

Chair Person Clem, Vice Chairpersons McLain and Post and committee members,

Thank you for allowing us to join you today. I am Brent Neilsen, and I am joined by my partner Ron Hays.

All you have to do is to look at the format of today's meeting to recognize that we are living through an unprecedented period of change.

Ron and I have created a company with the goal of bringing innovative, disruptive ideas to the non-profit world emphasizing collaboration and moving multiple organizations forward together to address big issues.

As we develop projects our starting point is to consider the large multidimensional challenges we face, and then to identify where different partners are addressing different dimensions of the issue.

Today, we wanted to share with you one of our projects.

We know every county in Oregon faces hunger and poverty issues.

We know there are challenges around unemployment and workforce development.

We know urban areas suffer from food deserts, and that there is an unfortunate consistency that leads us to give the least to those who have the least.

We are expanding on a model developed by Lotus House Shelter in Miami, Florida. Lotus House uses a Containerized Hydroponic farm system to provide nutritionally dense greens and vegetables into their clientele while also using the growing process as a science classroom for children in their program.

There are an amazing number of ways that these greenery systems can help organizations accomplish their missions.

Whether it is as a purely commercial model that helps replace funding,

a food production model that provides hyper local nutritionally dense produce, or

if it is based around a hands-on learning environment for children or workforce training.

A purely Commercial model produces micro greens for sale either to grocers or in a CSA in order to augment an organization's funding stream.

A food production model could either provide nutritious greens for internal or external consumption.

Perhaps the most exciting use to me personally is as an engine for education or workforce development.

Potential curriculum could start with young children tending the farm planting seeds,

older children could observe and study a whole crop cycle from seed to harvest,

eventually they could progress to advanced agricultural science experimenting with the optimum mix between red and blue light and what other factors impact healthy growth. Operating in this environment takes science learning and puts it right in front of the student where they can observe success based on the health of the crop.

Our personal involvement is bringing the capital asset into the community. Our current model developed in partnership with United Way of the mid-Willamette valley, anticipates United Way retaining ownership of the farms. This protects the asset should the host non-profit face future issues, or change their focus. In that situation farms could be relocated to another non-profit with minimal cost (approx. \$10,000) to disconnect, move, and reconnect.

Our current focus is on raising \$1,000,000 to cover the purchase, delivery and installation of six farms, we have already spoken with multiple organizations interested in hosting one or multiple farms.

Our initial focus has been in the Mid-Willamette valley, this is really for two reasons. First, the area is home, equally strong however is the recognition that

the Willamette valley provides a mix of urban and rural settings. It allows us to address many of the urban issues such as nutritional poverty while also being able to work in an area of agricultural bounty.

We believe this is a model that can be replicated around the state and plan to create a guidebook of best practices.

Recognizing that we have limited time today we have provided links to reference information.

A few I would like to draw your attention to are item #1 which provides a good overview of the Greenery system, and Item #6 which identifies the types of crops that can be grown. Additional links include examples of other organizations around the country using these farms, and a Video Webinar with the folks at Lotus House in Miami, Florida. Lotus House has implemented much of what we discuss, and we have already reached out to them for advice and mentorship.

We believe this can be a statewide model, and are eager to work together to prove this concept.

There are many areas we could do a much deeper dive into, but again respecting our limited time we'd like to invite any questions.