

BENEVOLENCE FARM



2020 ANNUAL REPORT



BOARD CHAIR'S STATEMENT

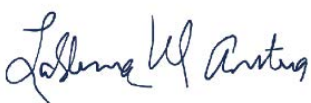
Dear Benevolence Farm Family,

2020 was a year like no other. It challenged us to come together like never before. As an advocate for formerly incarcerated women, and the second chances they deserve, I am excited to share our 2020 Annual Report. While 2020 had significant challenges, we also hit major milestones because of the unmatched kindness of our community.

Our board worked to ensure Benevolence Farm stayed focus on our social contract to help formerly incarcerated women grow and thrive in Alamance County, and beyond. The pandemic did not distract us from this purpose. In more ways than we can count, the pandemic highlighted the need for our work — supporting transitioning incarcerated women into local communities, providing employment, and living wages to these women, and advocating with and for people in incarcerated settings.

We are so grateful to our community. We had a record amount of donations and sales, that helped us grow our bottom-line and serve more people than the year before. So many of you became monthly supporters of our mission, donated generously to targeted fundraising requests and helped us have a blowout Giving Tuesday. You also helped us grow our body care line by purchasing products for your homes and businesses and backed our successful Soap for Incarcerated partnership with the Human Kindness Foundation. And last, but certainly not least, you sustained our rural farm, by purchasing organic produce throughout the year and supporting our seedling sales.

Yes, 2020 is a year none of us will forget. But Benevolence Farm made it through because of people like you. Thank you for your incredible partnership.



LASHAUNA AUSTRIA

Board Chair

Each year, over 2,000 women return home to their North Carolina communities. Some return to their families. Others are sent to halfway houses. Then, there is a population of women whose home plans indicate “homeless.” These women usually end up in motels, shelters, someone’s house, or the streets. At Benevolence Farm, we work to prevent women from exiting prison without a safe place to stay. We also offer a meaningful job. We work towards a world where women reentering their communities have the support that they need, without question or discrimination, in two ways: direct service and advocacy.

We address housing and employment needs by offering both to our residents on our 13-acre farm. And for those who do not come to the farm, we advocate for systems that actually offer people a second chance. Someday, we hope to work ourselves out of jobs. To do this, we need everyone to fight for a future where formerly incarcerated people have their basic needs met, traumas healed, and a community that has their back.

OUR MISSION & VISION

Benevolence Farm seeks to cultivate leadership, promote sustainable livelihoods, and reap structural change with individuals impacted by the criminal legal system in North Carolina.

Our vision is to create a more equitable, just, and nurturing world for women and the communities they transform.

AREAS OF WORK

To meet the conditions of the social contract outlined in our mission and vision statements, we center our work on three main pillars:

HOUSING & COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Benevolence Farm maintains a home that provides women leaving prisons with a place to live, work, and re-establish themselves in North Carolina. For women who cannot be accommodated on the farm, staff work to find transitional housing in the community. Benevolence Farm regularly consults with women being released from prison, in addition to staff in prisons and jails throughout North Carolina. We value being a community partner and referral source to organizations around the state that serve and support formerly incarcerated women

SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

Benevolence Farm manages a farming program that provides a critical connection to our rural community. We grow and sell fresh produce, flowers and herbs, and manufacture body care products. Our Benevolence Farm Body Care products contain at least one herb or flower grown on the farm by the women. We are proud to price products competitively and add value to people's lives.

ADVOCACY & OUTREACH

We understand that we will be in a vicious cycle where marginalized communities are left behind if we do not push for systemic changes. At Benevolence Farm, we advocate at the personal level — working alongside residents to demand dignity and respect from the legal system, service providers, and the local community. We partner with organizations across the state to center the voices of formerly incarcerated women, letting them set the agenda to ensure they get what they need. This means pushing for the decriminalization of poverty, the basic human rights inside prisons, and eliminating the stigma we place upon people with a criminal record.

25 Number of residents served since December 2016

1,207 Nights of safe and secure housing provided in 2020

84% The percentage of alumni that continue to live freely in the community



We advocate for formerly incarcerated women (Amy and her family, pictured left) and remember those we left behind (Faye Brown, pictured right)

2020 HIGHLIGHTS

In 2020, we brought on two new full-time staff members.

Kristen Powers (she/ella): Kristen Powers joined as interim Executive Director full-time in January 2020. Kristen worked at the Southern Coalition for Social Justice for three years as their Advocacy Coordinator before taking on this role. She also served on the Benevolence Farm Board of Directors and Resource Development Committee, joining the latter in 2017. The Board of Directors voted to make Kristen the full-time Executive Director in December 2020.

Alex Lombardi (she/her/hers): Alex Lombardi joined Benevolence Farm as the Program Manager in June 2020, in the height of the pandemic. A recent graduate of UNC's Master's of Social Work program, Alex joined the farm to reimagine and transform the systems within which we all co-exist — especially the criminal legal system.



Kristen Powers



Alex Lombardi

COVID-19

All of us were blindsided by the COVID-19 pandemic. Prisons and jails became hotspots for the spread of this virus. We received a dramatic increase in requests from prison and jail staff looking for transition planning support. At the same time, communication with potential residents, incoming residents, and prison staff were diminished due to sporadic lockdowns at prisons. Local services and businesses shut down, and we faced challenges accessing banks, the DMV, and even COVID testing for our residents who did not yet have IDs.

COVID-19 forced us to pivot in ways we never imagined, but the additional staff and cost commitment were well worth it. To protect the well-being of residents and staff, many in high-risk health categories, we prolonged our intake process for new residents, transitioning new residents to a hotel to quarantine until they received negative COVID test results. We shifted many of our services online and reduced the number of trips we took off the farm. We made every effort to build workarounds that limited the impact of COVID and shutdowns on new and current residents

SOAP FOR INCARCERATED PEOPLE

As the pandemic progressed, the Human Kindness Foundation pitched a project to us. We knew that people in prisons were not receiving the basic hygiene supplies they need during normal times. This chronic injustice only worsened during the pandemic, with people either having no access to high-quality soap or resorting to using chemical cleaners. When the CDC was telling us to wash our hands with soap, incarcerated people had none.

Thus, the Soap for Incarcerated People project was born. Through community donations, Benevolence Farm women are paid to create beautiful, natural bars of soap that were then donated to chaplains and partners at prisons across the country via the Human Kindness Foundation. What started as a pilot project has now led to the distribution of 772 bars of soap to three facilities in North Carolina and Illinois. We have no plans of stopping this effort as long as the state denies people their right to basic hygiene supplies.

PRISON SOLIDARITY PROJECT

COVID-19 was and is devastating incarcerated people. At a time when social distancing was encouraged, people in prison were packed into small spaces. Additionally, incarcerated people were told misleading information, had their homemade masks confiscated, and were denied access to medical care. To document the injustices in prisons across the state, the North Carolina Justice Center and Benevolence Farm teamed up to send COVID-19 surveys to incarcerated people. Benevolence Farm women sent over 200 surveys to incarcerated women across the state. The responses received played into a litigation effort, of which Benevolence Farm submitted an affidavit.

NO PLACE LIKE HOME CAMPAIGN

In 2020, it became increasingly clear what formerly incarcerated people already knew: access to affordable and accessible housing is practically impossible in Alamance County. As an organization, we continued to struggle to find safe and affordable housing for our residents to transition to after their time on the farm. The constant frustration we collectively faced led us to launch the No Place Like Home Campaign.

The No Place Like Home Campaign is threefold: expand the number of homes at Benevolence Farm, expand the number of Second Chance landlords across the county, and fight for second chance housing ordinances in municipalities.

While this campaign was launched late in 2020, we are hopeful that our impact will be felt in 2021, especially as we work with Haven Developers to design a tiny home community on our property.



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I ARRIVED AT BENEVOLENCE FARM DECEMBER 3, 2018 AFTER SERVING OVER 27 YEARS IN THE NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS. BENEVOLENCE FARM HAS OFFERED EVERYTHING THAT I HAVE NEEDED TO SUCCESSFULLY TRANSITION BACK INTO THE COMMUNITY AND FOSTERED A LOVE FOR THIS AREA. I RECEIVED MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT INCLUDING CRISIS INTERVENTION AND ASSISTANCE IN THE RECOVERY PROCESS FOR MAJOR SURGERY. THEY GAVE ME ACCESS TO CLASSES IN EMPLOYMENT AND LIFE SKILLS NECESSARY FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING. THE BODY CARE ENTERPRISE HAS GIVEN ME AN OPPORTUNITY TO EMPLOY CREATIVITY, ATTENTION TO DETAIL, AND GAIN PRACTICAL WORK EXPERIENCE. WORKING IN THE FIELD AND IN THE GARDENS HAS HELPED ME LEARN COPING SKILLS AND GIVEN ME THE OPPORTUNITY TO GIVE BACK TO THE LAND. BENEVOLENCE FARM HAS BEEN A SUPPORTIVE ENTITY THAT HAS BECOME MY FAMILY.

I WOULD NOT CHANGE MY TIME AT BENEVOLENCE AND AM LOOKING FORWARD TO CONTINUING MY CONNECTION THROUGH MY NEW POSITION AS THE SECOND CHANCE COORDINATOR. THIS IS TRULY MY CHANCE TO GIVE BACK SOME OF WHAT WAS GIVEN SO FREELY TO ME AND TO GET THE WORD OUT THAT WE ARE NOT BAD PEOPLE — WE MADE BAD CHOICES BASED ON THE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES WE HAD AT THE TIME.”

DEB AINSWORTH

SECOND CHANCE COORDINATOR, RESIDENT ALUMNA



Deb Ainsworth

BODY CARE ENTERPRISE GROWTH

The Benevolence Farm Body Care line launched in December 2018 as a value-added product that would build in some sustainability to our farm enterprise and employment program. We feared that the pandemic might dampen our growth. That did not happen. We pulled off a stellar year, with our best year in sales yet. And because of the immense community support we were able to pay living wages to seven formerly incarcerated women.

Not only was 2020 a banner year in sales, but we also received several recognitions for our products. Our healing salve was in the running for the North Carolina Chamber of Commerce's **Coollest Thing Made in NC** award and made it all the way to the semi-finals. Our State Magazine recognized the same healing salve as a finalist for the **Made in NC** award. These awards led to a local TV spot on Fox8 News.

In 2021, our goal is to make enough revenue in body care products to fully sustain the living wage employment component of our mission. We aim to sell \$100,000 worth of products.





HUMAN KINDNESS FOUNDATION PARTNERED WITH BENEVOLENCE FARM ON A PROJECT THAT HAD IMMEDIATE BENEFIT FOR TWO GROUPS HIT HARDEST BY THE PANDEMIC: SMALL BUSINESS EMPLOYEES AND PEOPLE WHO ARE INCARCERATED.

FORMERLY INCARCERATED WORKERS IN THE BENEVOLENCE FARM BODY CARE ENTERPRISE WERE PAID A LIVING WAGE TO SEND A GIFT OF LOVE — IN THE FORM OF BEAUTIFUL SOAPS — TO PEOPLE WHO WERE EVEN MORE ISOLATED BY INCARCERATION AT A TIME OF FEAR AND SICKNESS. HANDWASHING BECAME AN ACT OF SHARED KINDNESS.

CATHERINE DUMAS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
HUMAN KINDNESS FOUNDATION



BY THE NUMBERS

599

Number of people who purchased Body Care products and produce in 2020

\$50k

Amount of living wages distributed

OPERATIONAL OVERVIEW

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chair: LaShauna Austria

Vice-Chair: Jwan Johnson

Secretary: Erin Hils

Treasurer: Greeshma Somashekar

Member: Shiquita Hyman

Member: Debbie Smith

STAFF

Interim Executive Director: Kristen Powers

Farm Enterprise Manager: Jenn Grimmett

Program Manager: Alex Lombardi

MAJOR DONORS

The Snider Family Charitable Trust

Womack Family Charitable Foundation

Gannett Foundation

Impact Alamance

Eric Knight

Brenda Brodie

Macedonia Evangelical Lutheran Church

First Baptist Church on Apple Street

PARTNERS

Human Kindness Foundation

North Carolina Justice Center

Women's Resource Center of Alamance County

Burlington Housing Authority

Haven Developers

Project ID

Roll Construction

GCF, Inc.

TS Designs

Eagle Solar & Light

Vera Institute of Justice

Lowe's - Mebane

Target - Burlington

Country Inn & Suites - Burlington

Freehand Market

Persnickety Books

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Statement of Financial Position

For the period ended December 31, 2020

ASSETS

Cash & Cash Equivalents: \$75,187

Other Current Assets: \$261

Property & Equipment: \$430,637

Other Assets: \$2,381

TOTAL ASSETS: \$429,158

LIABILITIES

Accounts Payable: \$78

Credit Cards: \$8,345

Other Current Liabilities: \$4,260

TOTAL LIABILITIES: \$12,683

EQUITY:

Unrestricted Net Assets: \$405,670

Net Revenue: \$10,804

TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY: \$429,158

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Statement of Operations

January 1 - December 31, 2020

REVENUE

Grants: \$30,467

Individual Contributions: \$202,095

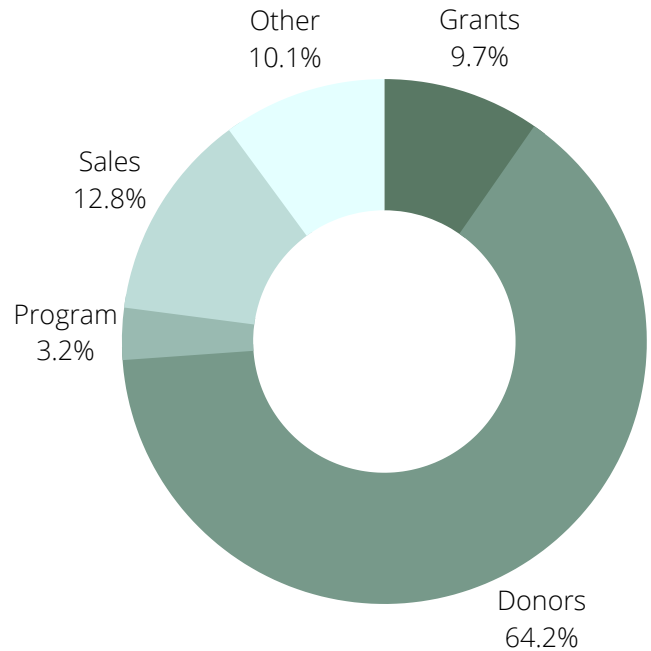
Foundations:

Programs Fees: \$10,065

Sales: \$40,451

Other: \$31,746

TOTAL REVENUE: \$314,824



EXPENSES

Professional Services: \$36,770

Coronavirus-Related: \$4,381

Body Care Enterprise: 21,992

Farm Enterprise: 23,613

Fundraising: \$531

Non-personnel: \$30,351

Program: \$65,864

Repairs & Maintenance: \$5,729

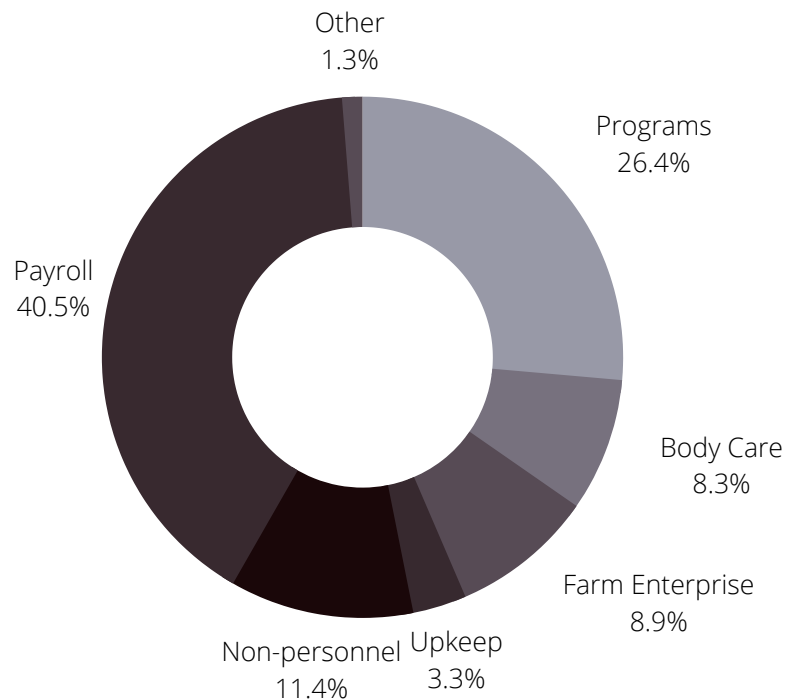
Utilities: \$3,143

Payroll: \$107,670

Other: \$2,830

TOTAL EXPENDITURES: \$304,020

NET REVENUE: \$10,804



BENEVOLENCE FARM

where **second chances**
grow naturally



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