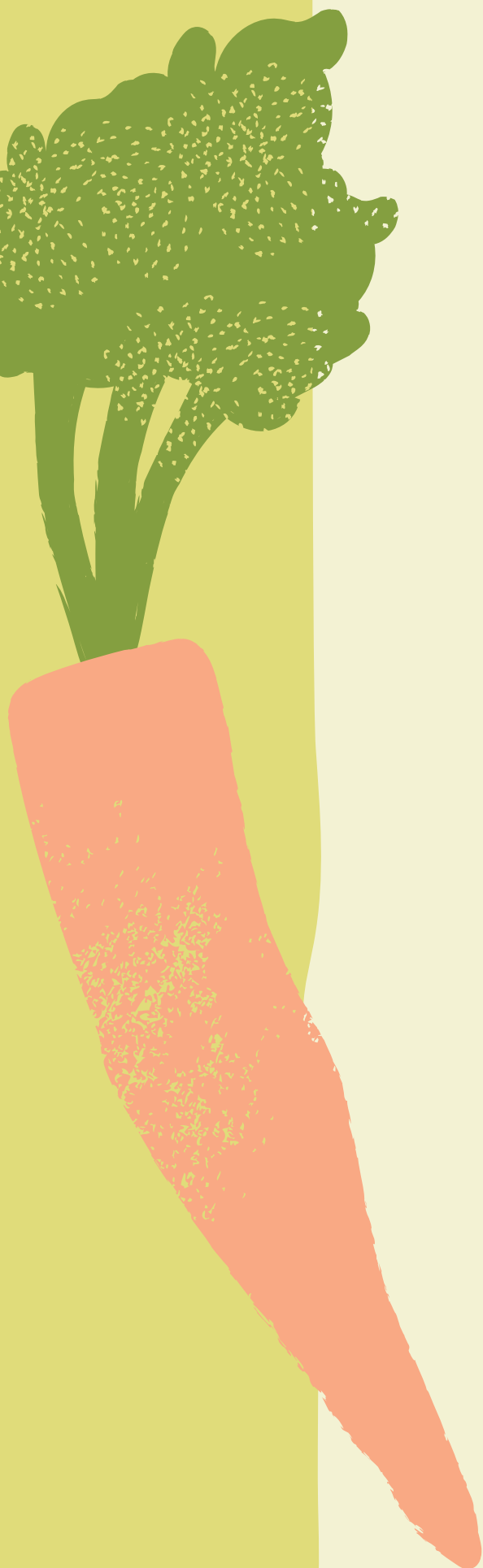




2021

# ANNUAL REPORT

**FOOD**<sub>TO</sub>  
**POWER**



## Mission

**To cultivate a healthy, equitable food system in the greater Colorado Springs community.**

## Vision

**We envision a world where communities heal and thrive in relationship with food, land, and each other.**



## Letter from our Executive Director

To the incredible movers and shakers of Food to Power,

I speak for all of us when I say 2021 was a roller coaster of a year. Our entire community and nation navigated many challenges, including exploring new ways to work and renegotiating what our work meant to us. Our team stayed flexible returning to work in person or adapting to hybrid formats, and their focus and drive for our mission is deeply appreciated in these times of change. We also double-downed to doing our part on the frontline to make fresh food accessible to all.

Through this focused, community participatory approach, we were able to further our mission of creating a thriving, equitable food system. The food access department recovered 435,008 pounds of food (equivalent to \$1,657,380.48) and provided healthy food to over 45,000+ community members. The food education department connected with dozens of community members and organizations to teach skills about cooking, gardening, and food systems as a whole. The food production department, through the work of Food to Power Compost, diverted 191,940 pounds of food waste from landfills across 287 households.

2021 also had deep impacts on our global food system. Due to challenges with supply chains,

worker strikes, and poor yields on certain crops due to environmental changes, many familiar items in the grocery store were simply unavailable or in short supply. These challenges underscore the importance of investing in local food systems and enabling food sovereignty for all. With this in mind, we pushed ahead with constructing the Hillside Hub despite supply chain challenges impacting construction costs as well. The production farm is already underway with 24,852 seedlings planted, and the Hub will be open for all to enjoy by the time this report is released. I'm thrilled to watch this space activate and support as many as 5,000 residents with fresh produce and opportunities for education in 2022.

The best is yet to come in our work, and I thank our board, staff, volunteers, and stakeholders throughout the city for everything being done to foster true transformation of our food systems.

In Solidarity,

Patience Kabwasa  
Executive Director

**Programmatic Impact**

# FOOD ACCESS DEPARTMENT

While most hunger assistance programs stock shelf-stable pantry items, our Food Access Department (FAD) focuses on fresh, healthy food to sustain a wholesome diet and prevent nutrition-related illnesses. Paired with educational opportunities, this department addresses immediate needs while building relationships and fostering a culture of empowered health.

**3722**

Volunteer hours in 2021

**10,776**

People served through our office at the Hub

**34,990**

People served through our partner locations

**435,008**

Pounds of food recovered in 2021

**\$1,657,380.48**

Equivalent funds saved through food recovered

## No Cost Grocery Programs Stats

### 11 PARTNERS // DISTRIBUTION SITES IN 2021:

Solid Rock CommUNITY Pantry  
Matthews-Vu Medical Group  
Highland Mobile Home Park  
Westside Community Center

The Hub  
Greccio Housing  
St. Patrick's Catholic Church  
Atlas Preparatory School

Meadows Park Community Center  
Voces Unidas de las Montañas  
Sleepy Valley Mobile Home Park

## Savvy Senior Stats

### NEW PARTNERSHIPS IN 2021:

Mills St. Pantry  
Ebenezer Baptist Church  
Anita Mata

The Empowerment House  
The Tiny Pantry

Food to Power delivered boxes of food weekly to 24 seniors in our community

"I began coming in the middle of the quarantine when work was scarce. This was when most of the food was chosen for you. It challenged me to cook more and it provides a variety of food I wouldn't have considered for myself. It saves me \$100-200 a week in expenses and time spent shopping. I now see it as essential."

## Programmatic Impact

# FOOD EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

At Food to Power and in our Food Education Department (FED), we see learning as something we all get to do together, at any age. This takes many shapes and forms, whether it be paid internships for high school students over the summer, afterschool programming for elementary aged youth, community workshops for adults, or conducting research in partnership with Colorado College and UCCS. We see ourselves as hosts, and invite our friends to come share and learn from each other through workshops, online experiences, and more.

## FED's 2022 Plans & Goals

In 2022, the Education Department is focused on deepening, improving quality, and rooting down. After building several new programs in 2021, 2022 will be more about honing systems, evaluating and improving quality, and deepening relationships. That said, we do have some new programming in store!

This year brings a new staff member and some restructuring in Education. Adding another full-time teammate to the department will allow the current manager in the department to focus exclusively on youth programming (after school and FLY) and volunteers instead of managing all programs. The new role, Community Connections Manager, will manage Community Corner and the Community of Practice as well as building out a menu of workshop offerings at the Hillside Hub and increasing the advocacy work of Food to Power.

With this new team in place, we have three main goals in 2022. The first is to intentionally evaluate both process and output of our existing programs—FLY, after-school clubs, Community

Corner, and volunteer training—so that we can continue to improve and grow responsively and responsibly. We will do this through new evaluation systems, partnerships with researchers at Colorado College, and expanded staff capacity.

Our second goal is to build a sense of community ownership over the Hillside Hub space. We will use workshops and other programming to invite neighbors, longtime community members, and new faces to the Hillside Hub to attend and host workshops and events. We will also build out our volunteer recruitment, management, and appreciation systems, so that our wider community knows they are welcome and valued when they spend time and energy on- and off-site.

Finally, this year will be about deepening and strengthening connections to partners and neighbors via advocacy for structural change to the food system. Our new staff member will be leading our advocacy work and ensuring that we have many avenues through which to listen to our community's concerns about and dreams for the food system.



▲ FLY 2021 interns celebrating the end of a great season

## FLY (Food Systems Leadership for Youth)

**8 Weeks of Classes Held**  
**12 Youth + 3 Volunteer Participants**

In 2021, we continued to grow our flagship program in the education department. It grew from 7 to 12 participants, and we experienced a 100% completion rate. We provided each of the 12 participants a paid internship of \$15/hr. While the Hillside Hub was under construction, we partnered with Hillside Community Center to cultivate their garden and host programming.

## Community Corner

**8 Classes Held**  
**80 Participants + 7 Appliances Awarded**

In 2021, we started a new monthly program hosted alongside our No Cost Grocery programs. While participants were waiting to receive food, they could sample unique recipes and engage in a variety of activities. In addition, this program helped collect data to influence program development at the Hillside Hub. After 4 participations, they were able to take home a free cooking appliance.

## After-School Programming

**4 Spring Sessions + 8 Fall Sessions Held**  
**Approx. 5 Spring + 30 Fall Student Participants**

We started a new partnership with Hillside Community Center last year to provide weekly after-school programming for elementary-aged youth that focused on teaching skills cooking, gardening, and food systems work as a whole.

## Community of Practice

Last year we started this monthly coalition meeting with neighbor organizations:

**3 - 4 Meetings Held**  
**8 Total Participating Organizations**

Catholic Charities	HAT (Hillside Advisory Team)
Concrete Couch	Hillside Community Center
Converge	Food to Power
Hillside Connection	Onebody Entertainment

## Deep Volunteer Training

**10 Hours of Training (five, 2-Hour Sessions) Held**  
**13 Graduates**



## Programmatic Impact

# FOOD PRODUCTION DEPARTMENT

Our Food Production Department (FPD) focuses on the production of fresh and healthy food. Before seeds are nurtured to life, this growing process begins with healthy and nutritious soil. There's no such thing as food "waste" when you compost! By diverting food, paper, and yard "wastes" from the landfill, we not only divert disastrous greenhouse gases from our atmosphere, but we also return nutrients to the soil so that we can foster the growth of healthy and nutritious food for our local community.

**287**  
Households Participated  
in Compost Programs

**191,940 lbs**  
Total Weight Diverted

**169,061 lbs**  
CO2E (Carbon Equivalency)

**8622**  
Gallons of Gas Avoided

**24,852**  
Seedlings Planted

## Looking Back

In 2021, Soil Cycle got a new name, but continued our food scrap collection and composting services. Food To Power Compost engaged volunteers in every step of transforming "waste" into a probiotic compost for amending local soils to grow food, fight drought, and build resilience. By the end of the year, Food To Power Compost wound down our composting systems at the Westside Community Garden and Colorado College Student Garden, in preparation for our move to the Hub in 2022. Meanwhile, the Farm Planning Committee did some deep research in preparation for the first farming season in 2022. In 2021, a group of five community members organized by UCCS graduate student Marisa Chapa conducted community-based research about food preferences to inform our crop planning process. From that, we learned community members are seeking fresh staple foods like tomato, lettuce, onion, and garlic, and the farm's first crop plan reflects that need.

## Partners

Food To Power Compost continued partnering with Westside Community Center, Ivywild School, and Colorado College Student Garden, and formed new partnerships with Flying Pig Farm and Vista Grande Community Church. Our commercial partners include Poor Richard's Cafe, Stellina Pizza Cafe, Switchback Coffee, Epicentral Coworking, Sustainable Living, and Carnelian Coffee.

## New Dropoff Stations

In 2021, we reconfigured the Westside dropoff location to be more accessible and have greater capacity for food scraps. We opened a new dropoff station in Manitou Springs at Flying Pig Farm, an educational community farm. Towards the end of the year, we formed a partnership with Vista Grande Community Church and began construction of a new north side dropoff location which will open spring 2022.

## FPD's 2022 Plans & Goals

In 2022, Food To Power Compost will open a north side and a Hillside dropoff station and continue operating the pickup service downtown. With a new work truck funded by CDPHE, we'll be able to start bringing food scraps to Don's Garden Center, the only permitted composting facility within city limits, instead of having scraps hauled by GFL to WM's composting facility at the Midway Landfill which will make our operation even more locally rooted. Food To Power Compost will setup a compost site at the Hillside Hub, focused on hot composting methods to produce high quality compost and compost teas for application on-site and distribution back to members. On the farm side, springtime will be spent refining the site plan and crop plan, starting seeds and building soil. Barring any natural disasters, we'll be harvesting veggies as early as July.



# HILLSIDE HUB

After nearly four years of community engagement through canvassing, surveying, focus groups, and community committees, Food to Power began shaping the vision for the Hillside Hub. Serving as Colorado Springs' first neighborhood food center, this community-driven space will serve as a place where neighbors can access, grow, cook, learn about, advocate for, and gain employment through fresh food.

It took nearly three additional years to draft architectural renderings and fundraise for the capital campaign, but on June 12th, 2021, we broke ground on the Hillside Hub. With the grand opening on June 11th, 2022, we look forward to the future as the Hillside Hub begins to grow its roots into the Hillside Neighborhood and begins to make a tangible impact on our local food system for many years to come.



▲ Hillside Hub grand opening is prepared for June 11, 2022

◀ Hillside Hub groundbreaking, June 12, 2021

## 5,000

Through integrated programming in fresh food access, education, & growing, core understanding of a healthy food system gained by 5,000 residents.

## 18

Hosted 18 Community Workshops

## 100+

100+ Hillside/Southeast residents with increased knowledge on and participation in one or more of the following:


- cooking on a budget
- high-desert garden management
- indigenous gardening techniques
- composting
- bee-keeping

## 700

Increased knowledge-base of the importance of fresh fruit & vegetable consumption in 700 unduplicated Hillside/Southeast Colorado Springs families.



Increased sense of neighborhood identity and community-ownership over Hillside neighborhood / Southeast Colorado Springs.

The background features several stylized food items: a yellow citrus slice in the top left, a green broccoli in the top center, a purple mushroom in the top right, a pink carrot in the middle left, a green leafy vegetable in the middle right, three blueberries in the bottom left, and a red strawberry in the bottom center. The text is centered in the middle of the page.

**Let's make  
a healthy,  
equitable  
food  
system.**

[foodtopowerco.org](http://foodtopowerco.org)