

NEWSROOM

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American Family employees partner with local food pantries

American Family employees cultivate and share NHQ garden produce with Madison community

American Family Insurance is dedicated to caring for the environment through sustainability efforts and improving lives in our communities. At our National Headquarters in Madison, Wisconsin, a four-acre community garden is helping achieve these goals.

The community garden consists of 122 plots, each measuring 100 square feet, and includes a butterfly sanctuary that provides food to monarchs as they migrate south for winter. Since 2011, the garden has been a place for restoration and growth for employees and the Greater Madison community.

Sixty AmFam employees and their family members maintain the garden. They come from diverse backgrounds and grow a wide range of produce. Many of them participate in the food sharing program, which started in 2012 and includes food pantry partners in and around Madison.

Gardeners can donate from their own plots, and there is also a designated plot from which all of the harvested produce goes to local food pantries. Through the years, the garden committee has made donations to the Sun Prairie, Lake Mills, Cambridge, Westwood Christian Church and The River food pantries, as well as the Goodman Community Center.

Josh Feyen, the garden communications director, said, "Gardening is a healthy activity that gets people outside and, in many cases, encourages new friendships that wouldn't have happened otherwise. And of course, helping

feed those in need through the hundreds of pounds of food donated to community food pantries is a particularly satisfying result for gardeners."

During the 2016 harvesting season, the gardeners donated 847 pounds of produce to local food pantries, and that amount increased to 1018 pounds in 2017.

Joan Peterson has worked for American Family for 12 years. The summer of 2017 was her first season working in the garden, and she was immediately drawn to the community aspect of the donation program. This season, she volunteered to be a delivery driver for The River Food Pantry in Madison.



"They're so thankful. Whenever we arrive with a delivery, they light up," Joan said of the coordinators at The River.

The garden's impact doesn't stop after the delivery, either. Arland Wingate, whose wife, Michele, is an AmFam employee, has been involved with the garden since 2012. One of his children has also volunteered on several occasions in the food pantry kitchens, sharing recipes and giving cooking demonstrations.

"Being able to help people is really exciting for both of us," Wingate said. "Food pantries usually receive items in cans and boxes. When they get fresh produce, the question of how to use it in a meal is always there, so sharing ways to integrate the vegetables is really just another step of the donation process."

The garden offers a space for employees who otherwise might not have the opportunity to grow their own food as well as the chance to share it with those who don't have much access to fresh produce.



Feyen said, "American Family dedicating this much land to the employee garden is a real statement of the company's commitment to both employees and the community's well-being."

About American Family Insurance

Madison, Wis. - based American Family Insurance, celebrating its 90th anniversary in 2017, is the nation's 13th-largest property/casualty insurance group and ranks No. 315 on the Fortune 500 list. The company sells American Family-brand products, including auto, homeowners, life,

business and farm/ranch insurance, through its exclusive agents in 19 states. American Family affiliates (**The General** < <http://www.thegeneral.com/>>, **Homesite** < <http://www.homesite.com/>> and **AssureStart** < <https://www.assurestart.com/>>) also provide options for consumers who want to manage their insurance matters directly over the Internet or by phone. Web [www.amfam.com](http://www.amfam.com/default.asp) < <http://www.amfam.com/default.asp>>; Facebook www.facebook.com/amfam < <http://www.facebook.com/amfam>>; Twitter www.twitter.com/amfam < <http://www.twitter.com/amfam>>; Google+ plus.google.com/+amfam/ < <https://plus.google.com/110868460217226182165/posts>> .