

# How do Growing Projects Work?

## Specialty Crops or Products Model



**Growing Hope Globally gives US communities the opportunity to respond to global hunger from right where you are through our unique Growing Project model. Growing Projects leverage local assets and create space for learning, spiritual growth, and community building.**

**Gather Donations:** Most specialty crop or product Growing Projects begin with the establishment of a Growing Project leadership team and the commitment of one or more farmers to donate a portion of their produce. Depending on the crop or product and the type of inputs required, other community members might be invited to participate by donating. Inputs might include seed, fertilizer, spraying, crop care, harvesting, processing or storage. Donations can be in-kind or cash. Churches, civic groups, and agribusinesses are usually happy to help when they know what is needed.

### **Harvesting, Processing, and Selling:**

Some specialty crops or products need to be processed further after harvest while others are consumed raw. The easiest way for the wider community to get engaged might be by joining in the harvest or processing of the product. In other cases, the best way to be involved is by purchasing the final product. Sales might take place at a special event, farmers market, school sporting event, or even after a church service.

**Celebrate and Educate:** Growing Projects provide a wonderful opportunity to educate the larger community about how their food is produced. A Farm Day, Harvest Celebration or other special event can be held to generate continued interest in the Growing Project and encourage non-farmers to learn more about agriculture. Depending on the crop or product, there may be opportunities for participants to get their hands dirty as they volunteer for the project.

**Choose the Overseas Program to Support:** Visit [GrowingHopeGlobally.org/programs](http://GrowingHopeGlobally.org/programs) for a list of all of the overseas programs currently in need of funding. You decide how your donations are used. Donations can be given to support specific programs or church related partners, or the overall work of Growing Hope Globally. It is important to let supporters know how their donations made an impact through e-mails, thank you notes, or newsletters.



**If you are interested in making a lasting difference for people suffering from hunger, please contact us. We want to welcome you and provide you with support to help your project be as successful as possible. Together we are living out our faith, loving our neighbors, and growing lasting solutions to hunger.**

# Yakima WA Growing Project

## Specialty Crop or Products Model Example

The “Sharing the Harvest” growing project in Yakima, WA is making a global difference while participants enjoy delicious Washington Apples. The process begins with several generous apple growers committing to share a portion of their harvest.

In August, Growing Project leaders send pre-purchase order forms for ten-pound bags of apples to churches across the Pacific Northwest. Three varieties are offered: Fuji, Gala and Golden Delicious. Each bag is \$10.

On a Saturday in late October, members of all the participating churches come together at Wiley Heights Covenant Church in Yakima to sort and bag the apples. The day includes a meal, cider pressing, activities for children and the opportunity to enjoy some time in the country.

Participants transport apples back to their home churches where individuals can pick up their pre-ordered apples the next day. The proceeds go to a Growing Hope program selected by the leadership team. For many years, the group supported a program in Central African Republic that included training for fruit growers.

**Other Growing Projects have had success with maple syrup, honey, almonds, popcorn, olive oil, and sweet corn. Consider the resources you have available in your community and let your imagination soar with the possibilities.**



## Getting Started

1. Reach out to us at [Info@GrowingHopeGlobally.org](mailto:Info@GrowingHopeGlobally.org) to get connected with a local staff person. You can also find upcoming opportunities to learn more at [GrowingHopeGlobally.org/events](https://GrowingHopeGlobally.org/events)
2. Brainstorm a list of names of other people in your community that might be willing to be part of your Growing Project Team. Farmers are critical to the success of a project, but so are people that can manage outreach efforts, track receipts, seek donations, or coordinate events. Get together and see what ideas you can develop.
3. Once you have a plan and a list of the necessary inputs for your crop or product, reach out to community members for support. Churches, local agribusinesses, agricultural associations and civic groups are all good places to start.
4. Most importantly, get started this year. Nothing creates excitement like a plan that is in motion, especially when it is going to support a great cause.

# FFA Chapter Resources

## Getting Started Checklist

**We've found that it's best to start a new Growing Project at the beginning of the second semester of the school year. Create a calendar of when you want to complete the following:**

- Complete activities A1 - A6 in the International Agricultural Development SAE for All Career Kit to familiarize yourselves with terminology, career paths, and the challenges farmers face around the world.
- Visit [GrowingHopeGlobally.org](http://GrowingHopeGlobally.org). Watch a webinar under the "Get Involved" tab to get inspired about the kind of programs your Growing Project could support. Read about our overseas programs under the "Support a Program" tab.
- Work as a chapter to write down your "why". Supporters will be excited to help if they know why your chapter wants to respond to world hunger.
- Brainstorm about people in the community that might want to participate in a Growing Project. Are there farmers, seed dealers, co-ops, churches, agricultural associations, processors, storage facilities or other organizations that might be supportive?
- Create a list of all the inputs you will need to produce the crop or product and then match each need with a potential supporter.
- Make sure everyone in your chapter has a role to play in the project. Form committees that are responsible for Marketing and Communications, Record Keeping, and External Relations. Sample committee descriptions are available on the following page.
- Begin outreach efforts. Prepare a presentation, brochure or letter to share with potential supporters. Be ready to ask for the inputs you need from them. Your presentation and letter should include: why your chapter is starting a Growing Project, an overview of your project, what you are asking them to donate, how their donation will be utilized, and how funds raised in the project will be used.
- Communicate with farmers to see how they'd like your chapter to work with them on the Growing Project throughout the year. Depending on the crop or product, opportunities for hands-on work could include pruning, tying up vines, weeding, harvesting, tapping trees, or many other activities.
- Plan and host a Farm Day, Harvest Celebration, or other special event where you thank supporters and update them on how the funds raised will be used. If your chapter plans to continue your project next year, let them know. This event could also serve as a fundraiser for the project or a way to educate the community about agriculture and hunger.
- Choose the overseas program(s) you want to support with your Growing Project proceeds. Visit [GrowingHopeGlobally.org/programs](http://GrowingHopeGlobally.org/programs) for a list of programs that need funding. Once you have made your decision, fill in a Growing Project Designation Form and send it to Growing Hope along with your proceeds.
- Create a report on your project. An end of year report can be helpful for students that do the project in the future.

# FFA Chapter Resources

## Sample Committee Role Descriptions

We've found that Growing Projects are most successful when everyone has a clear job to do. Planning well and assigning responsibilities enables the project to run smoothly and keeps supporters engaged throughout the year. You may need to create additional committees or assign additional tasks to complete everything your chapter wants to accomplish in your Growing Project.

### External Relations Committee:

- With the rest of the chapter, brainstorm a list of businesses, organizations and individuals that can be asked to support the Growing Project with in-kind or cash donations. Develop a calendar that assigns responsibility to specific committee members for contacting each potential donor.
- Develop a plan for following up with each supporter. Do you want to send letters, emails, or make phone calls to update them on the project during the growing season?
- With the marketing and communications team, develop a presentation to share with potential supporters that explains your Growing Project and your chapter's goals.
- Create a list of tasks that the Growing Project farmers want assistance with and make a sign-up sheet for dates when students can volunteer to help.

### Record Keeping Committee:

- Create a budget for the project and a plan for tracking gifts, income, and expenses.
- Track the hours spent by each committee on the project.
- If your Growing Project includes pre-orders, keep track of the orders as they come in.
- Fill out the Growing Project Designation Form and send it along with your proceeds to Growing Hope Globally once you have chosen which program(s) to support.

### Marketing and Communications Committee:

- Develop a marketing plan and calendar. Think through the marketing resources your group might need (signs, fliers, brochures, news articles, social media posts, etc.), and determine when they will be needed. Assign each item to a specific committee member.
- Ask the external relations team what they will need for reaching out to the community
- Consider which events in the Growing Project might be newsworthy (planting, harvest, sales day or making your donation, for example) and spread the word by doing social media posts and sending a press release to your local media outlets in advance so they will consider covering it.
- Find ways to publicly thank the supporters of your Growing Project
- Do you want to post a metal Growing Hope Globally sign to spread the word about your Growing Project? Growing Hope can provide you with a logo sign if you are interested.

### Other Possible Committees:

- Events Committee: Plans and manages the Farm Day, Harvest Celebration and other community events to raise awareness of hunger or the importance of food and agriculture, etc.
- Farming Committee: With larger projects, assigning a dedicated team to work with farmers might make sense.