



2020

ANNUAL REPORT

CONNECTING OUR
FARMING HERITAGE WITH
OUR GROWING FUTURE

8,000+ education hours

2,500+ students reached

4,750+ lbs. food distributed to
the community

MSTFP & COVID-19

How MSTFP adapted
to fulfill its mission in
light of COVID-19

MSTFP'S ORGANIZATIONAL EXPANSION

Read about the
expanded team leading
MSTFP under its new
status as a nonprofit



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- A close-up photograph of a person's hands, wearing yellow gloves, holding a large, ripe red tomato. The person is wearing a yellow jacket. The background is a dark, textured surface.
- 03 Thank You to our Donors
 - 05 MSTFP's Organizational Expansion
 - 06 Meet our Executive Director
 - 07 Meet our Education Manager
 - 08 Highlighting our Production Manager
 - 09 Our 2020-2021 AmeriCorps Cohort
 - 10 MSTFP & COVID-19 Adaptations
 - 11 Our Partnership with Farm Corps & SWCC
 - 12 Mancos Garden and Lewis-Arriola Garden Completions
 - 12 Free Produce Market at SWOS
 - 13 Our DIIGS15 Fundraising Campaign
 - 14 Where We're Headed in 2021

OUR MISSION

The Montezuma School to Farm Project unites our local agricultural heritage with our growing future by engaging students at the crossroads of sustainable agriculture, resource conservation, health, and economics through educational experiences in outdoor garden classes, on field trips, through youth farmers markets, and in summer farm camp.

THANK YOU TO OUR 2020 DONORS

Your support has made our twelfth year in the community possible! We couldn't have done it without you.

Aikin, Kent & Suzanne

Banga, Dave

Becker, Bob & Lorraine

Beira, Jose

Bieri, Jim & Sandra

Brown, Ryan

Burke, Jack & Patricia

Capelin, Doug & Beverly

Cicock, Mark & Trinette

Cruser, Peter & Holly

Foster, Wade & Ellen

Fox, Constance

Fulton, Richard & Kathryn

Genseal, Rylee

Groves, Gary & Sandy

Helm, Terri

Hitchcock, Frances

Johnson-Gaddis, Margaret

Kearns, Kathleen

Kyle, Bryan & Angela

Lavey, Mike & Gail

Lester, Marsha

McAfee, Chuck & M.B.

Mackenbach, John & Mari

Mallin, David

Marion, Bob & Nancy

Martin, Lisa

Miles, Steven & Jeanne

Moser, Mike & Anne

Patton, Hazel

Patton, Sara

Phillips, William & Katherine

Lackemann

Rank, Robert

Rauscher, Patricia

Schuenemeyer, John & Judith

Sorenson, Louise

Sullwold, Clayton & Petra

Tillotson, Sandhya

Udick, Lynn

Webster, Laurie

Whiteside, Gary & Deborah

Corley

Wood, John & Shirley Powell

Zerrer, Ted & Katherine

Dobson



THANK YOU TO OUR 2020 PARTNERS AND SPONSORS

*Your support has made our twelfth year in the
community possible!*

Mancos, Dolores, and Cortez School Districts

AmeriCorps

High Desert Conservation District

Mancos Conservation District

Cliffrose Garden Center & Gifts

Kiwanis Club of Mesa Verde

Ricky King State Farm

El Pomar Foundation

Colorado State Conservation Board

Empire Electric

La Puente

Montezuma Inspire Coalition

Great Outdoors Colorado

Fahrenheit Coffee Roasters

Colorado Legal Services

Dolores State Bank

Mancos Chiropractic



MSTFP's organizational transformation & expansion in 2020

Became an official non-profit

After twelve years of being a program under the Mancos Conservation District, we applied to be our very own independent non-profit organization.

Formed a Board of Directors

Our first step after becoming a non-profit was to form a Board of Directors, MSTFP's governing body. We recruited individuals from across Montezuma County who bring diverse skill sets, experiences, and backgrounds to serve on our board.

Hired an Education Manager

Another important step in becoming a non-profit was the hiring of an Education Manager, who will work to continuously foster a positive relationship between the organization and the school system. We are so lucky to have Karen Lindner as our Education Manager!

Hired a new Executive Director

After six years with MSTFP, Gretchen Rank has stepped down as ED but has excitedly accepted a position on MSTFP's Board to lend her expertise and facilitate the transition. We welcome Trinette Robichaux-Cichock as our new ED and are excited to have her lead us!



TRINETTE ROBICHAUX- CICHOCK

After an extensive search for the most qualified Executive Director for our program, we are happy to welcome Trinette Robichaux-Cichock as our new ED!

Trinette was born in Lake Charles, Louisiana and was raised in Texas. Although she is a full-blooded Cajun, she considers the Four Corners region to be home. Trinette holds a BA in Russian and East European Studies, an MA in History (both from the University of Texas Arlington) and an All but Dissertation (ABD) in history from Marquette University. She has taught English and history in various teaching positions in Hungary, Canada, France and the USA. In addition to her 25 years of teaching experience, Trinette has held various organizational leadership roles.

She previously served as the CEO of Cassata Catholic High School in Fort Worth, Texas where she oversaw all of the development and fundraising activities while also being involved in the education piece. She also served as principal of Cassata Catholic High School (Fort Worth, Texas), the Dallas International School, and Tse' Yi Gai High School (Navajo Nation, New Mexico). Her combination of education and advancement experience makes her a great fit for leading MSTFP into the future.

In Trinette's words, "I applied for the position because I feel that our modern age has removed children from nature, to their detriment, and that the mission of MSTFP was in line with my own ideals. I believe that we only learn by doing, which is what MSTFP does: gets students outside and gets their hands dirty. That is the best way for students to learn."



**KAREN
LINDNER**

MSTFP is dedicated to fostering a positive relationship between Montezuma County schools and our program, which is why we felt it was necessary to hire an Education Manager. We welcome Karen Lindner into this role!

Karen was born and raised in Austin, TX and holds a bachelors degree in Criminal Justice and Psychology. While raising three boys, she decided to pursue a teaching certificate in early childhood education and returned to school to complete an intense year long teaching program. Since 2008, she has taught in a small rural school district and an urban charter school. It was at the charter school that Karen was introduced to school gardens and experiential learning. This experience became the basis for Karen's educational philosophy that children learn best by having hands-on experiences that extend beyond the classroom.

In 2017, after moving to Colorado, Karen briefly taught middle school language arts in Pagosa Springs for two years. She also taught Genius Hour and Passion Project electives that gave students an opportunity to have hands-on student inspired experiences and be able to give back to their community. During the 2019-2020 school year, Karen was the first AmeriCorps service member for the Archuleta County 4-H Extension Office and taught STEM lessons in an afterschool setting.

The opportunity to join the MSTFP is a dream come true. Karen is looking forward to utilizing her experience as an educator and her ability to organize and plan to be able to carry the program forward by working as a liaison with the schools in Montezuma County.



**BEN
GOODRICH**

New leadership team, same mission and values.
MSTFP's Production Manager, Ben Goodrich, has been instrumental in maintaining our program's core values while expanding our reach.

MSTFP's consistent delivery of quality lessons, fresh produce, and clean, organized, safe garden spaces for our students could not be possible without Production Manager Ben Goodrich's work and dedication to the program. By working closely with and mentoring MSTFP's AmeriCorps Garden Coordinators, our educational gardens flourish with beauty that inspire Montezuma County students to learn and be outside.

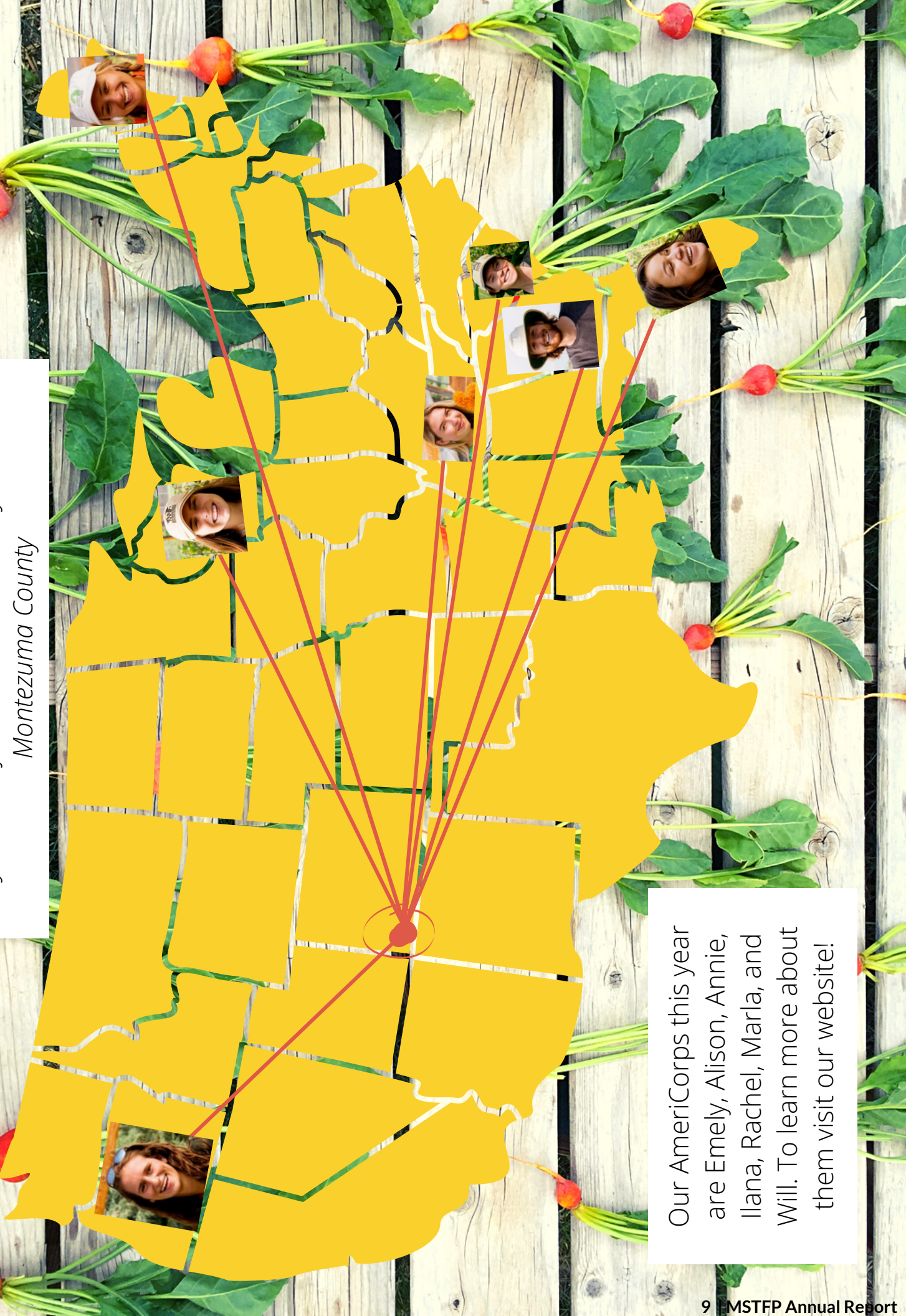
2020 was a transitional period for MSTFP in which the program underwent vast organizational change, allowing us to more efficiently serve our students. During this time, Ben's work has permitted our program to continue flowing smoothly. Since Ben's hiring in March of 2018, his vast knowledge and experience in gardening and agriculture has allowed our program to expand by adding two garden spaces and one additional AmeriCorps position.

Ben has enjoyed seeing how the AmeriCorps members interact with the gardens year to year and seeing the spaces grow and change. He looks forward to spending more time trialing new crop varieties, improving soil fertility, and growing our compost and seed saving programs. His hope is to encourage students to spend more time outside, away from their devices, and to continue giving students opportunities to learn about growing food, preparing food, and the importance of food producers all while providing fresh produce to our community.

OUR 2020-2021 AMERICORPS COHORT

They've come from across the country to serve in

Montezuma County



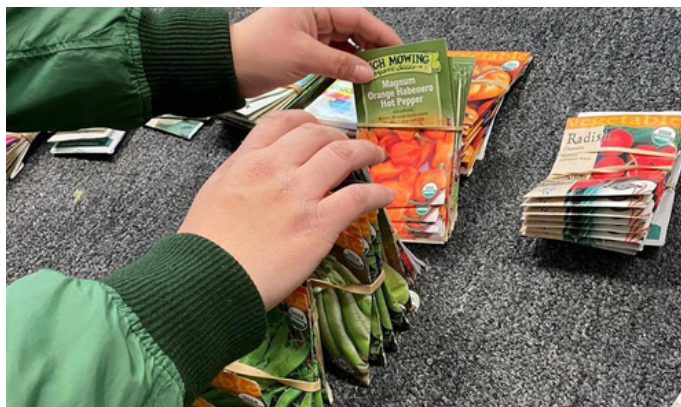
Our AmeriCorps this year are Emely, Alison, Annie, Ilana, Rachel, Marla, and Will. To learn more about them visit our website!

MSTFP's COVID-19 ADJUSTMENTS

Adapting to fulfill our mission in light of a global pandemic

Take Home Garden Kits

We partnered with Joe Magie, the Ag-science teacher at Cortez Middle School, to help us distribute seed starting kits to kids as a COVID safe effort to allow kids to still garden. Each kit included a peat pot, soil, and broccoli and cucumber seeds. In total, 75 garden kits were distributed.



Seed Starter Distribution

In collaboration with Montezuma Seedshare and Mancos Foodshare, and hosted at Mt. Lookout Grange, MSTFP staff donated and helped distribute 100 seed starters packets to the community which contained 10-12 seed types and 1-2 sprouted plants.

Summer Garden Programming

With COVID-19 restrictions, we adopted our summer program to fit CDC Guidelines to ensure the safety of participants, while still providing a summer education experience. During June & July, families were able to sign up for 1.5 hour time slots and experience tastings, crafts, and gardening tasks. In total, six families participated and ten kids were able to enjoy the gardens.

**"You know the best way to help a flower grow?
Give it lots of compliments!" -3rd grader,
Kemper Elementary**



Website launch for kids, MSTFPkids.org

School closures, due to COVID-19, caused our garden classes to be cancelled during the late fall of 2020. Therefore, we created MSTFPkids.org! The purpose of this website is to serve our students and still offer our programming through an online platform. Students of all ages and regions can access and learn from lessons on different subjects, including garden lessons! Managed by our Education Manager and AmeriCorps Garden Coordinators, our goal with this website is to fulfill our mission & vision through these difficult times by inspiring curiosity, healthy eating habits, and environmental stewardship, right from your home!



OUR PARTNERSHIP WITH FARM CORPS & SWCC

Farm Corps Crew Work

MSTFP welcomed five individuals from Montezuma County, ages 15-18 through a partnership with FarmCorps. This crew of young individuals were interested in learning about local agriculture. They planted, watered the gardens, weeded, and learned basic skills in growing vegetables, plant sciences, and other outdoor/environmental topics. We are honored to be able to offer paid career pathways such as this to Montezuma youth.



Southwest Conservation Corps Intern

One of our FarmCorps Members from 2019 signed on to be our 2020 Summer Intern. We were so excited to have Shakira Nephew working with us again. She is a 2020 graduate from Montezuma-Cortez High School. This position is in collaboration with our Southwest Conservation Corps partner. Shakira helped us with creating beautiful signs in our gardens and distributing food.

MANCOS & LEWIS-ARRIOLA ELEMENTARY GARDEN COMPLETIONS

MSTFP completed **TWO** garden sites in 2020, for a total of seven school garden sites operated by MSTFP in Montezuma County.

Our Mancos garden is a special one for us. Established in 2009, it is the first garden that we created in Montezuma County and has a rough but happy history. From being initially created, to being removed due to construction in Mancos, to now being reborn! The Mancos garden is complete after work with Southwest Conservation Corps FarmCorps and our AmeriCorps direct-service members this past summer. It features a 450 sq. foot teaching pavilion with a combination of raised and in-ground beds. We will be planting a mixture of vegetables, storage crops, and flowers in 2021 as well as managing the few remaining fruit trees that were planted in the area long ago.



Farm Corps building out the Mancos garden over the summer



The completed Mancos garden



The completed Lewis-Arriola garden site



AmeriCorps Will and Rachel giving the first lesson taught at Lewis by MSTFP

And now, Lewis-Arriola Elementary School is the 7th addition of MSTFP's garden sites in Montezuma County. Founded in late 2020, MSTFP is in the process of establishing a container garden space on a repurposed blacktop at the school.

FREE PRODUCE MARKET AT SOUTHWEST OPEN HIGH SCHOOL

From August-November, MSTFP visited Southwest Open High School on a weekly basis with fresh produce from our gardens. With the help of staff at SWOS, MSTFP set up a walk through "market" where students had the opportunity to choose veggies to take home to share with their families.



OUR DIIGS15 FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN

The impact of a \$15 donation in our program

Donations **I**nvesting **I**n **G**arden **S**tudents

Our impact

In 2020, MSTFP reached 2,500+ students across our seven school garden sites and we achieved 8,000+ education hours.

What we do

As a non-profit, we provide our garden classes for absolutely free. We do hands on, experiential garden classes for K-5 that focus on a variety of subjects held to CO education standards.

This means

In our program, to provide our services for one garden student a month, it costs our program \$15. That means, MSTFP must find roughly \$37,500 a year in funding to provide our garden classes.

What a \$15 donation allows

A \$15 donation to MSTFP will guarantee 1 student the opportunity to enjoy garden class for an entire month!

We are so grateful to our supporters who have made our twelfth year possible. If you would like to donate to our DIIGS15 campaign, please visit our website! Donors receive exclusive MSTFP gifts and swag (please leave your mailing address when you donate in PayPal). Throughout the year, we offer special raffles and prizes that our donors can win.

You can donate once or sign up for recurring payments in PayPal. Do you DIIG?

WHERE WE'RE HEADED IN 2021

MSTFP will resume regular programming in March. Our garden coordinators will resume garden classes with students in a safe manner.

In collaboration with the Montezuma County CSU Extension office, we will be designating three of our garden sites as CSU Grow & Give Gardens. Learn more @ growandgivecolorado.org

Another collaboration effort with CSU is offering monthly volunteer opportunities to CSU Master Gardeners participants and community members.

MSTFP will continue our collaboration with Montezuma Inspire Coalition to serve youth in Montezuma County.

MSTFP will continue our collaboration with Southwest Conservation Corps to offer paid summer opportunities to young adults in Montezuma County.

MSTFP plans to hire Montezuma County educators to be School Garden Educator Liaisons. These positions will offer support to teachers to ensure that schools maximize the educational potential of the school garden.

2021

MSTFP Staff

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Trinette Robichaux-Cichock, Executive Director

Ben Goodrich, Production Manager

Karen Lindner, Education Manager

MSTFP AmeriCorps Members

.....

Emely Beira, AmeriCorps VISTA

Annie Baumm, AmeriCorps Garden Coordinator

Alison Bean, AmeriCorps Garden Coordinator

Marla Moser, AmeriCorps Garden Coordinator

Ilana Newman, AmeriCorps Garden Coordinator

Rachel Skidmore, AmeriCorps Garden Coordinator

Will Warmath, AmeriCorps Garden Coordinator

MSTFP Board of Directors

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Katie Russell, Board President

Jim Patton, Board Vice President

Katri Rittenhouse, Secretary

Gretchen Rank, Treasurer

Beth Padilla, Member

Kit Connally, Member

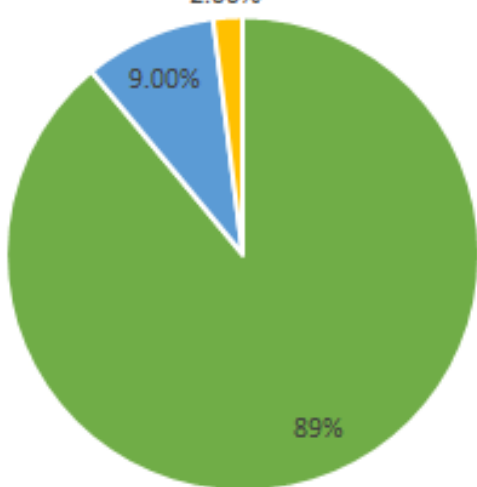
Clara Martinez, Member

2020 FUNDING:

2.00%

9.00%

89%



- Grant Funding
- School District Contributions
- Donations/Fundraising

Southwest
Open HS

Good
Samaritan
Food Bank

Food
tastings

Where produce
from MSTFP's
gardens was
distributed in 2020

Fundraisers

Volunteers &
AmeriCorps



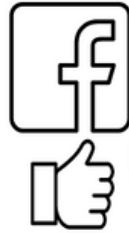
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