

2025 ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT



A Letter From Our Founder



When Gus Schumacher and I started Wholesome Wave in 2007, we had a simple, deep belief that access to healthy food should be for EVERYONE. We just needed to figure out how to make that a reality in a world with few answers. But we had each other, a conviction that the power of food could make positive change possible, and an unshakeable faith that if you could show something worked, the world would eventually catch up.

Nearly two decades later, the world is catching up.

2 million low-income Americans and their families on SNAP can now afford the fruits and vegetables they need to be healthy and whole. The National Produce Prescription Collaborative secured \$15 million in federal funding dedicated specifically to Produce Prescriptions for low-income pregnant women to thrive. That is not a small thing. It's the result of years of evidence-building, relationship-tending, and refusing to let a good idea die on the vine. Gus would have loved to see it.

Food4Moms continues its research into new phases, taking everything we learned and putting it to work with greater precision, greater impact, and in a rural environment. This is how lasting change gets built: not in one leap, but in deliberate, iterative steps forward.

OneKitchen spent 2025 being pressure-tested — and it held strong. Chefs showed up, used their voices, and proved what I have always believed: that a chef's impact can extend far beyond the four walls of their kitchen and into the communities we all call home.

None of this happened by accident. It happened because of the people who believed, gave generously, and understood the journey is long – and stayed with us throughout.

I am more optimistic about Wholesome Wave's future than I have ever been. The mission Gus and I dreamed up together is strong and growing. And the best is still ahead. Please continue walking with us as we work to change the world through the power of food - together.

With deep gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michel Nischan'.

MICHEL NISCHAN

Founder & Executive Chairman, Wholesome Wave

"The reason I support Wholesome Wave, and I hope you will also, is that if we are concerned about the health of our people and the cost of healthcare in this country, we must start thinking about keeping people healthy. Healthy and nutritious food is where health starts."

CHARLES MERINOFF

Donor



When we launched our first nutrition incentive program, none existed. We implemented our programs to ensure economic and health impact could be measured. We used the successes to share best practices with other nonprofits, to educate policy-makers, and to create system-wide changes. 19 years later, the total cumulative impact that has rippled through the country is massive:

\$1B+

estimated total federal, state, and private funding for PRx and nutrition incentives.

30M

As many as 30 million direct recipients and their families have more affordable access to wholesome food.

500+

produce prescription programs operating nationally based on our initial model.

\$3 for every \$1

Every dollar in nutrition incentives returns \$3 in economic benefit to local farmers, retailers, and workers. That number skyrockets when estimating healthcare cost reductions due to improved health.

The Problem

There is still much work to be done. America has an immense opportunity to improve the way we feed ourselves. Across decades and communities, our food system has drifted from its purpose — concentrating nutritious food in some places while leaving others behind, making unhealthy food the easiest and cheapest choice, and leaving families and entire communities without the ability to feed themselves well. This is not a partisan observation. It is a shared American reality.

The consequences are staggering. Americans now spend as much treating diet-related disease — \$1.1 trillion annually — as we spend on food itself. But this is not only a health challenge. It is an economic one, a workforce one, and a community development one. When people cannot access good food, they cannot show up fully — for their jobs, their families, or their neighbors. Food is not separate from opportunity. It is foundational to it.

For nearly 20 years, Wholesome Wave has been laser focused on improving this system — not just its symptoms. We address food access as the economic, social, and public health imperative it is, bringing together people across every background and belief to do it. Our impact has been significant.

Today, the opportunity to make system-wide, lasting change has never been bigger. So we are raising our goals, deepening our work, and building the funding base to match the scale of what is needed — reshaping the systems that put food on our tables, while making sure those who need it most don't have to wait for the future to eat well today.

\$1.1 Trillion

spending to combat diet-related diseases

50% of Americans

suffer from a diet-related disease

500,000 deaths

caused by poor diets in the US annually (#1 cause of death)

All data from Rockefeller Foundation

The Solution

We address this problem with the same model that has proven effective these last 19 years — innovate new grassroots programs and implement them with entrepreneurial drive and rigorous analysis. We then use the results to educate other nonprofits, inspire chefs to action, and inform those who make policy and funding decisions that will improve our food and healthcare systems while generating positive economic and health benefits that impact everyone.



Food4Moms is a maternal PRx program directly impacting low-income pregnant women, and through research, quantifying best practices and impact.



OneKitchen is a training and mentorship program, equipping chefs to improve food systems in the communities they call home.



NPPC works to embed Produce Prescriptions (PRx) as a covered benefit for members of all government-sponsored health plans.



Food4Moms is a maternal produce prescription program for low income pregnant moms. Through our partners at the Yale School of Public Health and the Tufts Food Is Medicine Institute, it is also a robust research program, built to identify best practices for other organizations to adopt, and quantify health and financial outcomes used to inform policymakers and funders at the state and national level.

Following an iterative approach co-designed with participants and improved based on data, Food4Moms is delivering some truly life-changing outcomes that have lifelong implications for participants, their families and communities:

83% Redemption Rate

Participant redemption rates are nearly 50% greater than published national averages.

>25%

Reduction in pre-term births from average for Latinas in CT from published Kaiser Foundation average.

40%

Reported increase in food secure as a result of participation in the program.



Wholesome Wave Food4Moms Produce Prescription Program
Wholesome Wave

Katina Gionteris
Food4Moms Project Director
Wholesome Wave

Watch on YouTube

The image is a video thumbnail. It features a woman with long, dark, curly hair wearing a blue short-sleeved shirt. She is standing in front of a brick wall with a window in the background. A red play button icon is overlaid on the video. The text at the top left identifies the program as "Wholesome Wave Food4Moms Produce Prescription Program" and the organization as "Wholesome Wave". The text at the bottom left identifies the woman as "Katina Gionteris, Food4Moms Project Director" and includes the "Wholesome Wave" logo. The text at the bottom right says "Watch on YouTube" with the YouTube logo.

ONE KITC HEN

Chefs are trusted leaders in food systems across their communities and nationally. They have the power to drive meaningful change.

OneKitchen equips chefs to organize, educate, and mobilize as changemakers outside of the four walls of their kitchens. Through training, tools, mentorship, and national coalition support, chefs strengthen their leadership and drive impact by leveraging the power of food in the communities they call home.

OneKitchen Chefs are already making measurable impact. California chefs are advancing kitchen infrastructure funding to improve facilities and staff training, bringing scratch-made meals with California-grown products to students' lunch trays. In Texas, chefs are working to make state SNAP-matching benefits permanent, while Colorado's coalition helped secure universal school meals with locally grown products. Georgia chefs are working to expand Food Is Medicine programs into new communities, and Louisiana — our newest coalition — is tackling local procurement.

130+

Across five state-wide coalitions, more than 130 chefs have gone through our 3 A's of Advocacy training, turning that knowledge into real policy and community wins.

600,000 children

receive free meals at students prepared with locally grown ingredients from passage of LL & MM, actively supported by our Colorado coalition chefs.

43,000 students

Receive scratch cooked meals made possible by KIT funding, advocated for by our California coalition.



"Working with OneKitchen this past year has been deeply engaging and very inspiring. Our group's ability to mobilize swiftly with collective action, bound together by a shared desire to catalyze food system change, has created a vibrant pathway to meaningful impact."

CHEF DANIEL ASHER





We started 2025 with the goal to ensure the Make America Healthy Again (MAHA) movement incorporated PRx and Food Is Medicine into the agenda. As a long-trusted, truly non-partisan and data-driven program, the National Produce Prescription Collaborative was able to access and inform policymakers in the early and formative days of a new Administration and new Congress.

NPPC has now ensured that Food Is Medicine and PRx are a central part of two administrations' health and nutrition strategies, from both sides of the political spectrum. In 2025, we continued to expand our coalition with fifteen new organizations joining to advance our shared goals and expanded our influence by growing our Congressional champions across key geographic areas.

From policymakers to clinicians, more voices are joining our call to integrate healthy food into clinical care at the local, state, and federal level, which improves the health of our citizens and lowers healthcare costs for every American. Some specific 2025 successes include:

6

states introduced, passed, or enacted bills to promote and implement Food is Medicine interventions statewide.

19

new Food Is Medicine coalitions were created, working at the state level to expand support for PRx.

38

states included Food Is Medicine initiatives in their Rural Health Transformation Programs.



"NPPC provides a trusted voice and leadership structure to the produce prescription movement. It is not easy to build a lasting coalition under an emerging policy issue and NPPC has done so thoughtfully and strategically — providing a strong foundation to sustain and build food is medicine policy."

MOLLIE VAN LIEU

VP Nutrition and Health at International Fresh Produce Association

A Letter From Our Executive Director



I didn't arrive at this work through a policy brief or a career path. I arrived through a kitchen, where I learned that food is more than what's on the plate — it's connection, dignity, and care made tangible. Food is opportunity, and for me, it is the opportunity that changed my life. I know what it felt like when there wasn't enough. That experience shapes how you see the world, and what you believe is worth fighting for.

At Wholesome Wave, I found something rare: nearly two decades of proven, evidence-based work that treats food access not as charity, but as a matter of health, dignity, and community strength. We don't manage symptoms. We build toward structural change.

I am excited about what comes next. OneKitchen — our program to activate chefs as food system changemakers — is ready to scale from pilot to national program. Through the National Produce Prescription Collaborative, we've built the evidence base that is making produce prescriptions a permanent part of how this country addresses diet-related disease, unlocking new funding opportunities along the way. Food4Moms is delivering real health outcomes for low-income pregnant women and providing the data that propel the first dedicated federal funding for maternal PRx. And this year, Food Is Medicine Conference (FIMCON) brings together partners, practitioners, and policymakers to align on what works and how to scale it with integrity.

None of this happens without you. Wholesome Wave exists because people believe that food is foundational — not separate from opportunity, but central to it. I'm asking you to stay with us, grow with us, and invest in what we are building together.

The table is set. We'd love for you to pull up a chair.

CASEY S. CRANE

Executive Director

"A healthy food system for all is fair, equitable, and essential. For nearly 20 years Wholesome Wave has led the effort to address the challenges of food and nutrition insecurity head on through innovative and impactful programs. I'm all in in supporting the effort!"

ED KELLY

Donor, board member

"I support Chef Michel's integrity, values, and morals behind making the food system better. Anything he does I'm always right there behind him, supporting him as much as I can. That's why I'm a firm believer in Wholesome Wave."

CHEF JJ JOHNSON

Summary Financial Statement 2025 (unaudited):

Revenue: \$2,728,533

Foundations: \$2,320,304

Corporations: \$64,914

Individuals: \$118,592

Events: \$45,908

Membership: \$63,556

Government: \$39,771

Investments: \$48,479

Expenses: \$1,762,311

Programs: \$1,331,929 (76%)

Admin: \$195,714 (11%)

Fundraising: \$234,669 (13%)

Case Study: Maternal Produce Prescriptions



Food4Moms pilot generated quantified impact data on health outcomes and projected positive financial impact on healthcare costs.

NPPC educated federal leaders and implementers on a replicable model that delivers measurable positive outcomes.

A federal appropriations bill was passed with \$15M included to support maternal PRx programs.

New maternal PRx program being planned for Georgia, following the Food4Moms model.

Result: Maternal PRx programs expanding nationally using proven frameworks initiated at Wholesome Wave.

"From our Fourteen Acres Farm, to our Block to Block program, increasing access to fresh food for our communities is a passion for all of us at Love, Tito's. It's because of this passion, that we're grateful for the opportunity to team up with Wholesome Wave and support their efforts to increase the access and affordability of fresh produce for people across the country."

LISA NUCCIO

Sr. Manager of Strategic Giving at Love, Tito's

Case Study: Chef-led Local and National Impact



27 chefs mobilized to form Colorado OneKitchen Coalition. Selected Universal School Meals as issue area.



We provided chefs with advocacy training, and Action Partner Nourish CO provided in-depth training on propositions LL & MM.

Chefs join the campaign launch press conference, hold media interviews, and publish Op-eds.

Chefs launch social-media campaigns for education & awareness on props LL & MM. Reach 75,000+ people.



Result: Props LL & MM pass on the November ballot. Every CO student now has free breakfast and lunch at school, made with Colorado grown products.

2025 SUPPORTING FOUNDATIONS

GRACE
Communications Foundation



Anthem Foundation

Murphy
FOUNDATION



THE **RACHAELRAY**
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