



brighterbites®

Annual Report

2021



ANNUAL REPORT
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BRIGHTER BITES Who We Are

Brighter Bites provides fresh fruits and veggies to kids and their families who lack regular access to fresh food. We teach them how to use it and track their behavior change.

OUR NOT-SO-SECRET FORMULA



PRODUCE DISTRIBUTION

Brighter Bites distributes fresh produce to Brighter Bites schools. Each family receives a variety of fruits and vegetables, weighing about 20-25 pounds and equating to approximately 50 servings of fresh produce.



NUTRITION EDUCATION

We teach kids, parents, and teachers how to make the most of their produce. We provide nutrition education handbooks, plus weekly tip sheets and recipes, for everyone to use at home. We train and support teachers in their implementation of the Coordinated Approach to Child Health (CATCH), an evidence-based program that promotes healthy food choices and physical activity.



FUN FOOD EXPERIENCE

Brighter Bites staff engages with families with hospitality in order to serve families with a dignified and welcoming experience. We share culinary tools like easy recipes, kitchen how-tos, culinary tips, and healthy topics, in person and through digital platforms.

We are Data Driven:

We measure the outcomes of the program to determine the impact on the families we serve. We look for operational efficiency and family behavior change impact.



OUR MISSION:

To create communities of health through fresh food.



Letter from Founder

Dear Friends,

This fall as we celebrate our 10th Birthday it is remarkable to see how far Brighter Bites has come. From our beginnings in Houston, to now having served over 50 million pounds of fresh produce to students and their families in food deserts across 9 major metropolitan areas.

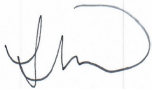
When we began in Houston in 2012 we only served 150 families in one school. During this current 2021-2022 school year we can excitedly report that we are distributing fresh fruits and vegetables to over 28,000 individuals at 141 schools. In addition to our distributions, we are also pleased to provide nutrition education in the classrooms and track our impact.

And Brighter Bites is now serving students and families in California! Programming in the Salinas Valley began this past fall, and we launched in Los Angeles in February 2022. We are also fortunate to work in tandem with a variety of new partners as we expand in these cities. These are some pretty significant accomplishments!

Brighter Bites would like to thank you, our supporters, who have traveled this extraordinary journey with us. With your continued support we will build even more communities of health through fresh food.

I hope you enjoy learning about our 2021 success and our dynamic organization in our most recent Annual Report.

With gratitude,
Lisa




“We love it. These fruits and vegetables are delicious. The recipes are wonderful. My little one really has enjoyed the fruits and it's getting back on his vegetable intake. The program is a great form of getting kiddos to eat healthier. Thank you.”

-Brighter Bites Parent





CEO Corner

2021 was a challenging year to say the least, both for Brighter Bites staff and the communities that we serve. I am so grateful to our hard working and dedicated team that continually overcame obstacles and enabled us to continue to live and breathe our credo:

- *To assure our first responsibility is to our Brighter Bites Families.*
- *To meet their needs by providing our them a consistent variety of produce and nutrition education resources that results in a sustainable and engaging program in order to promote long-term health.*

We know our employees are our most valuable assets, and we prioritized providing a safe and secure work environment, a healthy work-life balance, and more opportunities for employee satisfaction.

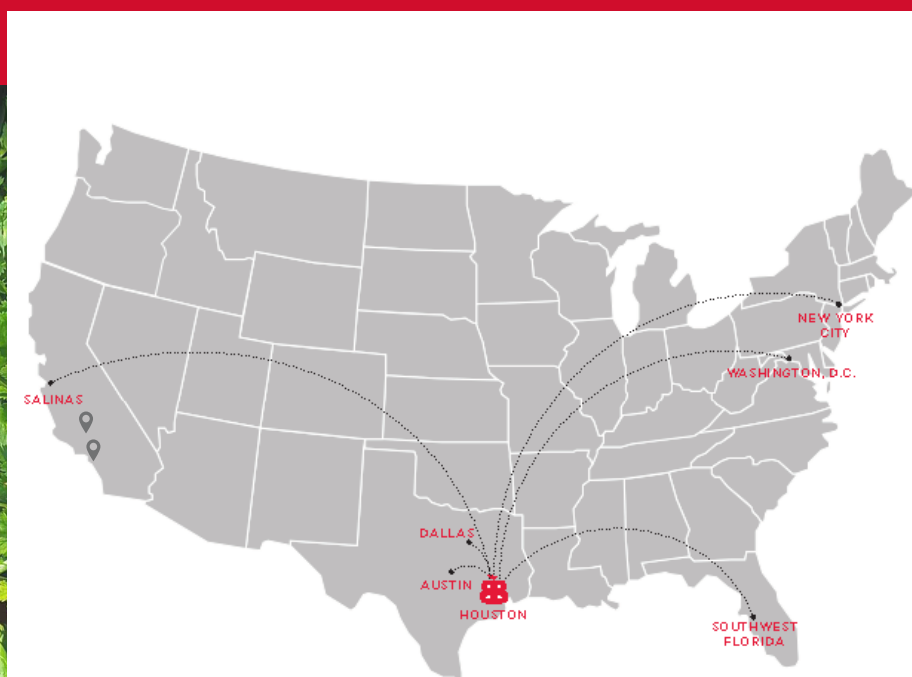
We also worked with our business partners through these challenging times to achieve our goals in a mutually beneficial manner, and we could not have executed our program without this support to provide the necessary services to support our families. As a nonprofit, we exist on donations of resources to deliver the high-quality program we are committed to. I am so thankful to all of our funders that continue to make Brighter Bites possible. Without you there would be no Brighter Bites.

Thank you to all of our dedicated employees, our sensational business partners, and our generous supporters we were able to overcome all obstacles that were put before us. We did not just maintain our program, but we grew into new schools and cities. Our future looks so bright with plans for significant growth in 2022. We are changing lives for the better, and I am thankful to all of you that help make it happen!

Rish

"The Brighter Bites program has benefited our school community in various ways. First, our students learn about healthy eating and a healthy lifestyle. In addition, our teachers are able to promote and inform our students about healthy food options. The fruit and vegetables that teachers highlight provide students a firsthand experience of healthy local produce. Additionally, our community families benefit from the box of produce that their children have learned about at school. Essentially, we are bridging the school-to-home connection and that is more meaningful for deeper learning."

*-Veronica Hernandez, Principal,
Arroyo Seco Academy, Salinas, CA*



Year in Review

Brighter Bites School Year 2021-22

- *When the pandemic hit, Brighter Bites had to pivot away from using parent volunteers on site at schools to help bag produce for families. Each of our cities arranged for produce to be boxed off-site and delivered curbside at each school. While this helped us deliver our program during the past two years, we miss our on-site bagging volunteers! Finally in fall of 2021, Brighter Bites teams managed to re-launch bagging on site in at least some schools in all cities except SWFL. This brought enriching volunteer opportunities to many of our families that connected them with their children's learning environment.*
- *In 2021 Brighter Bites finally reached the West coast. In January we launched programming in Salinas, CA, working with local growers to receive donated produce in support of six schools and 800+ families.*
- *Also in 2021, thanks to dedicated BB board members, we secured SNAP-Ed funding from the state of CA, enabling additional growth in coming years (next up in 2022: Los Angeles and Bakersfield!)*
- *YMCA of Metropolitan Dallas honored Brighter Bites as the inaugural recipient of their Catalyst Award. YMCA's Catalyst efforts are related to community solutions that are consistent and equitable. They were impressed that not only does Brighter Bites have an important mission of health that we deliver consistently and reliably, but we bring fresh food of the highest quality to communities that too often receive less than the best.*
- *In Southwest Florida, we doubled our footprint during 2021, from six sites in spring to twelve in fall, including our first schools in Lee County.*

Milestones

FEBRUARY

Launched in Salinas, California

APRIL

Hosted the Smart in the Kitchen fundraising event

SEPTEMBER

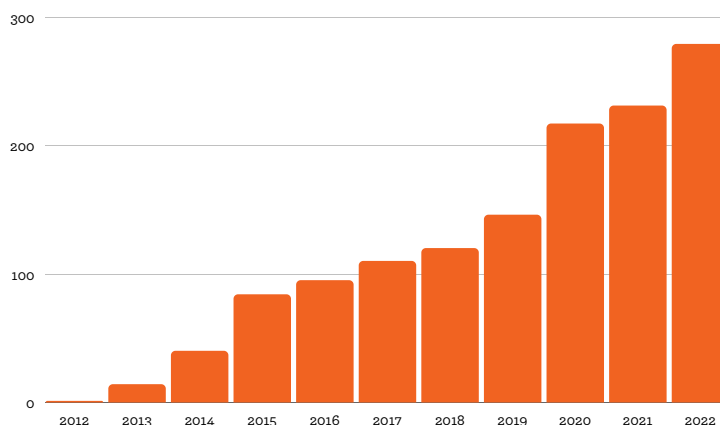
Held our first-ever back-to-school campaign

DECEMBER

Initiated infrastructure for Los Angeles with FoodForward as our partner

Growth

In 2021 we expanded to California, and we plan to have continued growth there and beyond!



279

projected number of sites for the 2022-2023 school year

ANNUAL REPORT

Programming

Produce Distribution: The Numbers

We distributed 5,139,819.12 pounds of fresh produce in the year 2021, and we made 1,753,203 family encounters!*

**Encounters defined as Brighter Bites staff interacting with Brighter Bites families at produce distributions.*

Pictured above are the most frequently distributed items in 2021.

While we often work with donated or rescued produce, we are proud to also partner with vendors like Common Market, purchasing produce from local farms. The Brighter Bites model supports both farmers and families by helping cover the costs of getting fruit from the trees to the table.

Nutrition Education

Brighter Bites continued to offer more digital options for educators in 2021 due to the uncertainty of the pandemic. This included digital access to CATCH.org, nutrition education video lessons and produce activity videos. Brighter Bites teachers tracked their lessons online, and continued to see a big impact.



53,984

CATCH Lessons, Produce Activities, and PE Activities taught in the classroom
That is 215,936 classroom encounters*!

**Encounters defined as Brighter Bites teachers interacting with Brighter Bites students with a nutrition education lesson in the classroom.*

WHAT EDUCATORS ARE SAYING:

"Thanks for your continued support. My students have enjoyed the lessons. Additionally, I've learned a lot too and it has been so much fun to teach!"

-Brighter Bites Teacher

"Our partnership has been a strong and valuable experience in which our parents, students, and staff learn and teach intricate lessons about food, culture, and relationships."

-Brighter Bites Principal

"The students have learned a great deal about eating healthy. We have built a good foundation for students to lead a healthy lifestyle, and we could not have accomplished our goals without the education and support from Brighter Bites."

-Brighter Bites Teacher



ANNUAL REPORT Programming

Fun Food Experience



DIGITAL MATERIALS

Brighter Bites utilized technology to distribute materials and engage with families. Here is a look at some of those results:

- Text messages sent: over 500,000
- Newsletters delivered: 50 family newsletters sent (including English and Spanish) with over 10,000 families subscribed
- Recipes and tip sheets accessed on our website: 19,935+ views
- Social media posts shared: 1,591 across city and national social media pages



NEW MOBILE APP

2021 was the first full year of our Brighter Bites mobile app utilization and updates. Content was available in both English and Spanish. 19% of families utilize our mobile app to check in at distributions and view our recipes and tip sheets.

WHAT PARENTS ARE SAYING:

"I love the app. It is very useful, and I definitely appreciate all the recipes. Now I have more ways to give more fruits and veggies to my girls which is a hard thing to make kids eat all of them. Thank you."

"Me and the kids take time to watch the videos and educate ourselves about nutrition. I believe this is an invaluable resource and is definitely helped me and my family of seven."

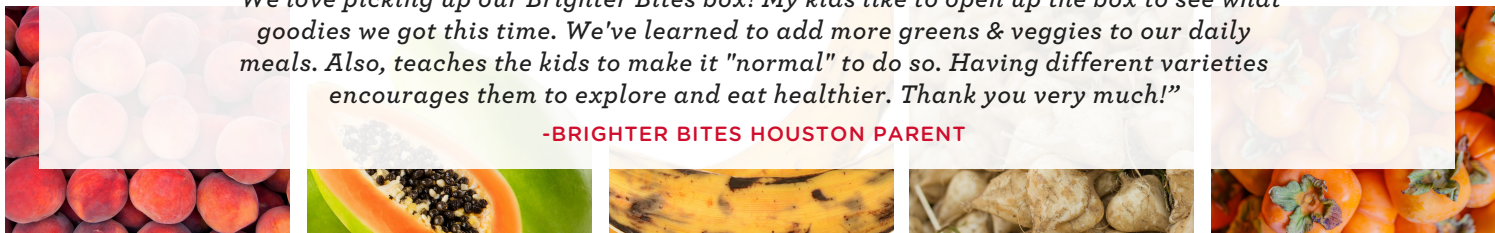
"First time using the app. Very convenient. Love the fresh salad choices."

"My kids loved the fruits. They made a smoothie, and I made use of the veggies."



"We love picking up our Brighter Bites box! My kids like to open up the box to see what goodies we got this time. We've learned to add more greens & veggies to our daily meals. Also, teaches the kids to make it "normal" to do so. Having different varieties encourages them to explore and eat healthier. Thank you very much!"

-BRIGHTER BITES HOUSTON PARENT



Pictured above are the most unique produce items delivered in 2021.

ANNUAL REPORT

Our Impact

OUR VISION

To improve health outcomes among children and families in under-resourced communities by using the data-driven, evidence-based strategies of providing fresh produce and nutrition education.

In 2021, Brighter Bites leadership focused on establishing our core values and credo. Here are the values that help inform our decisions for impact.

OUR VALUES

Health & Wellness
Community
Empowerment
Dignity
Integrity

OUR CREDO

- *We believe our highest priority is to Brighter Bites families.*
- *We acknowledge Brighter Bites employees are our most valuable assets.*
- *It is our responsibility to help educate and improve the health in the communities in which we work.*
- *We understand success requires us to work with our partners to achieve goals in a mutually beneficial manner.*
- *We understand that we are responsible for our organization-wide financial stability.*
- *We know we are successful when we execute our program fully and in such a way that demand for our program continues to grow.*

WWW.BRIGHTERBITES.ORG/OUR-IMPACT

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Focus

GOALS:

- *For every Brighter Bites employee to attend at minimum one required DEI training and one additional event from the DEI calendar.*
- *To increase the number of DEI candidates within our recruiting, interviewing, and hiring process, at every level of the organization.*
- *The DEI council to conduct an internal assessment of current hiring practices and present findings to Brighter Bites leadership by the end of July.*
- *The DEI council to provide recommendations on DEI hiring best practices, research and propose training for hiring managers, and devise a plan for tracking DEI practices during hires moving forward by year end.*
- *To present plans to leadership to increase program accessibility and participation for current and new school campuses and individual families by October.*

COMMITTEES:

Communications
Events & Trainings
Organizational Strategy

NEXT STEPS:

Brighter Bites is working with Common Health Action as an expert and consultant in this area to increase the efficiency of the DEI council in Brighter Bites programming and organizational culture.

We are Data Driven



BRIGHTER BITES SCIENTIFIC MISSION:

We are data driven to

Collect evidence

to

Inform program and policy

WE USE DATA TO GIVE A VOICE TO THE COMMUNITIES WE SERVE.

In 2021, we published six scientific studies in high-impact, peer-reviewed journals that highlighted the following:



FACTORS THAT INFORM
IMPLEMENTATION SUCCESS
OF BRIGHTER BITES



LONG TERM IMPACT OF
BRIGHTER BITES ON
FOOD INSECURITY



SUCCESS OF THE
PRODUCE VOUCHER
IMPLEMENTATION DURING
THE COVID19 PANDEMIC



SOCIAL DETERMINANTS
OF HEALTH NEEDS OF
BRIGHTER BITES FAMILIES
AND TEACHERS DURING
THE COVID19 PANDEMIC

An update from Dr. Shreela Sharma

What's new in the Brighter Bites data department?

Brighter Bites, in partnership with Penn State Better Kid Care and the University of Texas School of Public Health, has received funding from the Vitamix Foundation to assess the impact of a comprehensive approach that combines Brighter Bites with teacher wellness and nutrition education on physical and mental health outcomes among teachers participating in the program (2022-2024).

We are training the public health workforce of tomorrow!

In 2021, Brighter Bites provided a unique public health practice and research experience to undergraduate and graduate students from the following universities:

- University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, School of Public Health
- University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, McGovern Medical School
- Rice University
- Baylor College of Medicine



Shreela Sharma, PhD, RDN, LD,
Professor of Epidemiology at
UTHealth School of Public Health
and Co-founder of Brighter Bites

We are Data Driven



The highlights from published studies in 2021



DECREASE IN FOOD INSECURITY

Food insecurity decreased from 70% to 56.9% immediately after participating in Brighter Bites and decreased to 44.4% at 2-year follow-up

Highlights the significant positive impact of Brighter Bites on decreasing food insecurity among low-income households with children.



THE NEED TO IMPROVE THE WELL-BEING OF TEACHERS

29% of teachers in Brighter Bites schools reported being food insecure during the COVID-19 pandemic, which is higher than the national average of 11%.

A high proportion of teachers reported financial stress during this time.

Highlights the need for strategies to improve the well-being of teachers in the U.S.



PRODUCE VOUCHERS DISTRIBUTION

Brighter Bites distributed produce vouchers to families during the initial phase of the COVID-19 pandemic.

43,982 produce vouchers were distributed to 12,482 Brighter Bites families, with a 60% redemption rate of the vouchers at grocery retail stores across all Brighter Bites cities.

FOR THE FULL LIST OF PUBLICATIONS, VISIT: WWW.BRIGHTERBITES.ORG/RESEARCH

The people behind the research:

UTHealth Project staff & students leading the publications:



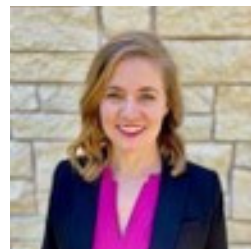
Dr. Christine Markham, PhD, Professor and Department Chair, Health Promotion and Behavioral Sciences, UTHealth School of Public Health



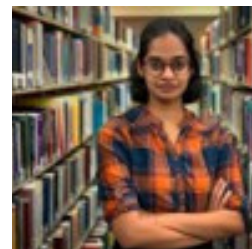
Ru-Jye Chuang, DrPh



Fangyu Li, PhD candidate



Allison Marshall, DrPh



Nivedhitha Parthasarathy, PhD candidate



Melinda Rushing, PhD



Amier Haidar, MD, MPH



Maha Almohamad, PhD candidate

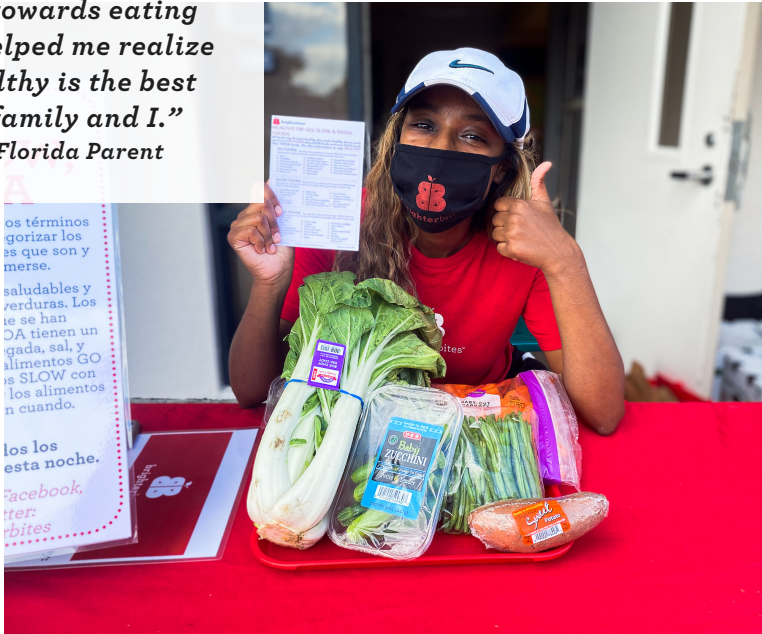


“Being a part of Brighter bites has been a joy not only because you provide produce to our table but because you have educated us on healthy eating! Thank you!”
-Brighter Bites Houston Parent





"The fruits and vegetables that we receive from Brighter Bites, have really given us the opportunity to take initiative towards eating healthy. It has helped me realize that eating healthy is the best option for my family and I."
 -Brighter Bites Florida Parent





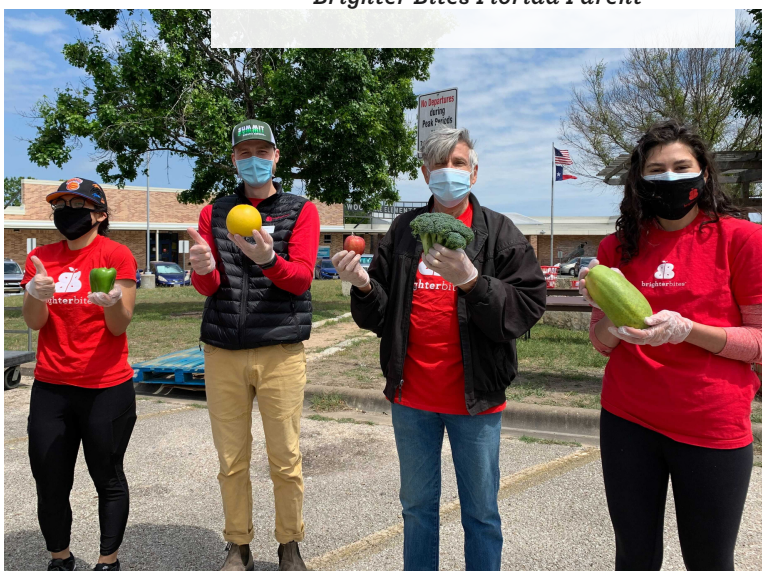
"I picked up my first box last Friday and truly enjoyed the fruits and vegetables. I was very impressed at how fresh and tasty everything was. With groceries costing more this has been a very welcome addition to my family. Thank you!"

-Brighter Bites DC Parent



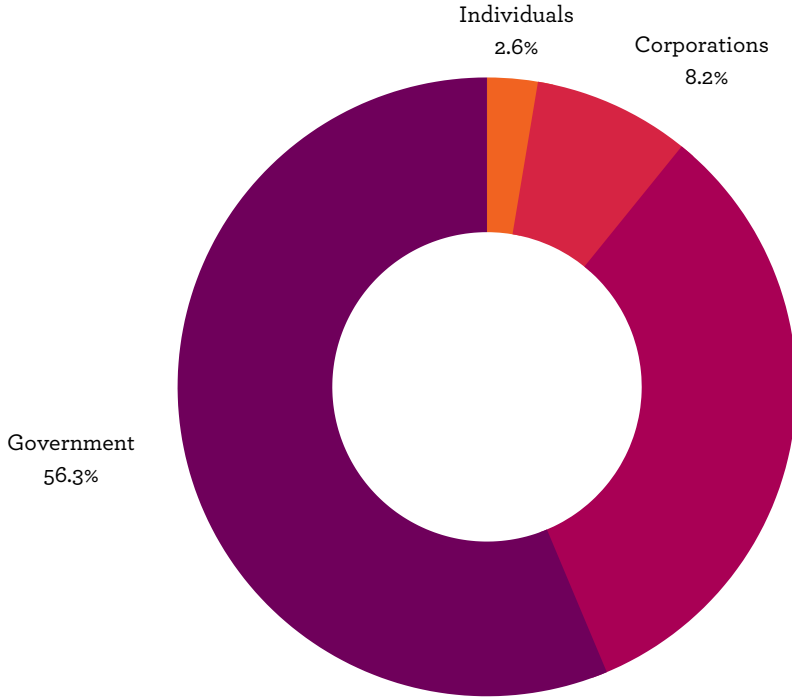


“Brighter Bites has helped me add more fruits and vegetables to all my meals. My kids love it! Instead of cereal for breakfast they are having fruits and vegetables. Our meals are so much healthier now.”
 -Brighter Bites Florida Parent



ANNUAL REPORT Financials

Revenue



- Government: \$4,270,392
- Foundations: \$2,489,623
- Corporations: \$621,343
- Individuals: \$199,826

Total: \$7,581,184

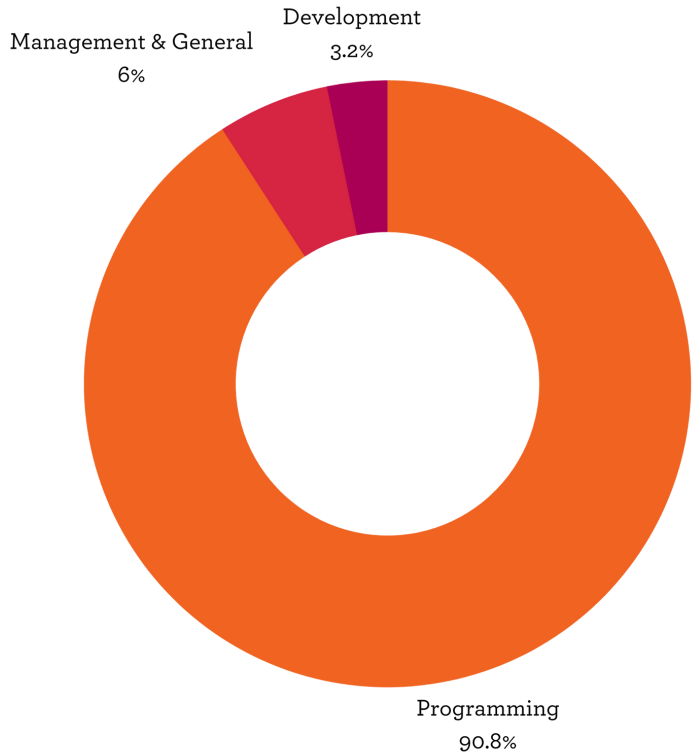
- In-kind donations: \$3,661,992

Total including in-kind donations: \$11,243,176

Expenses

- Programming: \$5,877,292
- Management and General: \$385,785
- Development: \$207,151

Total: \$6,470,228



\$.94 of every \$1.00

*goes toward programming,
including in-kind donations*

\$3,661,992

**In-kind donations of produce from
food bank and produce industry partners**

With Gratitude

Thank you to our generous donors!

FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTORS

\$1,000+

- Adam Forem
- Amerigroup / Anthem
- Annika Jessen
- Brian Myers
- Cadence Bank
- Cecilia Balchun
- Church Brothers
- Clement Pappas
- Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula
- Conor Fitzgerald
- Dan'l Almy
- Daniel Goetz
- Dee and Chad Muir
- Don and Barbara Chapin Foundation
- Dr. Shreela Sharma
- Drs. Adam Hair and Micaela Sandoval
- Eugene McDermott Scholars Program Alumni Association
- Faiyaz Bhojani
- Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
- Food Lion Feeds Charitable Foundation
- Foundation of the Carolinas
- Fred and Jean Allegretti Foundation
- Garcia Hamilton & Associates
- Giant Foods
- Grade Family Giving
- Greater Washington Community Foundation
- HFW Family Foundation
- Jennifer & Tadd Tellepsen
- John & Tama Klosek
- Lisa Helfman
- MAVFoundation
- Michael Spinazzola
- North Texas Food Bank (NTFB)
- Oliver Germain
- Publix Super Markets Charities
- Richard Dachman
- Salinas Valley Memorial Hospital
- Scott & Diane Shillings
- Scott and Christina Saunders
- Southern Specialties
- Stephanie Anderson
- sweetgreen
- The Malek Family
- The Weil Foundation
- Toni Oplt & Ed Schneider
- tristan michele marketing

\$10,000+

- Collaboratory
- Goldman Sachs Gives
- Kent & Lynn Shoemaker
- Lipman Family Farms
- Memorial Hermann Foundation
- NYC Civic Impact Fund
- Regina Rogers
- Suzanne Harris Smith
- The Dallas Foundation
- YMCA OF AUSTIN

\$25,000+

- American Federation of Teachers
- Community Foundation of Collier County
- Elyse and Lawrence B. Benenson
- Entertainment Industry Foundation
- Harden Foundation
- Mission Produce
- Natural Delights- Bard Valley Date Growers Association
- No Kid Hungry
- Philippa A Vizzone
- Prince George's County Council
- Produce Marketing Association
- QVT Family Office
- Samuels Family Foundation

\$50,000+

- Good Foods Group, LLC
- Halliburton Charitable Foundation
- H-E-B
- Mastronardi Produce
- Naples Children & Education Foundation
- Rice Management Company
- Sysco Corporation
- Taylor Fresh Foods
- The Kroger Zero Hunger | Zero Waste Foundation
- The Texas A&M Agrilife Extension Service
- Walmart Foundation
- Whalley Family Foundation

With Gratitude

PRODUCE INDUSTRY PARTNERS

4P Foods
 Andrew Smith
 B&W Quality Growers
 Braga Fresh
 Capital Area Food Bank
 Chelan Fresh
 Church Brothers
 City Harvest
 Coastal Sunbelt
 D'Arrigo California
 D'Arrigo New York
 Dole
 Freshpoint Dallas
 Gills Onions
 Harry Chapin Food Bank

Houston Food Bank
 Imperfect Foods
 JV Smith Company
 Kalera
 Lipman Family Farms
 Mann Packing
 North Texas Food Bank
 River Fresh Farms
 Southern Specialties
 Steinbeck Produce
 Taylor Farms Retail
 Taylor Farms Texas
 Tom Lange
 Urban Roots
 Windset Farms
 Wonderful Citrus

Board of Directors

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 Director of Public Affairs,
 Houston, H-E-B Grocery Company

DR. SHREELA SHARMA

Co-Founder
 Professor of Epidemiology,
 UTHealth School of Public Health

DR. FAIYAZ BHOJANI

Global Health Lead, Downstream
 Manufacturing Regional Health
 Manager, North & South America
 at Royal Dutch Shell

CHELSEA COLLINS

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 St. Luke's Episcopal School

JOEL GRADE

Executive Vice President,
 Business Development,
 Sysco Corporation

STEVEN GRAUBART

President & CEO,
 Community Hospital Partners

SCOTT MCCLELLAND

President,
 H-E-B Food Drug

BENJAMIN SAMUELS

Treasurer,
 Director, Samuels
 Family Foundation

MANOLO SANCHEZ

Director,
 Fannie Mae

SUE SMITH

Secretary,
 Community Volunteer

VIC SMITH

President & CEO,
 JV Smith Companies



Lipman Family Farms

“Brighter Bites has been able to combine consistent access to fruits and vegetables with nutrition education while creating a sustainable model. They have proven that they can enhance the eating habits of the families they serve while increasing consumption of our staple crops. They have really achieved what every farmer sets out to do when they plant each year. We are proud to be able to support them.”

-Jaime Weisinger, Director of Community Relations



Taylor Farms Texas

“We are excited to continue our four-year partnership with Brighter Bites. The families they have served are healthier because of what they do. Bringing healthy fresh fruits and vegetables into the home, one child at a time.”

-Mark Clement, Vice President Sales





*The better we
nourish, the brighter
we flourish.*