OVER 2.6 MILLION MEALS DELIVERED
Dear Friends,

For far too many, 2020 was a year of fear, loss, stress, and life-changing upheaval. As a hunger relief organization, we continue to see demand like never before; the lines at food pantries are devastatingly long, as more and more families seek food assistance.

Through all that is happening, the one thing I haven’t lost is hope. Hope for a brighter future and hope for humanity. That hope is fueled by witnessing our community’s love for others and willingness to take bold actions to ensure people are fed in their time of need.

In a year where Conscious Alliance lost critical parts of who we are—a year without connecting with our volunteers and supporters at concerts and festivals, a year without lively fundraising events, a year with moments where we weren’t sure how we could keep moving, we not only persisted but we rose to the challenge to distribute more than twice as much food as we did the year before.

We accomplished this with unbelievable amounts of support that flowed in from musicians, artists, food makers, foundations, and many independent businesses, small and large. Art was created for our benefit, musicians held virtual concerts that generated donations, and our virtual auction in collaboration with the MacMillan family was highly successful.

So many of you heard our plea and made donations to support our work. Had we not received those gifts when we did, I might be writing a different kind of letter. We wholeheartedly thank you!

We provided 2,646,203 meals in 2020, reaching young children, families, and those living with the fallout from the pandemic in 13 different states. We served without barriers on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, the Navajo Nation, and along the Front Range of Colorado. We sent semi-trucks of food to our partners including those in Atlanta, Chicago, Denver, Indianapolis, Minneapolis, Nashville, New York, Portland, and Rothbury, and we distributed to doorsteps in Colorado and South Dakota.

A friend recently asked me, “what keeps you going?” The answer was simple. Our team. They work relentlessly to find creative solutions to feed people during the ever-changing circumstances of an unprecedented pandemic.

While the team remains highly inspired and motivated by the outstanding support we received in 2020, we know the year ahead will be challenging and difficult. More people will face food insecurity in 2021. We must stay strong and continue to work hard for our neighbors.

With concerted effort, we will press ahead to provide the most nourishment to as many people as possible and do so with respect and dignity.

When concerts and festivals come back, we will be thrilled to see you in person. Until then, if you can help, please consider making a donation to Conscious Alliance. We are extremely grateful to have you on our side. Whether you’ve received help or given support, you matter to us.

Sending love and hope to everyone far and wide. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts for being a part of our Alliance.

Thank you,

Justin Levy, Executive Director
Conscious Alliance is committed to the sound fiscal management and financial stewardship of every dollar raised. When you donate to Conscious Alliance, you can be sure your contributions will be used responsibly to support communities in crisis through hunger relief and youth empowerment.

We were able to contribute $10,239,596 towards our programs while our combined administrative and fundraising expenses did not exceed 5%.

Help prepare us for every challenge and let us plan for the future, by naming Conscious Alliance as a beneficiary of your will or trust, life insurance policy, or retirement plan. Please reach out if you have any questions about making a legacy gift.
The willingness of many incredible people and companies to approach 2020 with determination allowed us to reach families in need during the shutdowns. Our friends in the food industry gave larger in-kind food donations, which opened the door for us to put our experience in reliable food logistics to full use. As the pallets and truckloads of food were offered to us, we connected with existing and new partnerships operating in the hearts of the communities. We shared food with school districts, community pantries, pop-up events, emergency services, preschools, food banks, and ensured our network of music and restaurant professionals were included in the give-aways. We also facilitated home deliveries for people without reliable transportation.

PARTNERING WITH CHAMPIONS

Throughout the year, we were inspired by local heroes, who worked their magic to bring smiles and healthy meals to their communities. We were honored to team up with Chance the Rapper’s nonprofit, SocialWorks, and Taste for the Homeless. Together, we delivered turkeys and other proteins to the streets of Chicago with the help of our partners, Hormel Foods and Applegate.

“Who are we as human beings if we ignore the suffering of others?”
—Michael Airhart, Taste for the Homeless

EXEMPLIFYING A CONSCIOUS ALLIANCE

Within hours of realizing the shutdown was happening in March, Elliott Toan, a Conscious Alliance Board member and owner of Arcana restaurant, devised a plan to keep his kitchen staff employed. His staff would be making meals for those in need. Teaming up with Veronica Johnston, a Conscious Alliance Advisory Board member and kindergarten teacher, it was decided that she and fellow teacher and volunteer, Lisa Taylor Strauss could ensure vulnerable students were fed by delivering to students’ homes. Soon Caroline Fassora, a school registrar, joined the effort, and Conscious Alliance was delivering meals to doors four days a week. 

Everyone involved got the connection and nourishment they needed.

The approach of delivering restaurant meals expanded in April. With support from World Central Kitchen, we grew the program to include Blackbelly and Santo restaurants in Boulder as well as Bette’s Kitchen in Manderson, SD. By the end of August, we’d delivered 19,099 restaurant-prepared meals to families in need all along the Front Range of Colorado and the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota.

Imagine being 6 years old and suddenly your school closes because of an unknown virus. You miss your teacher, your friends, and your world is vastly different and confusing.

There’s a knock at the door; it’s your kindergarten teacher. She isn’t dropping off homework, she’s brought you and your family a familiar smile, a comforting conversation, groceries, and a delicious meal from a local restaurant.
Our plans for 2020 were big, filled with concerts and festivals to continue providing hunger relief everywhere music plays. We could never have imagined that the amazing people who make ‘Art That Feeds’ Food Drives possible would experience such loss. We were faced with a void where our community once thrived and connected. We were shocked as our supporters and advocates in the music and art worlds were left with no jobs and no prospects as their industries collapsed overnight.

It was our turn to help them.

Conscious Alliance teamed up with Rhino Staging in Denver to provide food every week to event workers. With Symbiotic Event Services, we also hosted two large-scale, drive-thru give-aways to provide special holiday meals to the folks who have always had Conscious Alliance’s back.

When an entire industry shuts down, it can feel hopeless

77% of the people in the event industry have lost 100% of their income

96% of live event companies have cut staff and/or wages
PREVENTING FOOD WASTE

There is enough food in the U.S. to feed everyone, yet up to 35% of it is thrown out. As a hunger relief nonprofit, in partnership with 1% for the Planet, our approach is to connect with food brands to redistribute their excess products to families in need.

2.6 MILLION MEALS DIVERTED FROM LANDFILLS IN 2020

is equivalent to

KEEPING 538 CARS OFF THE ROAD FOR AN ENTIRE YEAR.

HELP US FEED THOSE IN NEED

MAKE A FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION:
ConsciousAlliance.org/Donate or use the envelope provided.

BECOME A MEMBER:
ConsciousAlliance.org/Membership, automatic monthly donations ensure people receive food and is the easiest for your budget.

PLAN FOR THE FUTURE:
Name Conscious Alliance as a beneficiary of your will, trust, life insurance policy, or retirement plan.

ADVOCATE:
We know not everyone is able to donate right now. You can still help though! Share our mission with the people you know.

If every person does one small thing, it becomes a tidal wave of care, kindness, and societal change. A true alliance can get us through anything.
HERO OF THE YEAR
DAN NELSON

We are excited to recognize Dan Nelson as our 2020 Hero of the Year. We first collaborated with Dan in 2013 when we installed a Learning Garden at Pine Ridge School. As the Facilities Director at the school, Dan’s support was key for us to break ground. Little did we know how his passions for gardening, teaching, feeding, mentoring, and advocating would transform our work on Pine Ridge Reservation and beyond.

Dan’s enthusiasm for improving lives is contagious and the need is real; with only one full-service grocery store on the entire reservation, access to healthy food is a challenge. Gardening is not only the most nutritious source, but it additionally builds a strong and self-sustaining food system.

Dan keeps the Learning Garden thriving and leads the school’s efforts to introduce students to growing food. He encourages engagement by intentionally cultivating vegetables and herbs, like carrots and mint, that can be eaten and enjoyed on site. Ever the advocate for Lakota culture, he integrates traditional language, knowledge, and values within the garden lessons.

Determined to do more, Dan plows additional fields at the school and constructs raised beds for families who want to garden. Every summer he mentors a crew of middle and high school students to tend to the gardens and help with our family garden program. Dan’s vision and leadership has significantly increased the availability of fresh produce within the community; the school’s gardens have expanded to serve 100 community members, and 30 families are now growing their own.

Dan’s compassion for his community shines through in all that he does. In January of 2018, Conscious Alliance had the opportunity to move its first semi-truck of meals and snacks to the reservation, but we were stuck on a logistical problem. Semi-trucks do not have ramps, and there is no loading dock for us to use in the area. But Dan is clever and adventurous when it comes to serving his community and tackling problems. We called him and he was eager to figure it out. He has now facilitated the unloading of more than 18 semi-trucks full of food and household necessities. By our calculation, it’s well over 500,000 lbs of food that he’s made possible through his unwavering commitment to nourish Lakota families.

While he excels at fixing wimpy tomato starts and finding solutions for stuck pallets, his most significant impact must be how he provides wise counsel to others and advocates for Lakota values. He has significantly shaped Conscious Alliance, and inspires the team to overcome obstacles. We are so grateful and honored to work with Dan. We appreciate his dedication, generosity, hard work, and guidance.

Thank you for being a good relative, Dan! Wopila Tanka!
In loving memory of Fran Lewis (1930-2020)—a fierce and constant advocate, our 2018 Hero of the Year, and a great force in the world.

STAFF
Justin Levy
  Executive Director
Cathryn Folkestad
  Operations Director
BJ Cochran
  Director of Touring and Logistics
Kathryn Burleson
  Program Director
Ali Stone
  Marketing and Communications Manager
Kristen Sommer-Swager
  Systems Manager
Ross Nicewonder
  Outreach Coordinator
Lauren Glavine
  Outreach Coordinator
Natalie Hand
  Pine Ridge Reservation Field Director

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Ben Baruch
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Chewy Smith
  CEO/Founder, Also Organics
Darcy Johnson
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Evan Baker
  Organization Consultant
Jake Schneider
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  Talent Manager, Hatchery 17
Jay Curley
  Global Head of Integrated Marketing, Ben & Jerry’s
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Jeff Wood
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Jeffrey Swager
  President, Symbiotic Event Services
Jenny Mueller
  Development Consultant
Jimmy MacMillan
  Philanthropic Consultant
John Warren
  CEO, Jay Dub Productions, Inc
Jon Blackburn
  Print Specialist
Justin Basch
  Director of Touring, Future Classic
Kevin Gregory
  Audio/Recording Engineer & Production Management
Lauren Evans
  Coordinator, Whole Foods Market
Liz Folkestad
  Booking Coordinator, Live Nation
Marina Hoffmann
  Visionary Artist
Matt Johns
  Technology & Fundraising Consultant
Michael Benjamin
  Branding Consultant
Michael Travis
  Musician, The String Cheese Incident
Nat Keefe
  Musician, Hot Buttered Rum
Nathan Prenger
  SVP, Event Operations & Del Mar GM, KAABO
Neal Luecking
  Consultant
Nick Morgan
  Peak Experience Productions
Norm Ruth
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  MA., MS., Professional School Counselor
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  Marketing Advisor, Med Marketing
Scott ‘Free’ Jaffke
  Simple Fuels Biodiesel/Free Entertainment Inc
Scott Nichols
  President, Lifestyle Events
Tobin Voggesser
  Co-Founder, NOCOAST
Tyler Andrews
  Philanthropic Consultant
Walt Pourier
  Owner/Creative Director, Nakota Designs

Conscious Alliance
art that feeds
2525 Arapahoe Ave Ste E4-182
BOULDER, CO 80302