



Island Grown Initiative and Island Food Pantry



July 1, 2020

Dear Friend,

We are writing to share some exciting news about an upcoming change that will transform and strengthen the Island's support resources for those who face food insecurity, and enable us to build a stronger, more integrated food equity infrastructure.

The Island Food Pantry (The Pantry) and Island Grown Initiative (IGI) will merge our organizations by the end of the year to:

- broaden our reach to underserved communities
- reduce barriers to access
- partner with health care providers to promote wellness and disease prevention through education and access to nutritious food

The Island's dependence on seasonal employment and the high cost of living cause many to struggle to make ends meet, particularly in the off-season. Now, the health crises created by Covid-19 and the resulting economic distress and insecurity have left many more island residents in challenging circumstances.

Through our work, we meet many people suffering from food insecurity – neighbors, colleagues, and friends who cannot dependably get enough healthy, affordable food to survive and thrive. We hear their stories and feel their anxiety.

Everyone we serve has unique needs. To that end, we plan to create a client-centered food equity system, one that offers the right food to the right people at the right time.

Our approach will emphasize the efficiencies and economic benefits of individual choice by innovating new models for food distribution, designing systems that better reflect the values and habits of those we serve. The result? Better planning, healthier clients, less food waste.

The coronavirus pandemic and its effects on our community have drawn attention to the need for better integration and coordination among the island's diverse food resource providers. Without a strong infrastructure, there are substantial gaps in the delivery system and inefficiencies at a time of great need. Paradoxically, this challenge presents our organizations with a timely opportunity to pivot, adapt, and improve.

Combining our organizations will offer greater efficiency to:

- grow produce
- rescue food
- prepare meals for home distribution
- offer summer food service
- operate a mobile market
- distribute groceries, meat, and fish directly to those in need

The Pantry and IGI began discussions this winter on how to unite our efforts. After thoughtful discussions and rigorous due diligence, our boards of directors voted unanimously to merge the two organizations, effective January 1, 2021.

The Pantry will become a separate program within IGI, with its own budget, and will maintain its name, mission, and brand. Kayte Morris will become a Senior Director at IGI, reporting to Rebecca Haag, IGI's Executive Director. Three members of The Pantry's board of directors will join the IGI board in January.

Until the merger takes effect on January 1, 2021, the two agencies will operate independently while jointly developing a new model for a client-centric delivery system and collaborating with other providers to build a robust, effective food equity hub.

Our thanks for your ongoing friendship and support – this important work would not be possible without you. Now is our time to stand together to eradicate hunger and food insecurity on our Island. We welcome your thoughts and support to help move this vision forward.

Warmly,

Kayte Morris, Executive Director, [The Island Food Pantry](#)

Margaret Hannemann, Board Chair, [The Island Food Pantry](#)

Rebecca Haag, Executive Director, [Island Grown Initiative](#)

Lynne Whiting, Board President, [Island Grown Initiative](#)