

# POWER OF ONE

WYOMING FOOD FOR THOUGHT PROJECT'S  
2016 REPORT



Wyoming  
  
food for  
thought  
Project

“What is The Power of One? It’s really very simple. No one can do it all, but if we focus on the one in front of us, the one within our own reach, each one of us can help solve the issue one person, one piece, one dollar at a time.” – Rhonda Zimmerman, Power of One visionary.

## Cultivating Community

*Breaking down barriers to build healthy, happy memories for more than 675 children: the Power of One*

Our desire to engage and empower our community through the Power of One continues to create a positive and dignified way to fight hunger. Altogether, our volunteers and supporters have helped provide over 180,000 meals to local students. One single box of macaroni & cheese made one sixth-grader's birthday wish come true (see page 3). This is the Power of One.

We are immensely proud of our commitment to never turn away a hungry child. We have you, our community, to thank for that. But there is still much work to be done. To change the story of hunger, we must change the fight.

Wyoming Food for Thought Project began with a focus on a local solution to hunger. Our reach has expanded over the past 4 years of our existence to include 100 community garden beds, year-round farmer's markets, free summer meals, AmeriCorps VISTAs, and business incubation programs. We believe in a systemic solution to hunger where inclusion and empowerment are at the core of our motivation to change the way our community as a whole accesses food.

The number hunger fighters - volunteers and donors - is growing: We’ve registered more than 350 different volunteers this year. Some of our volunteers are children who are finding a voice for their classmates. Children like Jaden, a first-grader who never misses a Wednesday bag-stuffing session—and never lets her mom miss one either. Children like Clara, age six, who asked her friends to bring canned food, not toys, to her birthday party. Kids seem to understand instinctively the adage recently popularized by a Snickers candy bar commercial: “You’re not you when you’re hungry”.

Teachers here in our Natrona County School District attest to the truth of hunger's effects. Discipline problems are one of the most visible hallmarks that a child is going without regular meals. Restore a reliable source of food, and the transformation is remarkable: improved attendance, sharper focus, a more positive outlook—in short, well-fed kids achieve more.

It can be both difficult and costly to keep the pantry stocked for hungry mouths. That is why we need your help to keep our promises to the children of Natrona County. In this season of giving and sharing, your donation to Wyoming Food for Thought Project may be the most transformative gift you give.



Wednesday packing day volunteers show up each week and help make feeding our children possible

# Be the change you wish to see



“  
because of the Food  
for Thought bag he  
received, he was able  
to have his best friend  
over for a birthday  
sleepover

”

No one knows better than our advocates in Natrona County Schools what a difference having enough food can make. Heather BeeBout, Social Studies teacher at Dean Morgan Junior High, shares the story of one child for whom a simple box of macaroni was the means to fulfilling a dream. She writes:

*“I have a student in my class who always wanted to be able to have a friend spend the night for his birthday but was never*

*able to because he knew that he "wouldn't have enough food at home to feed his friend too". I will never forget when he told me (with such excitement) that because of the Food for Thought bag he received, he was able to have his best friend over for a birthday sleepover and they ate macaroni and cheese together. He was so thrilled to be able to host a peer. It made my heart sing!”*

# Success Stories

*One person, one can of food, one dollar, can change a life: the Power of One*

"I have several students that are receiving the benefit of Food for Thought food bags.

One example is a student that has a single parent who works nights. He is responsible for his two siblings, who are under the age of 8, he is only 11. As a result of Wyoming food for thought, they have dinner, and because mom is still asleep when he gets his siblings up for school, he can give them a bit of breakfast as well (school breakfast is great and free, but sometimes it isn't enough). More importantly they have food for the weekend

when school is not in session. He once told me that it helps not to have to worry about mom remembering to get food, or having time or money to get to Casper (45 minutes away) to get food for them. Since being on the food program his attendance and that of his siblings has improved. I don't think he would be, or feel, successful if he was not receiving this act of kindness."

--Ronni Mull,  
Midwest Schools  
Math and Science Teacher

***"If you can't feed  
a hundred  
people then feed  
just one"***  
***--Mother Theresa***



# A Market for All Seasons

*Food for Thought's year-round markets expand access to programs which make it easier for everyone in our community to enjoy fresh and unique locally produced food and arts year round*

We are proud to manage Food for Thought Markets year-round, providing a venue for farmers, artisans, backyard growers, and novice craftspeople alike, to share the local love. All of our markets accept SNAP/EBT benefits, are kid-friendly, and are wonderful places to enjoy all our community has to offer.

Wyoming Food for Thought Project is firmly committed to making our markets accessible to all. In 2016, we were able to double the buying power

of 22 customers who chose to spend their SNAP benefits on fresh fruits and vegetables - the Double Up Food Bucks program. In addition, we debuted the Power of Produce Kids' Club, which provides fun, educational activities and a tasting challenge, the "Two Bite Club," in which children are rewarded for sampling unfamiliar foods with \$2 in "POP Bucks" to spend on fruits and veggies.

Markets are part of our overall mission to make good and healthy food accessible to every person in our community, all year long.



Jeff Hull of Moonberry Farms shows customers his all-natural bug repellent

## Growing Healthier Habits

*Community gardens prove to be a source of life lessons, as well as fresh meals, for local children and the community at-large*



In addition to 100+ community garden beds across the city, 2016 also saw the addition of a high tunnel greenhouse equipped for year round growing

Homegrown food is a powerful tool in achieving food security and food sovereignty, as well as teaching life skills and nutrition to the younger generation. This Summer, Wyoming Food for Thought Project sponsored over 100 community garden plots across the city of Casper. The plots grew a diverse range of foods, some destined for personal use, some for donation, and some to be sold at Food for Thought Markets or served at community dinners.

At the Food for Thought program center, over half of all the crops grown were designated "Food is Free," meaning they were free for the picking by anyone who could use them, with no questions asked. The most frequent beneficiary of the Food is Free program? Our neighborhood children, who picked, prepared, and enjoyed fresh veggies all summer. The group's favorite dish was unanimously voted to be "chini" (zucchini, to adults) bread.



Today is the day to  
be the change.

Today is the day to begin to  
make the world a better place.  
With over 750 local children  
receiving food bags, today is the  
day to be the Power of One.

## Steve & Mary: embodying the Power of One

Steve and Mary Lovelace are two of the best people we have ever met. They began volunteering shortly after the first community garden bed at our former location in downtown Casper was created in the spring of 2013. Steve and Mary arrived with passion and expertise for growing in Casper, and from the tiny bed, have lent their time, energy, and passion to helping us grow food for our community. Steve has built more than 50 garden beds, designed and maintains our water systems, built rain barrels, starts plants for the garden, and donates countless hours to our pursuit of growing food. Steve and Mary lead garden work days, teach children to garden, and drive our passion to do more. They are truly the Power of One.



Steve and Mary at Localicious  
2015. Most of the produce  
served at this dinner was grown  
in their personal garden.



Yes. I will be a part of the local solution

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

One Time   Monthly   Quarterly

Credit Card Information:

Card number \_\_\_\_\_

Exp, Date \_\_\_\_\_ CVV \_\_\_\_\_

Amount Pledged \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail with your donation to:  
Wyoming Food for Thought Project  
900 Saint John  
Casper, WY 82601

## WYOMING FOOD FOR THOUGHT PROJECT

Wyoming Food for Thought Project is an independently run, local non-profit 501(c)(3) organization founded on the idea that a local solution to hunger is possible. Located in Casper, we are changing the face of hunger in our community and our state by creating solutions that put the power of change in the community's hands.

900 Saint John Street, Casper, WY 82601

307.337.1703 [www.wyfftp.org](http://www.wyfftp.org)



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