



## Overview

Founded in January 2020, Pete's Garden makes it easier for families to share wholesome meals together at home. Our food recovery operations recover surplus prepared foods from Kansas City area caterers, restaurants, and food service operations. Volunteers package the food into family-sized meal portions in reusable containers. These take-home meals are distributed free through local social service organizations that serve families with children. Some of the Kansas City area organizations that receive our free meals include Operation Breakthrough, Boys & Girls Club, Jewish Family Services, Avenue of Life, and several other groups.

In addition to food recovery, Pete's Garden partners with high school Culinary Arts and Family & Consumer Science (FACS) programs to engage students in preparing take-home meals for families in their communities. This program, Kids Feeding Kids, provides educators with a standards-based food justice and culinary curriculum focused on increasing food access, reducing food insecurity, and raising awareness around the social and environmental impacts of food waste. Educators who participate in Kids Feeding Kids receive lesson plans along with all the ingredients and supplies they need to help their students prepare up to 1,000 meal servings that are distributed free to families. Kids Feeding Kids was launched with generous support from Patrick and Brittany Mahomes and their 15 and the Mahomies Foundation.

In 2024, our food recovery program recovered 180,000 pounds of prepared proteins and side dishes and distributed 150,000 meals to Kansas City families. Approximately 700 Kansas City area families take home a restaurant-quality, ready-to-heat Pete's Garden meal once per week.

Since the launch of Kids Feeding Kids in Dec 2021 through the 2024-25 school year, 44 schools in KS, MO, and IL have participated. Over 2700 students completed the program, distributing approximately 30,000 meals. In 2024, we launched our inaugural Summer Educator Institute to train teachers to implement Kids Feeding Kids in their classrooms. In 2025, we are launching the Kids Feeding Kids Fellowship to engage high caliber educators to enhance program content and accelerate program impact.

## Our Food Recovery Food Donors

- Aramark
- Bon Appetit Management
- Brancato's Catering
- Eddie V's Restaurant
- FLIK Hospitality Group
- Inspired Occasions Catering
- JE Dunn employee dining
- Kansas City Chiefs
- Kansas City Convention Center
- KC Current
- Loews Hotel
- New Theater Restaurant
- Overland Park Convention Center
- Pembroke Hill School
- Rockhurst High School
- Royals/Kauffman Stadium
- Sporting KC
- Stowers Institute

## Our Key Financial Sponsors

- Blessings Abound Blessings Fund
- Bloch Family Foundation
- Cocherl Family Foundation
- Dehaemers Family Trust
- Hall Family Foundation
- Hallmark Corporate Foundation
- Hulston Family Foundation
- Hunt Family Foundation
- Lucky International Trading
- Garmin/Kao Family Foundation
- Kauffman Foundation
- Menorah Heritage Foundation
- Sysco
- T-Mobile
- WellSky Foundation
- 15 and the Mahomies Foundation

## **About the Founder**

Tamara Weber founded Pete's Garden as a tribute to her dad, Pete Sluk, who had the best backyard garden in Dickson City, PA. Pete always grew more than his family needed so he regularly sent Tami off with bags of fresh vegetables to share with neighbors. Lettuce in the spring, tomatoes in late summer, and apples in the fall. The harvest from his garden was never wasted.

After moving to Kansas City, Tamara spent 15 years with Hallmark where she directed the launch and growth of several new businesses. While working on a partnership between Hallmark and UNICEF, Tamara realized that she could apply her business development skills to impact social issues important to her. So, when she and her daughter watched the documentary, "Wasted! The Story of Food Waste," as part of a school project, she was struck by the amount of food wasted every day. She saw it as a logistics issue and a business problem that she could help solve in Kansas City. The idea for Pete's Garden began to take root. Now Tamara is working to "pay it forward" by ensuring more Kansas City kids have access to the healthy family dinners she grew up with.

## **Board Members**

President: Jodi Schade - Marketing Director, T-Mobile  
Vice-President: Ali Tuttle - Director of Marketing and Sales Operations, Optimatics  
Secretary: Christa Cavanaugh - Client Relations Manager, Harvest Productions  
Treasurer: Kathy Baldwin-Heitman - Financial consultant; former nonprofit Executive Director  
Director: Jason Buchanan - Attorney, McDowell Rice Smith & Buchanan, P.C.  
Director: Lon Lane - Founder, Lon Lane's Inspired Occasions Catering  
Director: Erin Wishon – Executive Chef, Kansas City Chiefs/Aramark  
Director: Alan Kneeland - Owner, The Combine KC; President, Greater Kansas City Restaurant Association  
Director: Gayla Brockman - Retired; former Executive Director of Michael Reese Health Trust and Menorah Heritage Foundation

## **Website:**

<https://petesgarden.org>

<https://kidsfeedingkids.org>

## **Social Media:**

@petesgardenkc

@kckidsfeedingkids

## FAQs – Food Recovery

### Can anyone donate food?

To ensure food safety and provide fresh and healthy meals to families, Pete's Garden is very selective about what food can be donated:

- Food must be prepared in a health-department inspected kitchen facility.
- Food must be handled and stored in accordance with safe time-temperature standards.
- Food from self-serve buffets can be donated only when buffet has been monitored by staff.
- Pete's Garden accepts prepared entrees or side dishes that will retain flavor and quality upon reheating. We also accept fresh produce, sandwiches, prepared pasta and potato salads.

### Is there any legal risk to donating food?

A federal law, The Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Act, was passed in 1996 to encourage food donations. The law offers legal immunity to organizations that donate food. In 2023, the law was renamed the Food Donation Improvement Act (FIDA) and amended to strengthen food donor protections and immunities. The National Restaurant Association encourages food donation and food recovery among its members.

### Who gets these meals?

Pete's Garden distributes meals through nonprofits and social service organizations that serve families with children. We deliver meals to Head Start programs, after school programs, food pantries, and housing programs in the Kansas City metro area. We do not deliver directly to homes or individuals.

### What does Pete's Garden do to ensure food safety?

Pete's Garden accepts food only if it has been prepared in a health-department inspected kitchen and handled and stored in accordance with safe time-temperature standards. Pete's Garden processes and repackages food in a commercial kitchen facility. All meals are labeled with a use-by date. Pete's Garden staff are certified as food safety managers and follow all food safety protocols.

### How can I donate or get involved?

Visit our website [petesgarden.org](https://petesgarden.org) to donate or sign up to volunteer. Contact [info@petesgarden.org](mailto:info@petesgarden.org) for other ways to help, including donating food or sponsoring meals.

## FAQs – Kids Feeding Kids

### How can teachers plan a Kids Feeding Kids meal event for their classroom?

We offer opportunities for CTE Culinary and FACS educators teaching foods-related classes to attend professional development during the summer to immerse themselves in the entire process of:

- teaching lessons to destigmatize food insecurity,
- cooking nutritious meals from the Kids Feeding Kids recipe bank, and
- planning and distributing meals in the community.

Educators who have attended and completed training at a Kids Feeding Kids Summer Educator Institute (SEI) are then eligible for up to two funded classroom projects per year. If you're interested in receiving email notifications about the dates and locations of the SEI nearest you, please indicate that using the "CONTACT US" link found at [www.kidsfeedingkids.org](http://www.kidsfeedingkids.org).

### Am I required to hold ServSafe Manager certification in order to attend a Kids Feeding Kids Summer Educator Institute?

ServSafe Manager Certification is not required; however, we prioritize collaborations with high school CTE Culinary and FACS Nutrition classrooms where educators and students have been trained in food safety and sanitation. This includes ServSafe Manager and ServSafe Food Handlers certifications.

### How do you connect awareness of food insecurity with a skills-based cooking lesson?

Through a carefully scaffolded standards-aligned curriculum, Kids Feeding Kids creates an opportunity for students to identify, investigate, and analyze the root causes of food insecurity to destigmatize the misunderstandings about who is impacted and why. With this understanding students can then appreciate the importance of Kids Feeding Kids meals to

support the needs that exist in their community, create their own approach to reaching families in need, and utilize their cooking skills to meet the needs of families in their community. Overwhelmingly, we receive comments like this one from high school students who have completed a Kids Feeding Kids project, *"It made me feel happy to know that I am able to help someone in need. It made cooking more meaningful."* – H.S. Student, Wentzville School District

### **Is there any legal risk to donating food?**

A federal law, The Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Act, was passed in 1996 to encourage food donations. In 2023 the law was renamed the Food Donation Improvement Act (FIDA) and amended to strengthen food donor protections and immunities. The National Restaurant Association is one of several professional organizations that encourages food donation in accordance with these laws.

### **Who gets these meals?**

Kids Feeding Kids focuses on getting free wholesome meals to food insecure families with children. We encourage participating schools to identify nonprofit organizations within their district that will distribute the meals to families served by the organization. In some cases, we will deliver meals to Pete's Garden meal distribution partners including Head Start programs, after school programs, food pantries, and housing programs in the Kansas City metro area. We do not deliver directly to homes or individuals.

### **What does Kids Feeding Kids do to ensure food safety?**

Kids Feeding Kids supports classroom projects where educators and students are trained in handling and storing food safely and in accordance with sanitation and time-temperature standards. Kids Feeding Kids provides materials to ensure all meals are labeled with a use-by date.

### **Are Kids Feeding Kids projects limited to a certain geographic area?**

Kids Feeding Kids projects initially were limited to the Kansas City metropolitan area. In 2023, we began hosting projects throughout Missouri. We have supported communities as far east as St. Louis, north to Maryville, and South to Cape Girardeau. We have begun to receive inquiries from schools throughout Kansas and we are evaluating our capacity to expand the program nationally. With the support of additional funders, we know we can achieve this goal.

### **How can I donate or get involved?**

Visit our website [kidsfeedingkids.org](https://kidsfeedingkids.org) to sponsor a specific classroom project or commit funding for an annual school-year. For more information, contact [info@petesgarden.org](mailto:info@petesgarden.org).