

MILL  FARMERS
CITY MARKET

IMPACT

REPORT

2024

A LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As I reflect back on 2024, here are five lessons that defined my first year at Mill City Farmers Market & Charitable Fund.

1. Impacting people's livelihoods

MCFM prioritizes local farmers who sell products that are 100% grown and harvested on land they own and/or operate. We ask vendors selling value-added foods, baked goods and prepared foods use at least 25% local ingredients, and, if possible, to purchase from MCFM vendors. We refer to these principles as our "Local Sourcing Standards", but you can think of them as a core belief that guides our work. Beau Thomas, owner of Pure Ginger For You, puts it this way: "We help each other. When I started sourcing honey and apples from Ames Farm for my juice, Brian's sales went up. When I sell more, he sells more." Local sourcing is part of our unshakable belief in solidarity over charity and building community through food.

2. Responding in times of crisis

Following three years of drought, farmers in our region experienced record-breaking precipitation in 2024. You likely saw the Star Tribune's reporting on the impact of flooding for farms like Sharing Our Roots in Northfield, MN. In 2024, we awarded \$14k in Hardship Grant funding to 7 family farms in Delano,

Hugo, Isanti, Pine City, Northfield, and Waldorf, Minnesota. I'm so grateful that the MCFM community came together in 2013 to establish this program which, in the absence of a stronger safety net for small-scale food producers, helps farmers and recover and rebuild after extreme weather-related crop loss and other hardships.

3. Rainy day resolve

To everyone who shopped at the market in the rain in 2024, *thank you*. Rainy market days remind me that, when it comes to the things that matter most, we cannot be fair weather fans. Did you know that some MCFM vendors wake up at 2:45am on market days? Some vendors drive over two hours to get to the market. Others are so busy harvesting and baking for market customers that they don't go to bed at all on Friday night. Building a local, sustainable food economy is not for the faint of heart and we are so proud to be a primary storefront for many of the 100+ farms, food producers and artists who sell at our market – rain or shine.

4. Fueling our work and communities

Together we raised \$180k at this year's Harvest Social to support the Mill City Farmers Market Charitable Fund and its farmer grant programs. Two hundred people gathered in the Mill City Museum Ruins Courtyard to enjoy a delicious farm-to-table dinner prepared by Chef

Nettie Colón using seasonal ingredients from MCFM vendors. If you purchased a ticket for yourself or a farmer, hosted a table, donated an auction item or bid on one, volunteered, or made an individual contribution, *thank you*. The Harvest Social is our largest annual fundraiser and your support makes a real difference.

5. Growing our future

In 2024 we invested in our team to ensure continued growth for our future. We added a new full-time staff position to add capacity for our grant programs, food access initiatives and market management. Vendors tell me we have the best market managers. I am grateful to be part of a hard-working team so committed to serving the needs of our vendors, customers and food and farm ecosystem through best-in-class operations and community programs.

I hope you will take a look at our latest impact report, which summarizes key results from Mill City Farmers Market & Charitable Fund in 2024. By supporting this work, you help us transform our communities, health, and environment through food and sustainable agriculture. Because of you, we're positioned to create new possibilities for local farmers and makers through programs that increase access to markets and capital and promote food access and food education for all.

With an abundance of gratitude and partnership,



Ella Daniels
Executive Director
Mill City Farmers Market & Charitable Fund



OUR STORY



THE FARMERS MARKET

Mill City Farmers Market was founded in June of 2006 by farm-to-table chef and restaurateur Brenda Langton, in collaboration with the Mill City Museum. With over 100 local farmers, food makers and artists, MCFM strives to build a local, sustainable and organic food economy in a vibrant, educational marketplace. The year-round Saturday Market is proud to offer free cooking demos with chefs and local farmers, children's activities, free outdoor yoga classes and more in partnership with our Charitable Fund.

THE CHARITABLE FUND

In 2017, the Mill City Farmers Market Charitable Fund was founded as an extension of the Market to support and expand its mission-driven work and deepen its impact as an anchor in the local food system. The Charitable Fund is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization with a mission to support a healthier community through partnerships, educational programming, and support for sustainable farmers and local food producers.



OUR 2024 IMPACT



1,207

kids tasted new fruits & veggies for the first time



8,300+

lbs of produce redistributed to food insecure neighbors



447

recipes sampled or shared from local chefs and farmers



3,900+

lbs of waste diverted from landfill to compost



915

SNAP/EBT transactions double matched



1,415

people participated in free yoga & pilates classes



Together with
163K
community members annually...



...we support
115
farms & small businesses, most as their primary storefront...



...and have awarded
\$470K
in grant funding to local family farms since 2013.

NOTE FROM A MARKET VOLUNTEER

I started volunteering in 2009. On Saturdays, I stick around the Zero Waste stations and help people put things in the right containers. At the end of the day there's not very much trash, which feels useful. It's a personally meaningful way to connect to my own values.

I really enjoy being a part of the community of the market. I feel like this is my space on a Saturday morning. I get my veggies and a treat, and it's cool and fun to chat with people.

It's important to me because the vendors put a lot of effort and expense into using recyclable and compostable stuff. I want that to go in the right place so their efforts pay off. I feel good that they're doing the right thing, and I'm helping to make sure that it goes to the right place.



Kathy Klink



Mary & Tom Raciatti

NOTE FROM A MARKET DONOR

When we got to know and understand the mission and got acquainted with some of the vendors, we got energized and wanted to be part of it. **I can't explain how heroic and hardworking those farmers are. They're giving so much, and you want to be able to give some too.**

It's the highlight of my shopping week. I feel very connected. And it's not only the initial transaction of buying their product or their produce, and supporting them in that way, but through the programs you can support the ecosystem.

The [Next Stage Grant Program] is really an admirable program, and we really like the way that it's growing and helping beginning farmers, because we really need more farmers. Having a "face" to our food is really great. When we're eating something, we know exactly where it's from. That's something that we all don't get much anymore.

NOTE FROM A MARKET VENDOR

Every time in the morning when I drive in, I feel like I'm coming to a date. I have butterflies in my tummy, I'm filled with joy and excitement just to be part of this community. It's an amazing energy in the market, because the team is really supportive and helpful and organized. **You're surrounded with these amazing minds, artists and makers, and they are all there for the same purpose, to share their labor of love with the community.**

I was just reading something this morning about doing what you love and loving what you're doing. When you do that, it's more enjoyable and more fun and more precious.

The other day I got an email from a customer expressing a wonderful gratitude for what we do. Now he's offering me a retail opportunity, because he has an organic bakery in the North Loop. **That personal connection, when customers leave happy, so they talk to their neighbors, family, colleagues, really beautifully...there's just so many beautiful, successful stories that are connected to the market for our business.**

Everybody I talk to, whether that's at the market, or a friend, or even a former vendor, says just spontaneously that it is the best market around. It takes a village to bring the market to this beautiful level, with everybody pitching in -- from the staff, to the vendors, to the customers. There's this happy, vibrant, creative energy that brings people back. To me, the kindness, the hospitality, the attention to detail, exceeding the expectations of the visitors... that's what they leave with, and I think that's what makes the market loved by so many of our community.

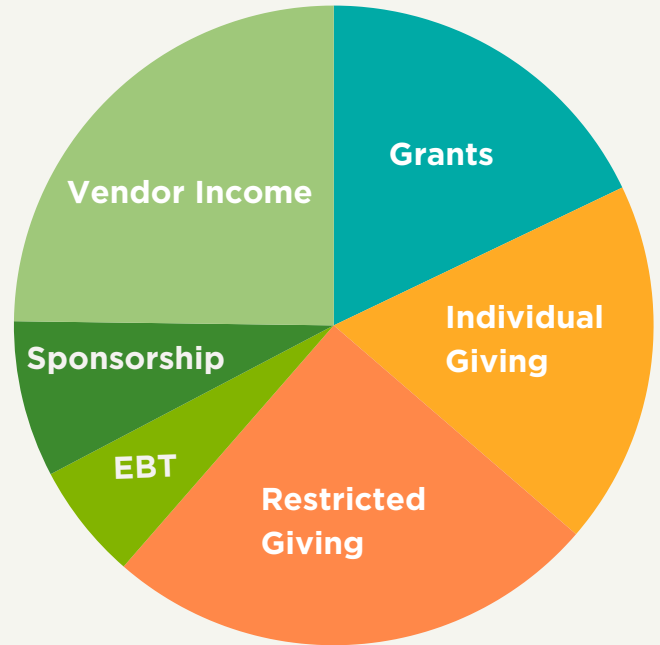


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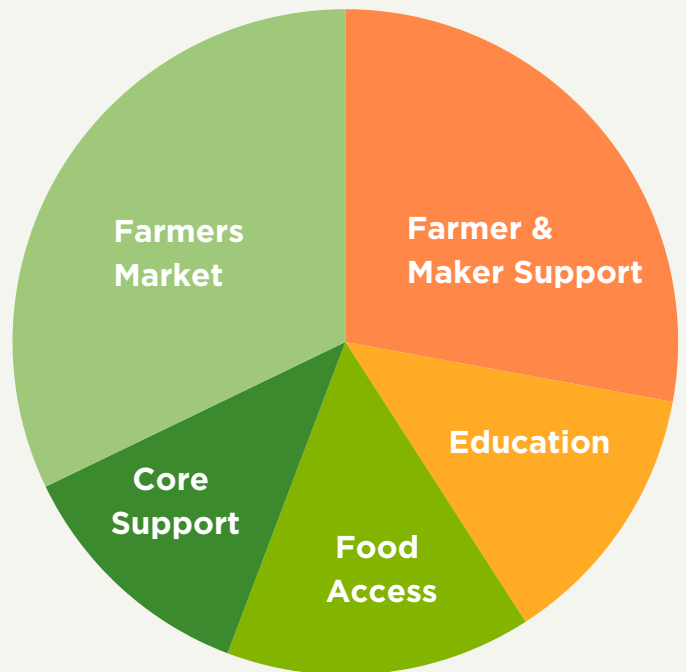
FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS 2024

Here's how our community came together to build a more local, sustainable, and equitable food system in FY2024:

SOURCE OF FUNDS



USE OF FUNDS



Total Operating Expense for Mill City Farmers Market & Mill City Farmers Market Charitable Fund:

\$536,627

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

You help co-create this market – it wouldn't be the same without you!

163,000+ annual shoppers

115 growers & makers

18 board members

248 financial donors

27 monthly supporters

42 volunteers

14 business partners

17 market staff members

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**WE THANK YOU
FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT OF
FOOD & COMMUNITY**