THE RIGHT CAUSE IN THE RIGHT PLACE AT THE RIGHT TIME.

What an amazing year for food! On every level - from local to global - the issue of hunger relief and sustainable agriculture are integrally tied together. As food policy decisions play out, Sustainable Food Center holds fast in our mission to cultivate a healthy community by strengthening the local food system and improving access to nutritious, affordable food. Change occurs through policy advocacy as well as grass-roots community organizing, and SFC has been at the forefront of both this year.

Austin has experienced a huge surge in community gardens - SFC has trained many of those garden leaders and ensured that local food growers have the seeds, compost and skills to grow fresh fruits and vegetables for themselves and their neighbors. More farmers’ markets are popping up all the time - SFC has provided valuable technical assistance to ensure that there are as many marketing outlets for our local family farms as possible. We’ve increased our reach within the schools, moving from 2 campuses in our inception of Sprouting Healthy Kids to almost 50. Our cooking and nutrition education classes are in high demand as more and more families choose to eat healthy, eat fresh.

With a strong board leading governance, an experienced staff implementing innovative services, and an energetic volunteer crew supporting all of our efforts, SFC programs are alleviating hunger, strengthening local family farms, and contributing to the decrease of diet-related disease. This time next year, we’ll be in our new training facility where we’ll see exponential expansion in all of our services. Together, with our community partners, we are empowering a thriving food system where all who participate can grow, share and prepare healthy, local food. Come grow with us!
Cultivating Healthy Communities and Sustainable Food Center’s Systems Approach to Food

A key element of Sustainable Food Center’s mission is to “cultivate a healthy community by strengthening our local food system.” SFC’s concept of health includes not just the physical health of individuals, but also the economic, environmental, and cultural health of our community. SFC’s systems-wide view of food that incorporates production, marketing and distribution, and preparation and consumption – Grow, Share, Prepare – establishes the context within which we cultivate an economic, environmental, and culturally healthy community and positively impact the physical health of the individuals. This is the force of our broad program and policy initiative referred to as Cultivating Healthy Communities. This initiative to transform our food system is enabled by institutional structures, environmental features, and public policies that support broad organizational and individual program participation. Below are our accomplishments related to food-systems change:

Institutional Structures

- Farm to School local food purchasing expanded to 47 AISD campuses plus several independent and charter schools.
- Community organizing efforts at schools created active wellness teams made up of parents, teachers, school staff, and community members with emphasis on inclusive representation and leadership development.
- SFC strengthened its relationship with regional grocery chain HEB by incorporating healthy cooking instruction into their community relations program, with plans set for broader expansion.

Environmental Features

- An increased number of community and school gardens has enabled healthy, community-based food production and greater food access.
- SFC Farmers’ Markets, including the new East location, served as sources for fresh, local fruits and vegetables, operated in underserved areas, accepted SNAP and WIC benefits, and offered the Double Dollar Incentive Program and Fruit and Veggie Prescriptions.

Public Policy

- SFC worked with Austin ISD to expand farm to school, establish policies in support of school gardens and other healthy programming.
- SFC’s involvement in the Sustainable Food Policy Board helped prioritize food access issues and clarify certain farmers’ market regulations, and raise the role of local foods in the Imagine Austin plan.
- Staff participation in state and national policy conversations and networks have elevated the profile of sustainable food systems among policy partners and law makers.

Organizational/Individual Participation

- SFC held its first Program Replication Training in June 2012 in order to train other organizations how to implement healthy food-systems programming in their own communities.
- The percentage of participants actively engaged in multiple components of SFC’s community-based, direct-service programs is steadily increasing.

As more individuals are growing, sharing, and preparing healthy, local food SFC’s organizational vision becomes reality. And the expanded opportunities represent a continuing fulfillment of our mission to strengthen our local food system. Statistics and stories from each of our programs follow.
GROW LOCAL

Grow Local, SFC’s flagship program, plants the seeds for a food-secure community by empowering children and adults to grow their own food. Through Spread the Harvest, Grow Local empowers individuals to grow fresh produce and share it with others in need, and also provides free gardening resources (including seeds, seedlings, and compost) for low-income gardeners. Grow Local offers hands-on sustainable food gardening education, taught by trained community-based facilitators. Both free and fee-based classes are offered, as well as the only Spanish basic organic gardening classes in Austin. Grow Local also trains and assists leaders in starting and sustaining community and school gardens, which serve as vibrant spaces for learning, cooperation, and food production.

“My husband does the planting and I do most of the harvesting and cooking. We cooked squash and zucchini for friends last night and I can definitely say that having these fresh veggies helps us eat healthier. I think it’s a great program. I share with several people including one of my friends who is raising a child and (like us) are feeling the hit of the economy... We are very thankful for [your] program.”

– Spread the Harvest Gardener

CLIENT STORY

Jenni Lafferty joined Grow Local’s Spread the Harvest program in June of 2011 and makes the most of the seeds, seedlings, compost, and organic soil amendments available to participants for free. Jenni’s home garden not only keeps her family in fresh veggies, it also produces enough surplus for regular donations to the Austin Resource Center for the Homeless.

“This program has done amazing things for our family,” she comments. “We have improved our diet by eating more organic produce than we could afford and we’ve decreased our grocery bill!”

“Better nutrition and spending less at the grocery store are great, but I really like that we are able to donate to the homeless soup kitchen downtown. I always take my children with me to harvest the food from the garden, pack it up in the mini-van and then drive it downtown to drop off. They get to see the whole process and our hope is that they learn compassion and generosity. Spread the Harvest has enabled us to be generous and to teach our children to do the same!”

After taking Grow Local’s Citizen Gardener class and Community Garden Leadership training, Jenni has decided to take further steps to positively impact her community through food gardening: she is currently heading up a project to create a community garden at the East Communities YMCA, also home to SFC’s new Farmers’ Market East. Jenni and the team of neighbors who have joined her in planning this project hope this new garden will serve as a space to grow food and camaraderie together.

Grow Local served 10,805 individuals.
SPREAD THE HARVEST
• 10,420 individuals served through Spread the Harvest
• At least 69% of Spread the Harvest participants served were low-income (7,214)
• 61 schools served by Spread the Harvest
• 8,467 garden-fresh produce meal equivalents shared by Spread the Harvest participants
• 79% of Spread the Harvest participants increased their consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables

CLASSES & TRAININGS
• 15 garden education classes & 6 garden leadership trainings
• 3 Basic Organic Gardening classes in Spanish, and Spanish translation was provided at 4 additional classes
• 385 individuals attended Grow Local classes & trainings
• Citizen Gardener class graduates provided over 830 hours of volunteer service in the community to help others in growing their own food

COMMUNITY & SCHOOL GARDEN ASSISTANCE
• 107 school garden groups and 71 community garden groups received education, resources, or other assistance from Grow Local for their garden projects
• 4 community gardens received Grow Local fiscal sponsorship
• 18 schools were matched with 1 or more SFC School Garden Volunteers to assist with school gardens
• Community members learned about school & community gardens through the Austin Community Garden Tour and the Get Growing & Keep Going School Garden conference (Grow Local staff co-facilitate the coalitions that organized these events)

JULY 1, 2011 - JUNE 30, 2012
**FARM DIRECT**

Farm Direct program demonstrates SFC’s core “seed to table” philosophy. Farm Direct includes the farmers’ markets and related market access initiatives, plus Farm to Cafeteria, Farm to School and Farm to Work projects.

Sustainable Food Center connects producers and consumers through custom designed web-based applications to broker local produce through Farm to Cafeteria and to make sales to individuals through Farm to Work. SFC also provides promotions and outreach as well as administrative support for these programs.

The use of online tools to manage orders and payments, paired with the administrative and promotional support that SFC provides, allows the farmers to concentrate on producing high-quality food and the institutions and individuals can focus on preparing and eating nutritious, local foods.

“This is beautiful food and is the best deal around. It is always a pleasure to pick it up and see what we got this week.”

– Farm to Work Customer

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**SPROUTING HEALTHY KIDS, FARM TO SCHOOL AND FOOD SYSTEMS EDUCATION**

In the past year, Sustainable Food Center worked closely with community partners, including Austin Independent School District, Marathon Kids, school Family Resource Centers, Community-School Alliances, and others to strengthen connections with area schools and school communities. SFC’s direct work with 15 elementary schools and 4 middle schools in Austin ISD, plus the KIPP Austin Public Charter School District includes community organizing to build Wellness Leadership Teams at the schools and help connect these teams with SFC programs. These include farm-to-school local food purchasing and food systems education support and activities provided as part of Sprouting Healthy Kids. Several schools hosted “Meet the Farmer” events and local veggie sampling activities in their school cafeterias, plus Austin’s version of Chefs Move to Schools, called Local Chefs—Local Fresh.

The connections with the Wellness Leadership Teams also enabled team members to bring other SFC Cultivating Healthy Communities activities to their campuses and communities. Parents, teachers, school staff, and community members helped to coordinate, and participated in, School Garden Leadership Trainings, Community Garden Leadership Trainings, Basic Organic Gardening Classes, and The Happy Kitchen/La Cocina Alegre™ cooking classes.

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32,000 children were served through Sprouting Healthy Kids.

Sprouting Healthy Kids partners in 2011-12 are:

- Dobie Middle
- Garcia Middle
- Pearce Middle
- Webb Middle
- Andrews Elementary
- Blanton Elementary
- Graham Elementary
- Houston Elementary
- Jordan Elementary
- Metz Elementary
- Norman Elementary
- Pecan Springs Elementary
- Pickle Elementary
- Reilly Elementary
- Sims Elementary
- Volma Overton Elementary
- Walnut Creek Elementary
- Widen Elementary
- Wooldridge Elementary
- KIPP Austin Charter School District
FARM TO CAFETERIA
• $25,000 in total sales
• 6 farmers involved consistently
• Multiple institutions participating, including six locations at University of Texas, Seton and Brackenridge Hospitals, St. Edwards University, KIPP Austin schools, Meals on Wheels and More, and Wheatsville Food Co-op

“I am very happy with the local veggies that we’ve recently received, the quality and variety of produce currently available from Gundermann Farms is truly impressive. I ate dinner in Jester City Limits (café at UT) last night and the collards and cauliflower were the center of the plate for me!”
– Robert Mayberry, Executive Chef University of Texas, Division of Housing and Food Service

FARM TO WORK
Farm to Work set several records in sales and participation in 2011-12, having reached $174,000 in sales with over 30 worksite partners, including:

Applied Materials
Asuragen
Department of State Health Services
  Austin State Hospital, Main Campus, Howard Lane
CPS Energy (San Antonio)
CAPCOG
Blackbaud
Blood and Tissue Center
City of Austin
  One TX Center, Waller Creek Center
Dept of Information Resources
General Land Office
Hill Country Outdoor Products
Department of Family and Protective Services
Rail Road Commission (through TEA)
Robert E. Johnson Building
Sunset Commission,
  Texas Legislative Council,
  Texas Legislative Budget Board
Tesoro (San Antonio)
Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts
Texas Department of Agriculture
Texas Education Agency
Texas Employee Retirement System (through CPA)
Texas Historic Commission
Texas Water Development Board
Texas Workforce Commission
Texas Department Parks & Wildlife
Texas State Preservation Board (through TEA)
University of Texas – School of Public Health
San Antonio Children’s Shelter
San Antonio Alamodome
Office of the Attorney General

“This is beautiful food and is the best deal around. It is always a pleasure to pick it up and see what we got this week.”
– Farm to Work Customer

3,400 people served in the Farm to Work program.
SFC FARMERS’ MARKETS

The Farm Direct program demonstrates SFC’s core “seed to table” philosophy. By organizing weekly farmers’ markets, Farm Direct gives local growers direct access to urban residents seeking freshly harvested produce. Through direct marketing projects like Farm to Cafeteria, Farm to Work and our unique Farm to School initiative, Farm Direct connects local farmers with worksites, health agencies and schools to provide fresh produce and strengthen the local economy.

Farm Direct initiatives, including farm-to-school and SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) card use at farmers’ markets, are model programs that have served as the basis for statewide policy change.

Farm Direct affects positive change in the Austin community by involving farmers and consumers in a broad effort to promote reliable and nutritious local food sources while helping to sustain the environment.

“I like the home-grown taste that I grew up with.”
– Farmers’ Market Shopper

“The farmers’ market changed us into seasonal eaters.”
– Farmers’ Market Shopper

SFC PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS
SFC FARMERS’ MARKET
The SFC Farmers’ Market is the largest certified growers-only farmers’ market in the state of Texas. With more than 120 vendors, of which 72 are farmers, the market hosts the following markets:
• SFC Farmers’ Market Downtown (10 years)
• SFC Farmers’ Market at The Triangle (5 years) - Largest mid-week market in the city
• SFC Farmers’ Market at Sunset Valley (3 years)
• And our new market: SFC Farmers’ Market East, started March, 2012

MARKET GROWTH
The total gross sales at the SFC Farmers’ Market over all sites was $2.4 million, reflecting a 2% increase in sales overall. More than 200,000 visits were made to the markets.

SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) purchases at the SFC Farmers’ Market increased, with $27,014 in sales.

“SFC Markets make it easy to bring the best product that I can grow, so that I can have the face to face interactions that are so important to the people that are consuming my vegetables. I want to offer people a healthy choice while at the same time I get to do what I like best – farming, working outside, working on my own. I know SFC will support my farming by the way that they manage markets and make them the places where people want to come to buy directly from the farmers. They also continue to do all they can do to promote local food and find new outlets like farm to work that helps the farmers sell their products. “
– Kevin Ottmers, Ottmers Family Farm

NEW INITIATIVES
The SFC Farmers’ Market expanded into a fourth market this year, opening up SFC Farmers’ Market East located at Hwy. 183 and 51st Street, in the YMCA parking lot. The new market is the first in Texas to offer a Double Dollar Incentive Program (DDIP), where customers’ fruit and vegetable purchases with their WIC or SNAP benefits are matched so that they have double to spend (up to $10 match per week). This new market in its first quarter had $28,898 in sales!

The SFC Farmers’ Market East also launched the first in Texas Fruit and Vegetable Prescription (F/VRx) program in a partnership with Wholesome Wave and the People’s Community Clinic.
The Happy Kitchen/La Cocina Alegre™ Program has grown its program participant numbers by 335% in the past two years! A large part of this growth is attributed to the worksite wellness initiative which aims to teach healthy cooking and eating classes in a fun, yet educational manner right at the place of employment.

Lynn T. of the City of Austin was one of many employees who left a Happy Kitchen workshop feeling inspired. “I enjoyed [it] so much. I even made the sweet potato wraps over the weekend! I try to eat healthy foods and this program really brings it down to a simple, understandable level. The two [Facilitators] doing the presentation were so down to earth and engaging. Everyone could benefit from these sessions.”

FREE 6-WEEK SERIES
THK provides a six-week series of cooking and nutrition education classes lasting 1.5 hours each week. Classes are located in recreation centers, faith communities, schools and community centers and led by trained community facilitators.

- 23 six-week classes serving 1200 family members
- 36 healthy eating workshops serving 967 individuals
- 53% of cooking class participants come from low-income households
- 77% of cooking class participants are Latino or African-American
- 98% of cooking class participants increased their fruit and vegetable intake after taking the 6-week class

2,167 people were served through The Happy Kitchen/La Cocina Alegre™.

“This information was very timely in my life. I [have wanted] to make some changes for myself and my family. This course was a wonderful guide and source of information. I was thrilled to try new foods and introduce them to my children!”

– Darla, 6-week cooking class participant
EARNED INCOME 6-WEEK SERIES
THK offers a for-fee six-week series of cooking and nutrition education classes lasting 1.5 hours each. Classes are located at worksite wellness sites, private homes, faith communities and at community sites. Class participants pay for service to increase THK’s reach and to bolster earned income for THK.
• 2 series serving 34 people

COOKING DEMOS
Cooking demos showcase a healthy, culturally appropriate dish and necessary nutritional information. The demos aim to introduce the community to THK and SFC programs. They are offered for free.
• 8 cooking demos, serving 423 participants

MATERIALS DEVELOPMENT
THK creates and maintains current, relevant curriculum, cookbook and teaching aides.
• 3rd Edition of the THK Cookbook - Fresh, Seasonal Recipes printed. Each recipe in cookbook includes price per serving information, seasonality wheel and nutrition facts label
• New class curriculum completed and disseminated to all 55 Facilitators

FACILITATOR TRAINING SERIES
Facilitator training increases the number of skilled community members who can effectively deliver the 6-week series of cooking and nutrition education classes. Trainees completed a training totaling 34 hours.
• 2 trainings (1 English, 1 Spanish)
• Number of new Facilitators: 37 Total (20 English speaking, 9 Spanish speaking, 8 bilingual)

FACILITATOR CONTINUING EDUCATION
A six-week continuing education series re-trains current facilitators to use updated curriculum and teaching materials.
• 2 trainings (1 in English, 1 in Spanish)
• 100% of active Facilitators completed training

FEE-BASED WORKSHOPS
Cooking workshops last 1-3 hours and focus on a type of dish or a type of food; they are much more in depth than cooking demonstrations. The workshops aim to introduce the community to THK and SFC programs as well as affect one or two eating/cooking/shopping behaviors.
• 10 workshops, serving 155 people

Did you know that 18% of all the groceries for classes were purchased from SFC farmers’ markets? This is one way that Sustainable Food Center integrates its programs and ultimately, its mission.
VOLUNTEERS MEAN OUR SUCCESS

VOLUNTEERS WHO VOLUNTEER AT LEAST ONCE A MONTH

245

“It is always such a privilege to volunteer and it is enough recognition to see all the wonderful, faithful shoppers who keep returning week after week to support the Market and all the farmers that ALSO show up week after week!”

– Barbara SFC Farmers’ Market Volunteer
“I love being a part of the SFC family. It’s a community of people who love truly good food, who care about others, and who are putting their skills and passions to use to improve access for all people to healthy, delicious, local food. It makes volunteering fun and inspiring. Thanks for putting the report together and including us volunteers in it :)”

– Dahlia, SFC Volunteer

“I’ve made some great friends and connections by volunteering at the Farmer’s Market and I will continue to volunteer as long as I can. I volunteer because I believe in your mission and feel local sustainable food is such an important issue. Plus I love to eat local healthy delicious food!”

– Jill H, Information Booth Volunteer

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900 OFFICE AND INTERN HOURS + 3,079 VOLUNTEER HOURS IN THE COMMUNITY

1,610 TOTAL NUMBER OF FARMERS’ MARKET SHIFTS

900 OFFICE AND INTERN HOURS

1,610 TOTAL NUMBER OF FARMERS’ MARKET SHIFTS

JULY 1, 2011 - JUNE 30, 2012

NUMBER OF COMMUNITY OUTREACH EVENTS ATTENDED

169
Sustainable Food Center is emerging as a major contributor to public policy and advocacy at local, state, and federal levels. Our internal policy committee includes staff as well as Board Members, who provide insight and guidance on policy issues and strategy. SFC staff serve a variety of functions with other policy organizations, including leadership positions on the Austin/Travis County Sustainable Food Policy Board and Austin ISD School Health Advisory Council (SHAC); as members of the national Community Food Security Coalition policy committee, Partnership for a Healthy Texas, Texas Food Policy Roundtable, and One Voice Central Texas; and as contributors and advisors to a number of policy makers. Among this policy and advocacy work and results this year are as follows:

SCHOOL DISTRICT
Through ongoing work with AISD, Farm to School expanded to nearly 50 schools. SFC staff consulted with AISD facilities staff and with the School Health Advisory Council to refine the process for establishing gardens on AISD property and for accessing district resources for school gardens.

CITY/COUNTY
SFC staff continues to work with the City of Austin and Travis County to amend health rules relating to farmers markets, as well as work through the Austin/Travis Co. Sustainable Food Policy Board to establish guidelines for healthier and local foods in public venues, and to ensure that local food systems are included in city planning documents.

STATE
SFC staff provided research and insight relevant to the drafting of several pieces of state legislation in support of local food systems, and provided additional research and testimony during legislative committee hearings. In preparation for the next legislative session, SFC Policy Committee has established specific priorities, outlined below, related to healthy food and food systems, and has provided testimony at several legislative “interim session” hearings.

FEDERAL
SFC worked with national policy partners to conduct research that informed the 2012 Farm Bill. SFC also worked to engage community members and local farmers in advocacy around the Farm Bill. Actions included blog postings, action alerts, and one-on-one informational and technical assistance meetings with farmers. SFC also revised our policy mission on Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO) statement to advocate for stricter testing requirements, stronger regulatory standards, and accurate labeling for GMOs.
CURRENT POLICY PRIORITIES
SFC will continue to interact with our program participants and partners to mobilize community members to be involved in policy discussions and decision making processes. Among our policy priorities for the coming year are:

School District
SFC will advocate for continued expansion of farm to school programming, increased support for school gardens; and support for worksite wellness initiatives for district staff.

City/County
SFC staff will work to incorporate healthier foods in city/county venues and events and towards broad support for urban gardening, equitable food distribution initiatives, and access in under-served areas.

State
With input and guidance from SFC Board members, and in partnership with other advocacy groups, SFC will work with the state legislature to support small, diverse farms and urban agriculture including incentivizing use of public and private lands for food production and agriculture exemptions for small farms; plus expanded and strengthened markets for local farmers through healthy food guidelines for public venues, streamlined SNAP and WIC farmers’ market processes, support for farm direct sales to childcare, schools, and other outlets, and fair, consistent health regulations for farmers’ markets.

Federal
Collaborations with national policy organizations will revolve around ongoing support for the passage of a farm bill in 2012 that supports local and healthy food systems, new and beginning farmers, low-income food access issues, and farmland conservation efforts.

STAFF ASSIGNED TO POLICY GROUPS
Ronda Rutledge, Executive Director
Austin/Travis County Sustainable Food Policy Board (Vice-Chair), Texas Food Policy Roundtable, OneVoice Central Texas

Andrew Smiley, Deputy Director
AISD School Health Advisory Council (Co-Chair), Partnership for a Healthy Texas, plus involvement with Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance

Katy Levit, The Happy Kitchen/La Cocina Alegre™ Developer
AISD School Health Advisory Council

Jess Guffey, Grow Local Co-Director
Community Food Security Coalition policy committee, Children in Nature Collaborative, Austin School Garden Network

Sari Albornoz, Grow Local Co-Director
Coalition of Austin Community Gardens

Joy Casnovsky, The Happy Kitchen/La Cocina Alegre™ Director
American Public Health Association, Texas Public Health Coalition, Austin/Travis County Sustainable Food Policy Board “Healthy, Local, Sustainable Food in City/County Venues” Working Group

Susan Leibrock, Community Relations Director
American Community Gardening Association

Suzanne Santos
Republic Square Partners, consultation to Austin/Travis Co. Health and Human Services
BUILDING OUR CENTER

SUSTAINABLE FOOD CENTER
OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE: A PERMANENT HOME FOR SFC’S PROGRAMS

For almost 40 years, we have been Sustainable Food Center without a center. SFC’s leadership in our community is growing as we promote community health and prevent diet-related disease by breaking down barriers to fresh, nutritious, affordable food and supporting local family farms. Please partner with us as we seek our own sustainability: A training facility for Sustainable Food Center’s programs.

With a permanent place to call home, SFC will be equipped to expand our programs, create a state-of-the-art teaching kitchen and host community events. In addition, a 2.3 acre community garden adjacent to the property will provide access for east side neighbors to grow their own food as well as children and families to learn the principles of organic food production.

We invite you to browse our website, www.sustainablefoodcenter.org/capital-campaign/about. Please contact Angela Osborn at angela@sustainablefoodcenter.org to find out how you can come grow with us!
In fiscal year 11-12, Sustainable Food Center charged 17.7% for fundraising and 7.3% for management and general.

The full financial statements, audited by Gindler, Chappel, Morrison & Co., P.C., are available upon request by calling 512-236-0074 x 112.
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Andrew Smiley
Deputy Director
Sari Albornoz
Grow Local Co-Director
Joy Casnovsky
The Happy Kitchen/La Cocina Alegre™ Director

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Jess Guffey
Grow Local Co-Director
Susan Leibrock
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We are grateful for the financial support of the following:

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