Are you willing to give up four hours of twittering? Or watching TV? Or Face booking? Join the effort of planting a row for the hungry. What is this movement all about? One of my most favorite forefathers of this county, Benjamin Franklin explains what the movement hopes to accomplish: “Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn.” Becoming involved is the key. Once you are involved, life experience becomes the teacher.

PAR or Plant a Row for the Hungry was launched in 1995 by the Garden Writers Association asking gardeners to plant and donate an extra row of produce for the greater good in support of food relief in neighborhoods, cities and counties nationwide. The community gardens in the Golden Plains Area are asking for gardeners to step forward and grow that extra row or space in any of the following gardens: Holyoke, Burlington, Akron or Sedgwick.

Out of the 84 million households in the United States, will you be the one that joins us in this effort? You would be helping the most vulnerable citizens and the food agencies. By joining in this commitment you would be “Harvesting Hope” as stated by the Garden Writers Association.

Think about a time in your life when you had to stretch your dollars because some unforeseen turn of events in your life created a loss of abundance? You may have received help during that time from neighbors, family or total strangers. Come share in the gift of giving food abundance to someone else. If you have the talent and love of gardening or even if, you just want to help in the process of planting, watering, weeding, harvesting and/or distributing, and/or creating a Farmer’s Market, the community gardens welcome you.

If you can’t donate time, can you donate fresh seeds to be planted? Can you donate garden tools that can still do the job? Can you volunteer school age students who are dependable and committed for the growing season who want to learn and share while fulfilling community service time?

A staggering number of 33 million people including 13 million children live in households that experience hunger or the risk of hunger according to the Garden Writers Association. This represents one in ten households in the United States. That takes my breath away. How about you?

I know that so many of you are so talented in different aspects of gardening from novice to expert. We invite those of you who have different gardening techniques to come out and share. We are asking for those of you who have wonderful recipes to share with people who don’t know how to cook the food they are given. Others of you have great recipes for preserving food. But sharing is the key. Collectively we can act together giving what we can do best to help these families through their tough time. So come out to your local community garden. Call one of the following local contacts: Colorado Master Gardener, Lisa Brewer at Burlington Community Garden, Colorado Master Gardener, Lora Bierman at Ovid Community Garden, Colorado Master Gardener, Jessica Filla at Akron Community Garden and Linda Langelo at Holyoke Community Garden and general information.

Bring your extra cucumbers or tomatoes you have and join in the local farmers’ markets in Burlington, Akron or Yuma. For further information on the farmers’ markets or to be a vendor, please contact Linda Langelo at Phillips County Extension Office at (970)854-3616.

Consider that hunger can lead to poor and substandard diets leading to disease. A family with a lack of food abundance may be forced to give up a meal or eat processed food or canned goods which may be the only EMERGENCY FOOD they can get. I am asking you to offer them fresh food, locally grown and invite a friend or family that you know to come out and share in your talent of gardening, cooking or preserving. Let us, who have the
knowledge or skill, help those who don’t or think they can’t. In doing so, we have given the best gift of all, teaching permanent food abundance no matter what life brings. And above all, you can make a permanent change in your community by sharing your gifts with someone in need. By doing so, you may end up with lasting friendships or in the very least, giving someone else sustenance to feed their soul.

For more information visit [www.ext.colostate.edu](http://www.ext.colostate.edu).

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Colorado State University Extension is your local university community connection for research-based information about natural resource management; living well through raising kids, eating right and spending smart; gardening and commercial horticulture; the latest agricultural production technologies and community development. Extension 4-H and youth development programs reach more than 90,000 young people annually, over half in urban communities.