

Tualatin Valley Gleaners

Nominated by:

Walter Peck, Tualatin Valley Fire & Rescue

Vision Action Network
2011 Cameron Award for Outstanding Community Collaboration
RATING SHEET

Name of Nominee: Tudlaton Valley Cleaners

The nominee must be a collaborative program, project or initiative (can be a short-term or one-time project or event, or an ongoing collaboration) that:

1. Is a multi-organization effort, with preference given to cross-sector collaboration:

- Cross-sector, multi-organization effort (3 points)
- Multi-organization effort, but NOT cross-sector (2 points)
- Multiple organizations involved but really led by one organization (1 point)
- Doesn't really demonstrate collaboration (0 points)

2. Letters of support from collaborative partners demonstrate buy-in, participation and effective partnerships:

- Yes (2 points) Somewhat (1 point) No/No letters (0 points)

3. Demonstrates identifiable and measurable impact (outcomes, outputs and value added to the community):

- Strong measurable impact (3 points)
- Some measurable impact (2 points)
- Anecdotal impact only, nothing measurable (1 point)
- Does not demonstrate impact (0 points)

4. Is focused in Washington County with local organizations involved:

- Yes (2 points) Somewhat (1 point) No/Unknown (0 points)

5. Utilizes creative approaches to address our community's most pressing needs:

- Yes (2 points) Somewhat (1 point) No/Unknown (0 points)

6. Has potential for replication and/or sharing of best practices:

- Yes (2 points) Somewhat (1 point) No/Unknown (0 points)

For Staff Use Only:

Total Points: 14

VAN Issue Area: Yes No

Tualatin Valley Gleaners – 2011 Cameron Award Nomination

1. Please provide your contact information:

Name: - Walter C. Peck

Organization: - Tualatin Valley Fire & Rescue

Title: - Planning Chief

Address: - 11945 SW 70th

City: - Tigard

State: - OR

ZIP: - 97223

Email Address: - walter.peck@tvfr.com

Phone Number: - 503-259-1366

2. Please provide the following information for the collaboration being nominated:

Name of Collaboration: - Tualatin Valley Gleaners

Primary Contact Person: - Heather Thompson

Organization and Title: - Executive Director

Address: - 1316 NE 51st Ave

City: - Hillsboro

State: - OR

ZIP: - 97124

Email Address: - info@tvgleaners.com

Phone Number: - 503-719-9890

3. Please list all collaborative partners involved in this effort:

Tualatin Valley Gleaners Oregon Food Bank City of Beaverton Hands On Portland 400 families Community volunteers Area farmers and backyard gardeners Area grocery stores Oregon Extension Portland State University

4. Please describe the collaborative effort:

It is sadly ironic that in a county of agricultural abundance, adults and children go hungry in Washington County. A related health concern – many would say crisis – is the consumption of poor quality food by the poorest in our community. Collaborative efforts spear-headed by the Tualatin Valley Gleaners, a volunteer-based 501(c)(3) organization, are working to address both of these critical problems. TVG provides the people and programs that allow the community to follow a human precept in place for millennia: abundance should be shared with those in need, not wasted. While an ancient practice, gleaning (the harvesting of leftovers from fields and backyards) needs TVG's guiding hand to work in a complex suburban/agricultural county with a population of 540,000. TVG

provides the interface between those with abundance and those in need. Abundance comes from many sources: farmers, backyard gardeners, farmers markets, grocery stores, and the Oregon Food Bank – to name a few. Four hundred families regularly work for and receive the benefits of these “extras.” Fresh vegetables and fruit, which are rare in most supplemental food programs, are the staple of this one. Personal dignity and the value of providing for one’s family are reinforced as all participants are expected to participate at some point in the harvest (gleaning) and distribution process. Each family unit keeps half of what it harvests and shares the remainder with other members. Waste is not tolerated. When every last option for human use is exhausted, including sharing back through the Oregon Food Bank system, gleaned items are composted or used as feed by a local pig farmer.

5. What measurable impact has this collaborative effort had in Washington County?

400 families are members and growing – each pays \$10/monthly to receive information about gleaning opportunities, as well as newsletter that includes healthy recipes (provided by OSU Extension Service). No one is turned away if they are unable to pay this fee. In 2010, 200 families per week were assisted with food and aid. 20,000 lbs of produce harvested from community gardening efforts as well as food from fields. (2008/2009) 400,000 pounds of food distributed to over 21,000 children, disabled, homebound, elderly and low-income individuals and families. (2008/2009) Commitment of 10 plots (20’ by 20’) in Beaverton’s Kennedy Community Gardens. Volunteer help for these is provided by volunteers, many of whom are placed by Hands on Portland. Donations from Beaverton Farmer’s Market vendors (tax deductible) and growing interest from Hillsboro Farmer’s Market. Recent commitment of office and storage adjacent to the Beaverton Resource Center.

6. Please describe how this collaborative effort has utilized creative approaches to meet our community’s most pressing needs:

The majority of the labor comes from those in need. TVG makes every effort to schedule gleaning sessions late in the day and on weekends so it doesn’t interfere with participant’s work schedules. The simplicity and power of gleaning and working to feed one’s family constantly sparks new collaborations: Portland State University is researching the possibility of additional community gardens in green space areas that would be linked to adjacent neighborhoods. Residents would be encouraged to get to know one another, work together, and benefit from the harvest. Area businesses are on board. For example, Farmington Gardens invites it vegetable gardening patrons to bring their extra vegetables in to the nursery as a donation to TVG. Nutrition education is stressed. By making fresh whole foods available, as well as great ideas for how to prepare them (OSU Extension Service assistance), low-income families are able to provide much more nutritious food to their families.

7. Is there anything else about this collaborative effort that you would like to share?

TVG is entirely volunteer-driven. It is sustained by personal passion, tremendous creativity in the development of new partners, a supportive community (particularly the City of Beaverton), and the power of a very old idea. By focusing

on quality foods, personal responsibility, and nutritional education, this work is helping focus personal habits in a much healthier manner. At TVF&R, we see the human price that is paid, by adults and children, when this assistance and resource is not available. TVF&R strongly endorse the collaborative strategies and partners that TVG has engaged to make a difference.

Tualatin Valley Gleaners -- Updated 2012 Cameron award nomination

3. Please list all collaborative partners involved in this effort:

Tualatin Valley Gleaners, 530 families, Oregon Food Bank, City of Beaverton, Hands On Greater Portland, community volunteers, local farmers, local businesses, backyard gardeners, all Washington County farmers markets, Community Action, Oregon Extension, Portland State University, AARP, Beaverton Civic Theater, Boys Scouts, Washington County Homeless Connect, Goodwill, local churches, Sisters of Providence, Tuality Health Care, KGW, Beaverton Garden Club, Boyds Farm, King City-Red Hat Society, Elks of Beaverton, Mr. Tree, Tualatin High School

4. Please describe the collaborative effort:

It is sadly ironic that in Washington County, a place of agricultural abundance and individual and corporate wealth, people of all ages go hungry. A related health concern is the nutritional consequence of consuming poor quality, low-cost food. Collaborative efforts spear-headed by Tualatin Valley Gleaners (TVG), a volunteer-based 501(c)(3) organization, are working to address both of these critical problems.

TVG member-volunteers provide the interface between those with abundance and those in need. Abundance comes from many sources including farms, backyard gardeners, farmer's markets, grocery stores, the Oregon Food Bank, and the community at-large. More than five hundred families work in collaboration with each other and the community to receive the benefits of these "extras." Fresh vegetables and fruit, which are rare in most supplemental food programs, are the staples of this one.

The efforts of TVG and its partners are unique because of their focus on individual responsibility and dignity. The value of providing for one's family is reinforced as all members are expected to participate at some point in the harvest (gleaning), distribution process, education, community outreach, or other operational activities. Each family unit keeps half of the food they harvest and shares the remainder with other members. Waste is carefully managed by first exhausting every human use, including sharing back through the Oregon Food Bank system. Items that cannot be consumed are used as compost or as feed by a local pig farmer. Donated non-food items are distributed to members or other organizations.

Increased self-sufficiency is another core TVG value. With help this year from the City of Beaverton, they are sponsoring the first annual seed swap event where local business, farmers, and urban gardeners can buy, sell, and trade plants and seeds, while engaging with TVG members about awareness of hunger and the need for more food-based agriculture within Washington County. Last year TVG started a Farm2Forest Program to teach low income children how to fish. It is hoped that Oregon Fish and Wildlife will come aboard again in 2012 to

teach their 2nd annual "Fishing 101" class. A collaborative project with Portland State University (PSU) Students recently identified five potential locations for new community gardens within Aloha and the City of Beaverton that would benefit low-income neighborhoods with high rates of students receiving free or reduced lunches.

TVG collaborations go beyond the needs of quality food. The Beaverton Civic Theater is working to provide tickets to the TVG to distribute to its members to see two free plays. This gives low income families a chance to attend events that they normally would not be able to due to their financial situations. Goodwill Industries is working with TVG to provide books every week to the members of the TVG to amplify their access to books. Every child that attends the weekly food distribution walks away with a book of their choice, and is welcomed to recycle it back the week after if they choose. The AARP worked and collaborated with the TVG this year in hosting a booth at one of the farmers markets to raise awareness on senior health and nutrition. This partnership created an opportunity for seniors working with the AARP to also sign up and work in the City of Beaverton/TVG's "Giving Gardens".

TVG has collaborated with the City of Beaverton, OSU Masters Gardens Program, St. Matthews, and Hands on Greater Portland volunteers to develop a piece of marginal land at the Kennedy Street Community Garden. This plot yielded 1,694 pounds of produce during 2011 growing season. Collaborations with these organizations continue to improve the land to create year-around usability and increase productivity. The garden space allotment (Giving Garden) has also been opened up to youth organizations such as the boy scouts and 4-H as a community engagement center and outdoor classroom. Essential garden supplies are donated by local businesses throughout the area including Farmington Gardens, which also promotes awareness of hunger in Washington County and encourages its patrons to grow and donate extra produce.

Five hundred families received holiday meals boxes and personal hygiene products, and 750 local children received toys this Christmas despite the loss of assistance from the Sunshine Division. Major partners for this event included the Sisters of Providence, New Vision Fellowship, KGW, Beaverton Civic Theater and the Beaverton Chamber of Commerce, Beaverton Farmer's Market, and the Glitz-n-Glamour club of the Red Hat Society in King City.

5. What measurable impact has this collaborative effort had in Washington County?

TVG's membership rolls have increased over the past three years to over 500 member families and will likely continue to grow due to a slow economic recovery. Each member family pays only \$10/monthly to receive food and information about gleaning opportunities, as well as newsletter that includes healthy recipes provided by OSU Extension Service and other TVG Members. No one is turned away if they are unable to pay this fee. In 2011 the organization provided food and other aid to an average of 200 families per week. That same year, 15,196

pounds of produce was harvested by TVD member volunteers from community gardening, urban fruit trees and farm fields, and 5 % was donated to the Oregon Food Bank network. Also in 2011, through the direct labor of member volunteers, 460,898 pounds of donated food was distributed to over 28,400 children, disabled individuals, homebound, elderly, and other low-income individuals and families. TVD's focus on dignity, work, and improved self-sufficiency is making a difference in the lives of its member volunteers, and along the way skills are learned and references for resumes are developed.

6. Please describe how this collaborative effort has utilized creative approaches to meet our community's most pressing needs:

The genius of TVD is its simplicity and value base. Its member-volunteers are viewed as active partners with skills, energy, and dignity. Though mostly poor, they expect (and are expected) to contribute something. While they glean the community's natural abundance, they also glean their own collective talents. When combined with strong volunteer leadership and the generosity of a supportive community and partners in business, government, non-profits, and faith community, the opportunities for creative cooperation have their own abundance; just a few include:

Nutritional Needs:

TVG is gearing up to launch phase one of their newest program, which incorporates traditional field gleaning practices, fishing, and forest gleaning into one unique program that maximizes participant's access to nutrition. Members within the organization are promoting Oregon's annual free fishing weekend and encouraging other members to fish for their food that weekend by conducting a training and informational clinic. They are also working to develop an edible NW wild plant field guide with recipes specifically for this program. Moreover, they continue to collaborate with the Oregon Food Bank and other organizations to improve access to nutrition for low-income families in the southern part of county where support services are severely lacking (Tigard, Tualatin, Sherwood, and King City)

Social Needs:

TVG encourages its members to engage in other community organizations. Some participate on civic committees (transportation, CPO's), and others are involved with organizations such as SOLV, Friends of Trees, and Master Gardeners. While building the individual's personal network and sense of civic responsibility, this helps also encourages cross-organizational relationships for future collaboration.

Educational Needs:

TVG works with the Oregon Food Bank and OSU Extension Services to provide teen and adult members with classes on health and nutrition, food preservation and preparation, and food cultivation. Because youth need more than a healthy diet to facilitate learning and develop a sense of responsibility, TVG is also working to improve literacy and access to the arts for children in low-income households by working with Goodwill Industries, local schools, the Linus Project, the Beaverton Civic Theater, and 4-H.

7. Is there anything else about this collaborative effort that you would like to share?

By focusing on quality foods, personal responsibility, and nutritional education, the TVG community and its many generous partners is helping focus personal habits in a much healthier manner. At TVF&R, we see the human price that is paid when this assistance and resource is not available. We strongly endorse and admire the collaborative strategies and partners that the TVG community has engaged to make a difference.

SM
February 6, 2012

Re: Letter of Support for the Tualatin Valley Gleaners Cameron Award

Dear Vision Action Network:

Thank you for the opportunity to annually honor an organization on behalf of the great work they do in our community. It is truly my honor to write this letter of support for the Tualatin Valley Gleaners (TVG) for this year's Cameron Award.

The Tualatin Valley Gleaners is comprised of a 100% volunteer-run organization that is able to serve our low-income neighbors with food and resources that help people navigate through social services. In fact, this group goes the extra mile every year, adding on more and more partners that can help others make ends meet when budgets are tight.

Last summer, TVG partnered with farmers markets throughout our county, conducting food drives and getting the word out to low-income shoppers about their program. Teaming up with public events is just one example of the hard work that the team at TVG put into their innovative efforts to end hunger.

Last fiscal year, the Tualatin Valley Gleaners served more than 3,000 people with foods that they pick up from local grocery stores, Oregon Food Bank, local markets and more. Here at Oregon Food Bank-West, when we receive a call from a low-income person in need of healthy food choices, we know that we can send them to TVG for produce almost all year round because of the partnerships that they've built with the community.

Thank you, again, for offering this prestigious award to our partners in Washington County; if you have any questions regarding this support letter on behalf of the Tualatin Valley Gleaners, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Signed:



Laura Tovar
Washington County Services Manager, OFB-West
(503) 439-6510 X3320
ltovar@oregonfoodbank.org

... because no one should be
HUNGRY



TO: Vision Action Network

FROM: GINGER RAPPORT
MARKET MASTER-

FAX #: (503) 244-3927

PHONE #: (503) 643-5345

P.O. Box 4, Beaverton, OR 97075

e-mail address: market@beavertonfarmersmarket.com

Dear Committee,

I am thrilled to be writing this letter on behalf of the Tualatin Valley Gleaners. Never have I seen an organization do so much with so little. By that I mean that they somehow manage to feed hundreds of families a week on a very tiny operating budget. At the helm of the Gleaners is Heather Thompson, a woman who knows the meaning of leaving no stone unturned. It is because of her tireless ability to connect with individuals and organizations, to network and optimize opportunity that the Gleaners are so successful.

Last year, the Gleaners, in conjunction with all of the Washington Co. farmers markets, sponsored a county wide summer food drive that provided much needed fresh fruits and vegetables at a time that is typically slow for food bank donations. At Beaverton alone they received:

\$2225.00 in cash,

15,000 pounds of food

Numerous gifts, toys and personal items for the holiday Baskets of Joy drive.

62 sweatshirts and 80 t-shirts for their holiday gift giving program.

A BFM sponsor, New Seasons Market, was so impressed that, for the 2012 season, they awarded a grant to the market that specifically stated that part of it was to support the collaborative efforts between the BFM and the Gleaners. Needless to say, we have scheduled a second annual summer food drive which we hope will be better than the first. The City of Beaverton will be a co-sponsor of this event as well. Like us, they recognize the hunger issue in our community and believe the Gleaners to be the best friend of those needy families.

As I said, in the search to provide food for the hungry, Heather exhausts every possibility. When I mentioned my connection with the Beaverton Rotary, the next thing I knew she was speaking at one of their meetings and the members brought donations.

When the Sunshine Division stopped donations to the Gleaners' holiday Baskets of Joy program, Heather came knocking on our door again. We launched a City wide campaign for them that ultimately allowed them to provide a holiday meal for each of 500 families in our community as well as toys for their children.

If you have never been to their drop site it is something that you should see. It is a busy, crazy place with recipients/volunteers buzzing around, organizing donations and boxes. Food with Dignity is their motto. Everyone who receives food helps to make it happen. They work in the gardens that are operated by the Gleaners, they pick fruit from trees that have been registered with their Fruit Tree registry. When my one of my farmers gave them 200 tomato plants for their growing gardens, it is the recipient/volunteers who went to the farm to pick them up, then planted them, cared for them and harvested them, and finally, got to eat them.

We could all take a lesson from Heather and the Gleaners in working with other individuals and organizations, and leveraging every relationship for the benefit of our families in need.

Sincerely,

Ginger Rapport

Market Master

Beaverton farmers Market



The recipient/
volunteers who
make it all
happen.

Food
with
dignity!



In 2011, the Gleaners collected 15,000 pounds of food at the BFM.

Using a grant from New Season's Market, the BFM purchased totes, a hand cart and vests bearing their name to assist in their gleaning efforts at the market.





February 9, 2012

Vision Action Network
ATTN: 2011 Cameron Award
3700 SW Murray Blvd., Suite 190
Beaverton, OR 97005

Dear Vision Action Network:

I welcome the opportunity to state my enthusiastic support on nominating the Tualatin Valley Gleaners for the Cameron Award for Outstanding Community Collaboration. For the last 10+ years, I've seen the positive impact they have made in Beaverton and the difference they are making in so many families' lives.

Every week 150-200 families are able to get fresh produce and groceries at the Beaverton Resource Center. On average this is 36,000 pounds of food that is provided to low-income households monthly. They work with the Beaverton Farmers Market, local farmers and grocery stores on a weekly basis to provide the freshest food possible for these families.

TV Gleaners was instrumental in partnering with the City, the Beaverton Farmers Market, and the Northwest Minority Supplier Council, for a Summer Food Drive. We worked together to spread the word about the opportunity to donate food, particularly FRESH food, and by leveraging our various networks were able to raise awareness about the event. It was also timed to benefit people during the summer, when food drives tend to drop off with school out of session and the holiday rush over. We collected 1,000 lbs. of food enough to feed 200 families.

Based on this success we are planning to partner again in August 2012. We will be expanding the drive to include all of our community vision partners and running the collection in conjunction with our annual vision open house. TV Gleaners' leadership on hunger awareness has been instrumental in the Beaverton Farmers Market stepping forward and helping encourage all of the Washington County farmers markets to host their own food drives last year. This was the first coordinated effort among all of our Washington County markets to host food drives.

In addition this past year, Tualatin Valley Gleaners offered their first annual "Fishing 101" class to teach young people how to fish and take advantage of the "Free Fishing Day" in Oregon. Due to the success of this program, they will be seeking other partners to coordinate with in the coming years.

Another new partnership developed last year with the Beaverton Civic Theatre when they received a grant to provide tickets to low income families. The Beaverton Civic Theatre was appreciative to have

the TV Gleaners distribute tickets to low income families that would enjoy the opportunity to enrich their lives with arts and culture.

Our Neighborhood Office relies on the TV Gleaners to help residents with needs that other agencies are unable to handle. A recent example of this was when the Neighborhood Office received a call last summer from a senior citizen living in a trailer. Her air conditioner had gone out and she was not going to be able to stay in her trailer during the hot summer months if it could not get fixed. Other agencies were not able to respond to this request, so my staff called the TV Gleaners and they were able to have one of their volunteers look at it that day. They paid out of their pocket to have the air conditioner's parts ordered and installed the new parts.

The Tualatin Valley Gleaners has collaborated on many projects with the City of Beaverton, other organizations and businesses in order to provide more support to our community:

Resource Fairs: Tualatin Valley Gleaners partner with the City of Beaverton and other local non profits to participate in community resource fairs throughout the year, to make sure that no Beaverton resident goes without. They provide valuable information to our community at these events and look for ways to partner with other groups to fill the gap of unmet needs.

Holiday Program: Tualatin Valley Gleaners partners with the City of Beaverton, a local TV station and many local businesses in order to help provide a holiday program for low-income families. Every December, more than 300 families are able to participate and receive food and gifts so that they could celebrate the holidays. Without this assistance, most families would have had to go without. I know of several examples of where families stopped by the Neighborhood Office prior to Christmas to express their gratitude to be able to provide Christmas to their kids. Two years ago, one of the moms said that they had donated toys to this program the prior year, but now found themselves needing to receive assistance. Her husband had lost his job and they were barely getting by on his unemployment checks. They said without the Tualatin Valley Gleaners Holiday Program, their kids would not have received a Christmas. This much needed Holiday Program has become an annual project that grows bigger and bigger each year.

Giving Garden Program: Over the last couple of years, the Tualatin Valley Gleaners have coordinated with the City's "Giving Garden" which was one of the projects I started during my first year here as Mayor. They have taken a simple idea and turned it into an expansive community project. Their volunteers teach members how to grow their own food and then offer the fresh produce to their program. In addition, they welcome volunteers from the community and partner with other organizations. The Beaverton School District sent classrooms of children over to the garden to volunteer

and teach them valuable lessons about gardening and the value of growing nutritious food. Thousands of pounds of fresh produce have resulted in this partnership.

I could go on and on about the various project they are involved in, but the basic goal of all their projects is to look for innovative ways to serve low income families and collaborate with other groups in order to make a significant impact in our community.

Tualatin Valley Gleaners does a great job for our community and I strongly support nominating them for this award.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Denny Doyle".

Denny Doyle
Mayor