

NEWSTRACKER: GENEROUS GARDENERS ADD 211 AND IPHONE APP CONTACTS

WHAT'S NEW? AmpleHarvest.org, the national organization that matches backyard gardeners and their excess produce with local food pantries, now has two new features: It lists United Way's resources and it can be accessed, free, through iPhone and iPod Touch.

Specifically, the organization provides United Way's 211 Web resources, a network of free and confidential information on state and local health and human services including food, shelter, medical care and counseling services.

The AmpleHarvest iPhone app, a free download from App Store, will use the GPS built into the iPhone (or manually entered location for iPod Touch users) to display a Google map marking all the registered food pantries in the area.

Detailed pantry data such as contact information, address, and days and times the pantry can accept donations will be shown.

BACKGROUND: West Milford resident Gary Oppenheimer started a small program to have local gardeners donate extra produce to area food pantries in 2008. He saw how much was left to rot when

backyard gardeners couldn't eat or give it all away to friends and family. In a year, the plan morphed into a national grass-roots effort.

More than 1,800 food pantries are now participating in all 50 states, with many of these charities starting to list other items also needed desperately.

"The original intent ... was to enable gardeners across America to easily find a local food pantry eager for their excess garden bounty," Oppenheimer said. "However, when some food pantries started using AmpleHarvest.org to list store-bought items they urgently needed, it became clear that they saw value in the site not only to connect them with local gardeners but with the general community at large."



CHRIS PEDOTA/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Gary Oppenheimer started the AmpleHarvest program.

WHAT'S NEXT? The iPhone app is available from a link at www.AmpleHarvest.org/iPhone.php or directly from the Apple iPhone App Store. Contact AmpleHarvest.org at www.AmpleHarvest.org or by phone, AMPLE-6-9880 (267-536-9880).

— Barbara Williams

