call and leave voicemails the week leading up to Media Site Day and also made calls the morning of to live reporters a list-minute reminder of the event.

## **Media Site Day**

Reporters were invited to a Media Site Day at Forward Garden to showcase the garden along with the purchase announcement. MAFPG Spokespeople were in attendance for reporters to interview on camera and off. The entire UW PR class was present to direct traffic, assist reporters, and ensure the Media Site day went smoothly. Reporters were greeted upon arrival by students and directed towards specific spokespeople to speak with depending on the story angles for each reporter. A food truck was present offering water, coffee, fresh popcorn and grilled cheese to all those who came out.

## Results

Media Site Day was a success with seven news organizations showing up. The news organizations ranged from radio, broadcast and print news. The weekly community newspaper Verona Press had a reporter at the Media Site Day. Reporters from Wisconsin State Farmer, NBC 15, and Channel 300 were also present at Forward Garden on Media Site Day. The radio stations WORT 89.9FM and WWMV-LP 95.5 FM had reporters at Media Site Day as well.

Since the Media Site Day, MAFPG's purchase for Forward Garden has been covered in Verona Press, NBC 15, and WORT 89.9FM so far. The student led project was covered in UW-Madison News and featured in the Inside UW-Madison Newsletter as well.



### Non-profit buys 15-acre property to grow fresh produce for Madison food pantries



An organization dedicated to providing fresh food to area food pantries now has a property to call their own, allowing them to expand their reach.

By [Shaina Nijawan](#)  
Published: Apr. 21, 2023 at 7:31 PM CDT



### Local Food Pantry Garden Prioritizes Sustainable Farming This Earth Day

APRIL 17, 2023 BY [FAVE PARKS](#) AND [WORT NEWS DEPARTMENT](#)



WORT 89.9FM Madison - Local food pantry garden prioritizes sustainable farming this Earth Day