



**brighterbites<sup>®</sup>**

..... BRIGHTER BITES .....

# **Annual Report 2020**

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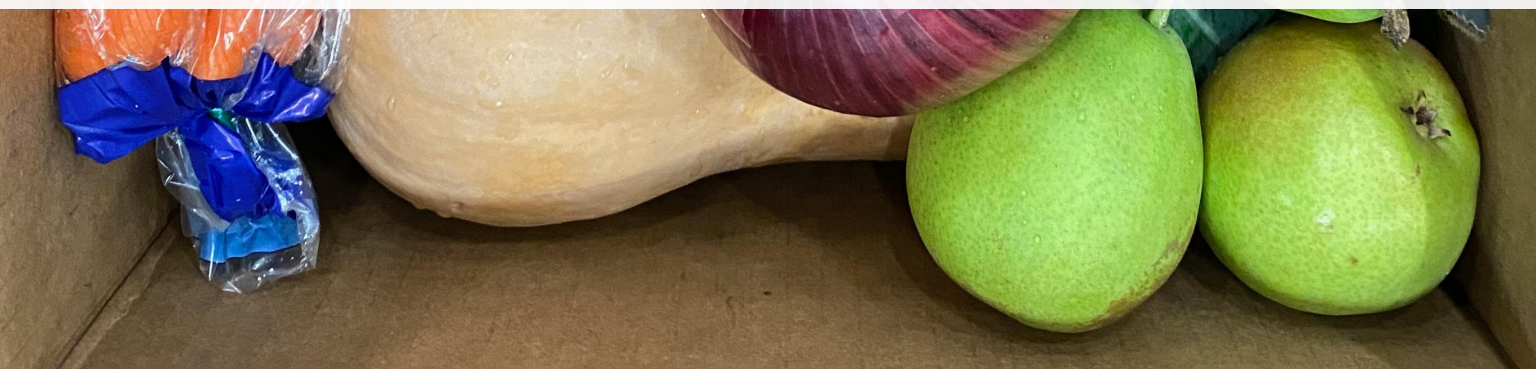
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## BRIGHTER BITES

# Who We Are

*Brighter Bites provides fresh fruits and veggies to kids and their families who lack regular access to fresh food. We teach them how to use it and track their behavior change.*

### ..... OUR NOT-SO-SECRET FORMULA .....



#### PRODUCE DISTRIBUTION

Every week, Brighter Bites heads to schools and summer camps to distribute fresh, seasonal produce for families and teachers to pick up and take home. Two bags contain about 50 servings of fruits and veggies, weighing 20-25 pounds.



#### NUTRITION EDUCATION

We teach kids, parents, and teachers how to make the most of their produce. We encourage teachers to utilize their bags during in-class lessons and we provide nutrition education handbooks, plus weekly tip sheets and recipes, for everyone to use at home.



#### FUN FOOD EXPERIENCE

During weekly produce pickups, Brighter Bites staff and volunteers create a fun food experience for the whole family, demonstrating colorful recipes and passing out samples that incorporate that week's fresh produce.

.....

*"Brighter Bites is a theory-driven, evidence-based health promotion program that mitigates fruit and vegetable waste and converts it into a public health opportunity by systematically sourcing and channeling primarily donated produce into underserved communities."*

- Dr. Shreela Sharma, PhD, RD, LD, Professor of Epidemiology at UTHealth School of Public Health and Co-founder Brighter Bites



### .....

## OUR MISSION:

*To create communities of health through fresh food.*



# Letter from Founder .....

Dear friends,

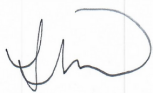
*It is hard to believe that almost ten years ago the idea for Brighter Bites was sparked when my son asked for berries instead of cake at a birthday party. The organization has grown beyond what I could have ever imagined, from the very first distribution in 2012 serving 150 families at just one school in Houston, to now serving almost 30,000 families at 125 schools across seven cities, and powered by 70 talented staff, a dynamic Board of Directors, and countless partners contributing critical resources.*

*The Brighter Bites mission of creating communities of health through fresh food is at the forefront of all that we do. While we have consistently implemented our three part formula of produce distribution + nutrition education + a fun food experience for the whole family, we have also sought ways to be more impactful with Brighter Bites families, schools, and communities where we partner. It is this drive to constantly evaluate the effectiveness of our program that has led us to the place we are today.*

*Thank you for coming along on this journey with us - your support, guidance, and encouragement has helped to strengthen the organization in countless ways. I am proud and humbled to see my little idea blossom into this thriving organization that is creating so much impact, and Brighter Bites would not be what it is today without the contributions of so many. During this time where promoting good health and strong immune systems is more important than ever, I truly feel that with your continued support, Brighter Bites will build even more communities of health through fresh food across the country.*

With gratitude,

Lisa






## ..... CEO Corner .....



*Where do I start with an annual message for 2020, a year unlike no other? Brighter Bites started out the year excited about our program's expansion and growth to our seventh market, Salinas, California; then the pandemic changed everything. Many Brighter Bites families who were so reliant on our program for weekly free, fresh produce and nutrition education resources were suddenly unable to engage with us due to quarantines and school closures. We did not allow barriers to stop us, we adjusted, we innovated, and we found ground-breaking ways to continue to accomplish our mission to create communities of health through fresh food. In the midst of adversity in 2020, Brighter Bites served the highest number of families ever, distributed the most produce ever, and had the farthest nutrition education reach ever.*

*Brighter Bites set an overall commitment to increase diversity representation among staff, participating communities, and schools. We developed and started implementation of a strategic plan - work that is more critical than ever, as the disparities in nutrition and obesity in underserved communities play a role in the health inequities that have been spotlighted during the pandemic.*

*We continued to implement policies and practices to be an employer of choice, and in 2020 we funded a 401k match, provided additional paid time off, and provided professional development opportunities for all full-time staff.*

*Even through these extremely challenging and stressful circumstances in 2020, I believe the organization grew in unimaginable ways that have ultimately made us the strongest and most effective we have ever been.*

*-Rich*

*Rich*



## ..... Milestones .....

### MARCH

*Brighter Bites emergency response  
due to COVID-19 began*

### APRIL

*Launched the first ever Family Resources page  
on our website, establishing a  
comprehensive resource for families*

### MAY

*Our first-ever virtual fundraising event,  
Wine for a Cause, raised over \$100,000*

### JUNE

*Implemented first retail produce voucher program,  
ensuring Brighter Bites families receive continued  
access to produce during the pandemic*

### JULY

*Shifted traditional model of utilizing parent  
volunteers to pack produce, to distributing  
pre-packed produce boxes via contactless  
drive-thru and walk-up distributions*

### AUGUST

*Reached a total of 8 million pounds of  
produce distributed, just over the summer*

### SEPTEMBER

*Began fall programming and released the  
new Brighter Bites Mobile App*

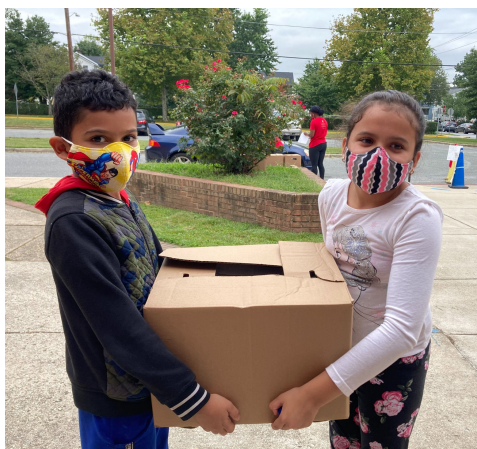
### OCTOBER

*Hired first West Coast staff to run the Salinas, CA  
program launching in February 2021*

### NOVEMBER

*Enhanced our internal and external strategy,  
efforts, and actions around  
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion*





## Brighter Bites School Year 2020-21

*Brighter Bites shifted its traditional programming model during these challenging times to continue to create communities of health through fresh food in a contact-free and safe environment.*



### PRODUCE DISTRIBUTION

In the year 2020, the program looked a little different from years past. In the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, Brighter Bites teamed up with produce suppliers (growers and distributors) to distribute pre-packed boxes of fresh produce to Brighter Bites schools. Each family received a box that contains a variety of fruits and vegetables, weighing about 20-25 pounds and equating to approximately 50 servings of fresh produce.

### NUTRITION EDUCATION

Utilizing new digital platforms, we taught kids, parents, and teachers how to make the most of their produce boxes. Similar to past years, we trained and supported teachers in their implementation of the Coordinated Approach to Child Health (CATCH), Youth Understanding MyPlate (YUM), and other evidence-based programs that promote healthy food choices and physical activity. But instead of in-person education, we provided training and nutrition education through our new web pages, social media outlets, and a mobile app.

### FUN FOOD EXPERIENCE

In the year 2020, we sent the “fun food experience” home and encouraged our families to create a safe, healthy, and fun food experience for the whole family by cooking nutritious meals together. Brighter Bites staff engaged with families through various digital platforms, like newsletters, text messages, web pages, our new Brighter Bites app, and social media, by sharing easy recipes, kitchen how-tos, culinary tips, and healthy topics.



# ANNUAL REPORT

## Programming

### ..... Produce Distribution: The Numbers .....

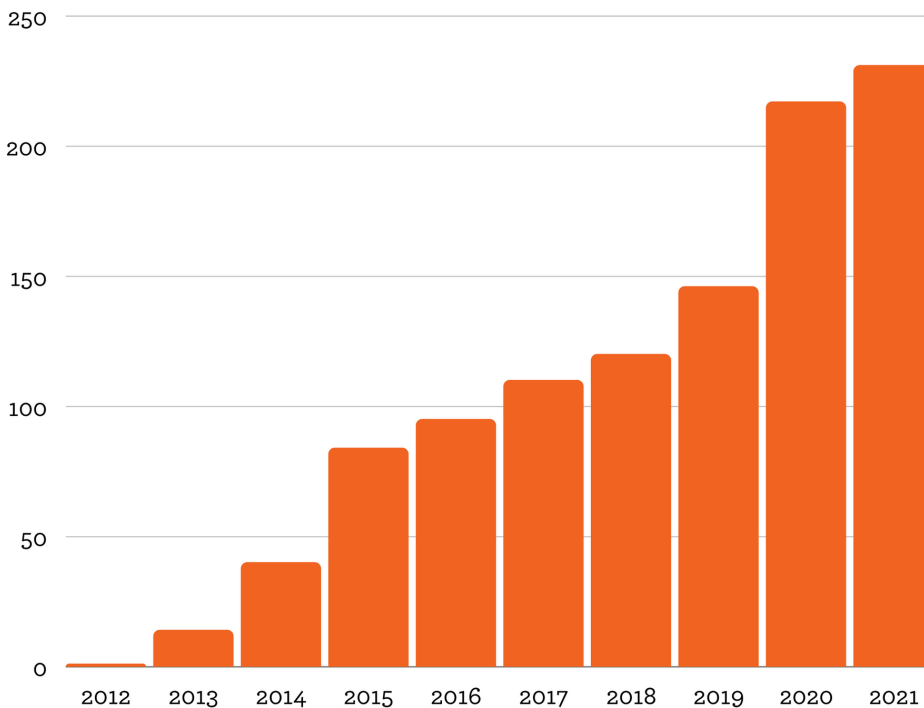
Since our first distribution in 2012, we have distributed over 40 million pounds of produce and hundreds of thousands of nutrition materials to over 500,000 individuals.

***We distributed 12 million pounds to almost 30,000 families in the year 2020 alone!***

*\*Most frequently distributed items in 2020*

### ..... Growth .....

***Since our first distribution in 2012 at one site, we have expanded to 217 sites across six cities.***



**231**

*projected number of sites  
for the 2021-2022  
school year*





## ANNUAL REPORT

# Programming

## ..... Nutrition Education .....

### 27,147

CATCH/YUM Lessons, Produce Activities,  
PE Activities taught in the classroom

*This year Brighter Bites went digital in the classroom. We created videos showcasing various healthy topics as well as supported teachers' access to digital nutrition education lessons. To better support our school staff, we created a new website page and our first-ever teacher newsletter.*



"Brighter Bites and the staff has been a very **rewarding experience** for the students. The activities are **engaging**. Brighter Bites promotes a conversation about healthy food with the students which is of **great benefit** to the students as they learn to live a healthy lifestyle."

-Brighter Bites Teacher



"Brighter Bites gives my students the opportunity to **enjoy fruits and veggies**, while learning new things about **healthy habits**. It is amazing for students to actually taste the foods they learn about. Brighter Bites helps shape **nutritious practices** for all of our students and families."

-Brighter Bites Teacher



"My students have a great **experience** learning to be more **healthy in their daily lives**. They enjoy the activities and our discussions. I think this is a great program to encourage children how to be **healthier**. I myself have implemented this in my daily life."

-Brighter Bites Teacher

## ..... Fun Food Experience .....



### DIGITAL MATERIALS

This year, we greatly increased digital engagement efforts through enhanced family newsletters, new website content for families, expanded social media presence through city-specific channels, and videos focusing on culinary education.



### NEW MOBILE APP

We developed the Brighter Bites mobile app which includes a contactless check-in for families, a full library of recipes and tip sheets, and a curated list of materials sent to families weekly based on produce received.



## ANNUAL REPORT

# We are Data Driven

*At Brighter Bites, we see data as a way to understand our families' lived experiences, to ensure that we are implementing the program as planned, and, most of all, if we are making an impact on the schools, children, and families we serve.*

- Dr. Shreela Sharma, PhD, RD, LD, Professor of Epidemiology at UTHealth School of Public Health and Co-founder Brighter Bites

We use state-of-the-art real-time monitoring of key performance indicators so our team is aware of program dosage, reach, fidelity, and acceptability at each school site, each week for every family enrolled in our program.

Additionally, using story-telling and PhotoVoice techniques, our data gives a voice to the families we serve.

Feedback is used for ongoing program improvement.

## BRIGHTER BITES IMPACTS FAMILIES

STUDY RESULTS SHOW THAT CHILDREN AND PARENTS WHO RECEIVED BRIGHTER BITES DEMONSTRATED:



### HEALTHIER HABITS

Significant increase in amount of fruits and vegetables consumed



### LESS ADDED SUGAR

Significant decrease in amount of added sugars consumed among children



### HEALTHIER SNACKING

Significant increase in serving more fruits and vegetables as snacks

### BRIGHTER BITES IS CREATING SUSTAINABLE DEMAND:

*At two-year follow-up, both parents and children continue to consume significantly more fruits and vegetables.*



**98% of families** reported increased produce consumption during program

**96% of families** maintained an increased produce consumption

**19 servings** of additional produce consumed weekly two years after the program





## ANNUAL REPORT

## We are Data Driven

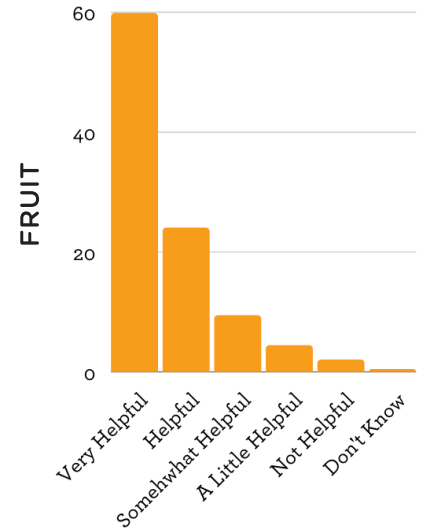
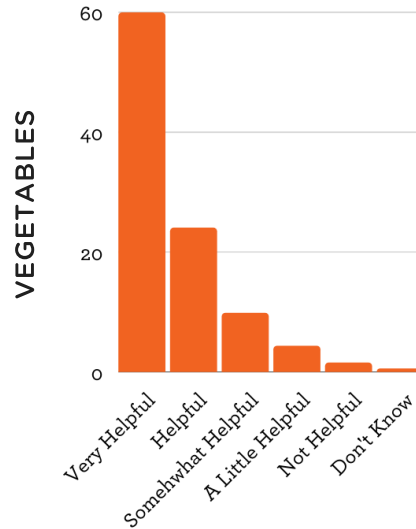
## BRIGHTER BITES IMPACTS TEACHERS

*How helpful were the following Brighter Bites components in influencing YOUR intake of fruits and vegetables?*



**84% of teachers**

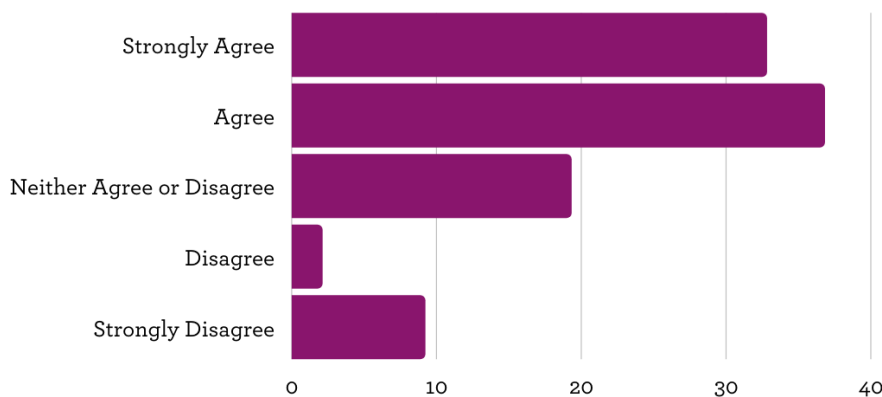
*reported that Brighter Bites produce distribution influenced their OWN intake of fruits and vegetables*



DATA SOURCE: TEACHER SURVEY COLLECTED AT THE END OF 2019-2020 SCHOOL YEAR (N=862)

## BRIGHTER BITES IMPACTS SCHOOLS

*How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statement:  
Brighter Bites has increased parental engagement in my school. (N=830)*



**70% of teachers**

*said that they agree/strongly agree that Brighter Bites increased parental engagement at their school*

DATA SOURCE: TEACHER SURVEY COLLECTED AT THE END OF 2019-2020 SCHOOL YEAR (N=862)

## IN THE YEAR 2020:

Brighter Bites developed four publications focused on COVID-19's impacts on its families. Brighter Bites hosted COVID-19 webinars in conjunction with the Michael & Susan Dell Center.

*For the full publications, visit [www.brighterbites.org/research](http://www.brighterbites.org/research)*

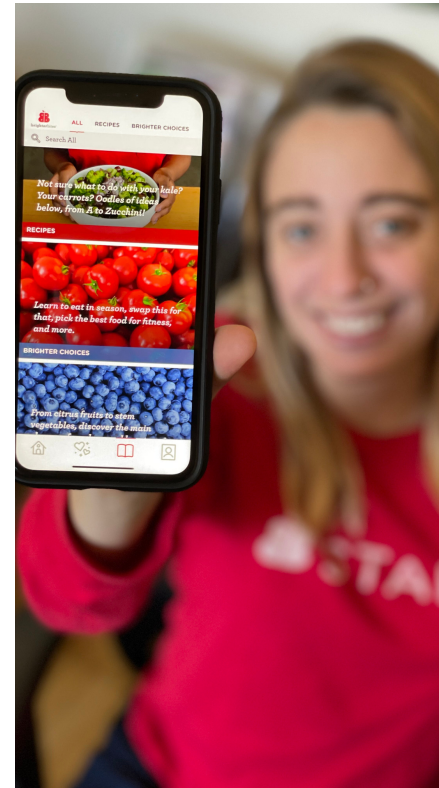
## OUR SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY &amp; DATA BOARD COMMITTEE:

- Dr. Shreela Sharma, PhD, RD, LD, Professor of Epidemiology at UTHealth School of Public Health
- Dr. Christine Markham, PhD, Professor and Interim Department Chair, Health Promotion and Behavioral Sciences, UTHealth School of Public Health
- Dr. Faiyaz Bhojani, MD, DrPH, Global Health Lead, Downstream Manufacturing Regional Health Manager, North & South America at Royal Dutch Shell



## ANNUAL REPORT

## Operating During COVID-19

**EMERGENCY RESPONSE**

Emergency grocery assistance for families based on COVID-19 survey responses.

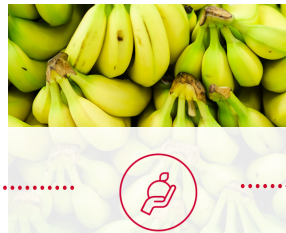
- 139 grocery store gift cards
- 17 personal grocery deliveries
- local resources for all

**RETAIL PRODUCE VOUCHER PROGRAM**

- \$25 produce vouchers
- 43,000 vouchers sent out
- \$650,000 in retail produce sales
- 60% redemption rate

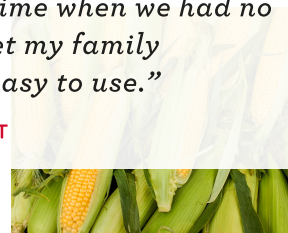
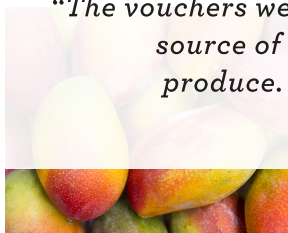
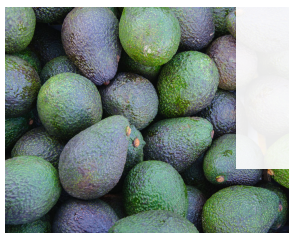
**BOX PROGRAM**

USDA Farmers to Families produce boxes with nutrition education materials: 8 million pounds



*"The vouchers were very helpful at the time when we had no source of income but had it to get my family produce. They were especially easy to use."*

-BRIGHTER BITES PARENT



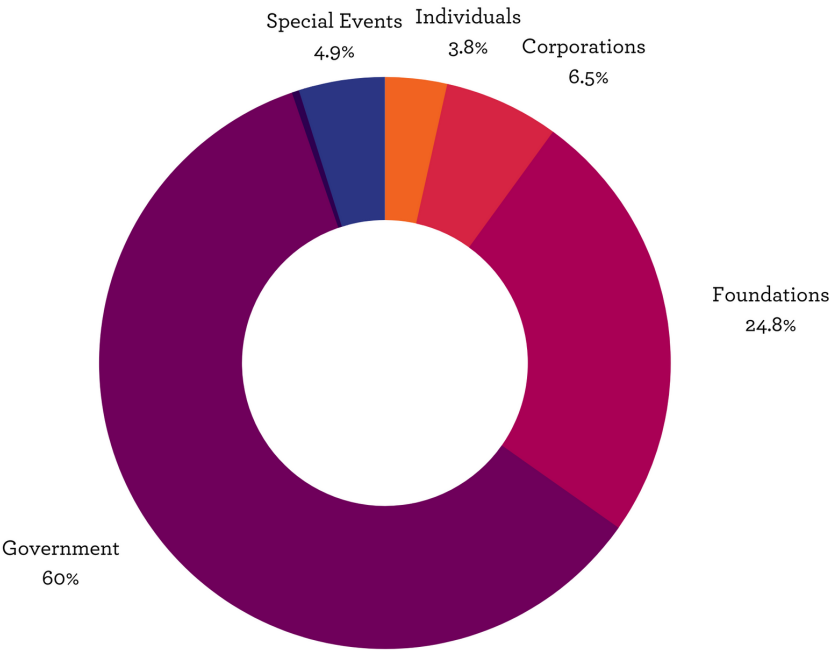
*\*Most frequently selected items from retail vouchers*



# ANNUAL REPORT

# Financials

## ..... Revenue .....



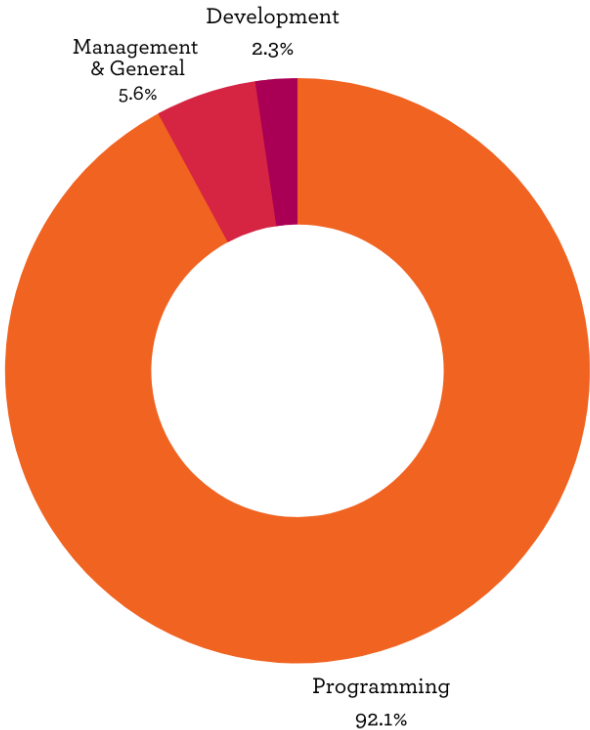
**Total: \$6,142,496**

- Government: \$3,682,858
- Foundations: \$1,520,760
- Corporations: \$399,622
- Special Events: \$299,172
- Individuals: \$215,084
- Earned Revenue: \$25,000

## ..... Expenses .....

**Total: \$5,700,524.17**

- Programming: \$5,249,831.17
- Management & General: \$318,881
- Development: \$131,812



**\$.92 of every \$1.00**  
goes toward programming

*\*Financials not audited*

.....  
**\$8,737,417**  
.....

**In-kind donations of produce from  
food bank and produce industry partners**





Austin



NYC



*"My favorite part of working at Brighter Bites is the opportunity to engage with and educate kids about fresh food and healthy habits, ultimately contributing to their bright futures!"*

*-Brighter Bites Employee*

Edward M. Felegy

Elementary School



DC



DC



Dallas



Austin



*"Brighter Bites has enhanced our students' love of our school garden and increased their consumptions of leafy greens, fresh fruit and vegetables in our school meal program. The students often ask if they can plant vegetables they have been exposed to by Brighter Bites."*

*-Brighter Bites Teacher*



Houston



Austin





NYC



Florida



.....

*"My kids have never had pears. They love it now.  
And now instead of cookies I have them pick a  
fruit. So grateful."  
-Brighter Bites Family*

.....



Austin



Austin



NYC



.....

*"Brighter Bites has been an incredible asset  
to our school. The program has played a  
major part in helping us reduce rates of food  
insecurity in our school community as well  
as providing easier access to fresh produce  
to our students and families."  
-Brighter Bites School Administration Partner*

.....



Houston



Houston



Houston



# With Gratitude .....

*Thank you to our generous donors!*

## FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTORS

### \$1,000+

- 99 Cents Only Stores
- Atmos Energy
- Benjamin Samuels and Marci Rosenberg
- Brandon Grimm
- Carlos Visconti
- Carrie Procinsky
- Cathy Burns
- Christine Markham
- Clement Pappas
- Communities Foundation of Texas, North Texas Giving Day 2020
- Dave Corsi
- David Gill
- David Lake
- Dee and Chad Muir
- Domex Superfresh Growers, LLC
- Eugene McDermott Scholars Program Alumni Association
- Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
- Frieda's Specialty Produce
- Garland Reiter
- George Pitsikoulis
- Goldman, Sachs and Company Matching Gift Program
- Greater Washington Community Foundation
- Greg Reinauer
- Hilary Holmes
- Holly & Caleb Noel
- Imperfect Foods
- James Prevor
- Jason Duke
- Jeff Brattain
- Jessica Malek
- Jim DiMenna
- Joe and Mary Bundrant
- Jon Couchman
- Justin Cho
- Kurt Vetter
- Lee Sirota
- Lisa Helfman
- Lisa McNeece
- Lisa Pompeii
- Lori Taylor, the Produce Moms
- Lynn and Kent Shoemaker
- Mark Schneider
- Marty Craner
- MAV Foundation
- Michael Spinazzola
- Michele McNeece
- Olivier Germain
- Oppy
- Pam Fullenweider
- Parker Cragg
- Paul Sirbaugh
- Pepco, an Exelon Company
- Prime Time International
- Rahul Mehta
- Ravi Cheema
- Richard Dachman
- River Fresh Farms
- Sandi and Steven Wolf
- Scott Shillings
- SEWA International Houston
- Stephanie Anderson
- Steve Serck
- Steven Graubart
- Susanna Dokupil
- sweetgreen
- Taylor Farms
- The Almy Family Foundation
- The Community Foundation of Tampa Bay
- The Dominican Sisters of Houston
- The Giumarra Companies
- Todd Simmons
- Tony Freytag
- Walmart Corporation
- William and Nancy Attra (Dogman Training)
- William Schuler
- Winn-Dixie Stores
- Wonderful Company Employee Giving
- Wyatt Hassel
- Yes! Apples
- Zachary G. Upcheshaw

### \$10,000+

- Avocados from Mexico
- Chelan Fresh
- Church Brothers
- Grimmway Farms
- PayPal Giving Fund
- Prince George's County Council
- Renaissance Food Group
- Scott and Soraya McClelland
- Stephanie K. Tobor
- Sue Smith
- Sunkist Growers
- The Community Foundation of Collier County
- The Dallas Foundation
- The MAVS Foundation
- Wolff Family Foundation
- YardPeeps/Robyn Goldstein

### \$20,000+

- Accolade Inc
- Amerigroup, an Anthem Company
- EarthFresh
- Good Foods Group, LLC
- JV Smith Companies
- Liberty Mutual Foundation
- Lipman Family Farms
- Mastronardi Produce
- Mission Produce Inc.
- Moody Foundation
- Naples United Church of Christ
- QVT Family Office
- Rice Management Company
- Robin Hood
- Ruthie and Jay Pack Family Foundation
- Samuels Family Foundation
- Southwest Florida Community Foundation
- The Rees-Jones Foundation
- Vic Smith
- Whalley Foundation

### \$50,000+

- Cigna Foundation
- Feeding Texas
- H-E-B Grocery Company
- Kosmos Energy
- Produce Marketing Association
- ReFED
- St. David's Foundation
- The Boeing Company
- The Greater Houston Community Foundation
- The Kroger Co. Zero Hunger | Zero Waste Foundation
- The Naples Children and Education Foundation
- Walmart Foundation



# With Gratitude .....

## PRODUCE INDUSTRY PARTNERS .....

B&W Quality Growers  
 Baby Bay Produce  
 Brothers Produce  
 Capital Area Food Bank  
 Chelan Fresh  
 Church Brothers  
 City Harvest  
 Coastal Sunbelt  
 Collaborative for Fresh Produce  
 Crystal Valley Foods  
 D'Arrigo New York  
 DiMare Fresh  
 Dole  
 FoodMaven  
 Freshpoint Dallas  
 Freshpoint South Texas  
 GoFresh  
 GR Fresh  
 Hardie's

Harry Chapin Food Bank  
 Houston Food Bank  
 J&C Tropicals  
 Mann Packing  
 Mission  
 NFI  
 North Texas Food Bank  
 Perfect Pact  
 Potandon  
 Pro Citrus Network  
 Prosource  
 Pure Flavor  
 Southern Specialties  
 Sunset/Mastronardi  
 Taylor Farms Texas  
 The Garlic Company  
 Tomato Thyme  
 Tom Lange Company  
 Village Farms

## ..... Board of Directors .....

**LISA HELFMAN**

Chair & Co-Founder  
 Director of Public Affairs,  
 H-E-B Houston

**DR. SHREELA SHARMA**

Co-Founder  
 Professor of Epidemiology,  
 UTHealth School of Public Health

**DR. FAIYAZ BHOJANI**

Global Health Lead, Downstream  
 Manufacturing Regional Health  
 Manager, North & South America  
 at Royal Dutch Shell

**CHELSEA COLLINS**

Head of School,  
 St. Luke's Episcopal School

**JOEL GRADE**

Executive Vice President,  
 Business Development,  
 Sysco Corporation

**STEVEN GRAUBART**

President & CEO,  
 Community Hospital Partners

**SCOTT MCCLELLAND**

President,  
 H-E-B Food Drug

**BENJAMIN SAMUELS**

Treasurer,  
 Director, Samuels Family Foundation

**MANOLO SANCHEZ**

Director,  
 Fannie Mae

**SUE SMITH**

Secretary,  
 Community Volunteer

**VIC SMITH**

President & CEO,  
 JV Smith Companies

# Supporter Highlights

## .... Produce Marketing Association ....

*“PMA remains a steadfast supporter of Brighter Bites’ mission to connect families with fresh fruits and vegetables as we work together to grow a healthier world.”*

*-Cathy Burns, CEO*

## .... The Walmart Foundation ....

*“Access to healthy food builds the foundation for good health in communities. Our goal is to improve people’s ability to more consistently consume nutritious food, and we’re thrilled to support Brighter Bites who work every day to do just that.”*

*-Eileen Hyde, Director of Sustainability,  
Food Systems & Food Access*

## .... Cigna Foundation ....

*“Giving a child healthy food does far more than provide them with essential nutrition today. It provides them with a sense of security, and supports their future health, well-being and development, and that is foundational to our multi-year Healthier Kids For Our Future initiative. We are proud to support Brighter Bites and applaud the great work they do ensuring children and families have access to fresh produce while making nutrition fun.”*

*-Susan Stith, Executive Director*

## .... The Kroger Zero Hunger | Zero Waste Foundation ....

*“The Kroger Co. Zero Hunger | Zero Waste Foundation is excited to partner with Brighter Bites to expand their program. We celebrate their dedication to education and outreach efforts, and we look forward to working with their innovative team to help achieve our mission of creating communities free of hunger and waste.”*

*-Sunny Reelhorn Parr, Executive Director*



# Supporter Highlights

## .... H-E-B ....

*"At H-E-B, education, health and hunger are 3 of our core pillars of giving. Brighter Bites helps us achieve our goals by having a data driven track record in each one of them. We are proud to support their efforts to build healthier habits among Texas families in our most underserved populations."*

*-Lisa Helfman, Director of Public Affairs of H-E-B Houston*

## .... The Houston Food Bank ....

*"After eight years, the Brighter Bites and Houston Food Bank partnership is as strong as ever. And I am confident that we will continue to expand our reach throughout Houston even after the pandemic subsides."*

*-Brian Greene, President and CEO of the Houston Food Bank*

## .... Mastronardi Produce ....

*"With Brighter Bites, we saw an opportunity to look at the (2020 SUNSET Rocks®) event through a different lens this year and give to the families that have been hit hard by the pandemic."*

*-Paul Mastronardi, President and CEO of Mastronardi Produce*

## .... Prince George's County, MD ....

*"We have been absolutely blessed to receive these generous and kind produce donations. The response from our community has been overwhelming. We are thankful for the partnership forged by Council Member Dannielle Glaros, and for the compassionate work of the Brighter Bites team. We the people are grateful. This is the type of unity needed to survive the times."*

*-Pastor Everett Pope of United Baptist Church*

## .... Taylor Farms ....

*"Taylor Farms is pleased to support the Brighter Bites mission through fresh produce donations and financial support benefitting Brighter Bites families across the country."*

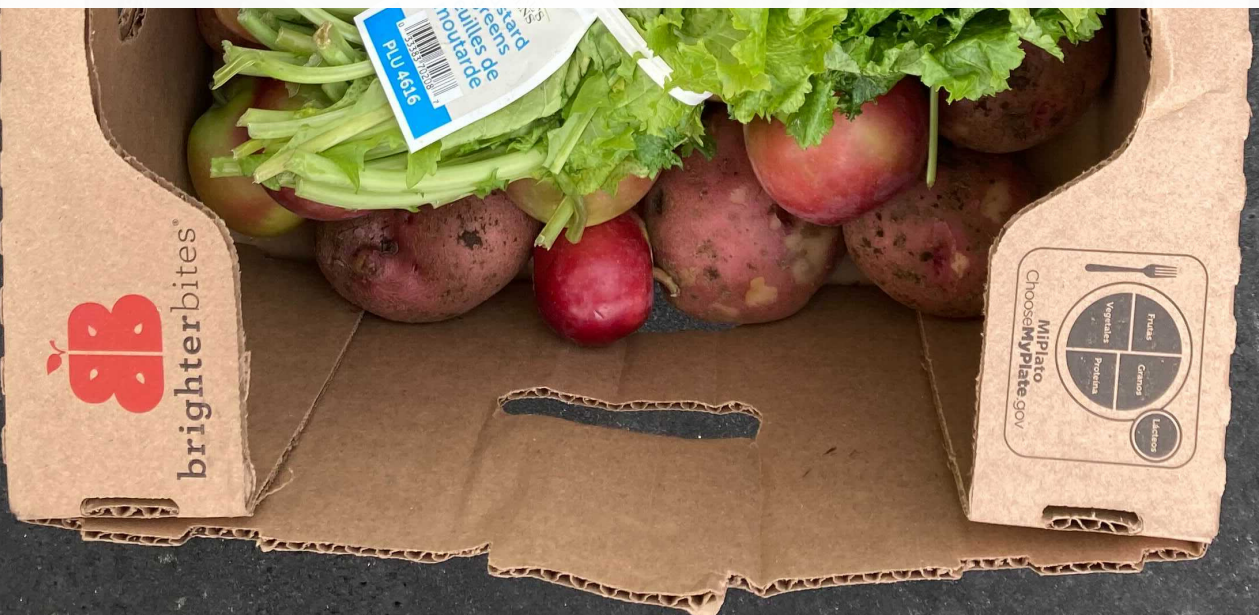
*-Bruce Taylor, Chair and CEO of Taylor Farms*





..... A Look Back at 2020 .....

Determined  
Flexibility Wholesome  
Unexpected Accomplishments  
***Resilient***  
Innovation Rollercoaster  
Pivot







..... A Look Forward to 2021 .....

Equity Normalcy Emerge  
Hopeful Engaging  
Game-changing Well-being  
New-levels  
***Growth***  
Flourish Goals  
Model Promising Prosper  
**Open-minded**







**brighterbites<sup>®</sup>**

.....

*The better we nourish,  
the brighter we flourish.*

.....