1. Leket Express – a new venture in pilot stage. This mobile food pantry truck will deliver fresh produce to populations that do not have infrastructure to support regular Leket distribution through nonprofit agencies.
2. Rescue of 18 million apples – a partnership forged by Project Leket, Bereshit (the Apple Cooperative Society) and KANAT (the Agricultural Insurance Company). Leket has already started distributing apples estimated to total at the end of the program at 3,000 tons (6.6 million lbs.). Fresh, nutritious apples just in time for Rosh Hashanah. These apples were aesthetically damaged by a hailstorm but are perfectly edible. Marketing materials will be distributed with the apples, explaining food rescue and recipes, all in 3 languages – Hebrew, Arabic and Russian.
3. Leket Briut; Nutrition Education Project – A program, led by Smadar and Moran in partnership with Ariel University, educating students in select schools on the importance of eating fruit and vegetables. The families receive bi-monthly packages of fresh, rescued produce from Leket Israel. The program is currently run in 5 schools with a waiting list for next year.
4. Replacing Leket COO – In the first half of the year, Irit left Leket Israel and Tamar Brener joined as the new COO. Tamar brings with her extensive Logistics knowledge and substantial management experience.
5. Change in Organizational Structure – In order to enhance and advance the organization’s productivity, an organizational restructuring was undertaken. As a result, two members of the management team were promoted to VP level. Additionally, a new structure of direct reporting to the CEO was implemented in order to consolidate overlapping activities and have less managers’ report to the CEO.
6. Project Leket Surpasses Goal – as of the end of August 2023, Project Leket has surpassed its goal to date, on the way to rescuing over 30,000 tons (66m lbs.) of agricultural produce by the end of 2023.
7. Leket to Table – Meal Rescue, Surpasses Goal – as of the end of August 2023, Leket to Table has surpassed its goal to date on the way to rescuing 2 million meals by the end of 2023.
8. SKYLEKET Satellite Project – after a year of collaboration with Code for Israel, led by Efrat, we have developed a software that identifies, via satellite, agricultural land where produce is harvest ready. This program aids us in being able to identify rescuable food before it is destroyed.
9. Paul’s Retirement and the Reorganization of the Overseas Resource Development Department – In June this year, after 19 years of service to Leket Israel, Paul Leiba retired. We divided his position into two different positions focusing on different aspects of Paul’s position. Rosie Miller was promoted to Grants and Donor Relations Manager. She manages Abi Singer, a grant writer, and is responsible for writing all the grant requests, reports and donor correspondence as well as overseeing all grant proposals. Rechelle Hochhauser was hired as the Development Operations Manager to manage the financial issues of fundraising including analyzing the market. Additionally, she will now oversee fundraising knowledge management. Together with Deena, who was promoted to VP of Overseas PR & Development, they hold all the responsibilities that Paul oversaw.
10. Soup Project and Cooked Vegetables – the soup project will continue this coming year. This project has expanded to include cooked vegetables, beet, cabbage & onion and more. This initiative prioritizing the elderly populations delivered 520,000 units of pints sized containers of soup, or TV dinner style containers of cooked vegetables.
11. Leket Live – the 5th annual Leket Live Mission celebrated 20 years of Leket Israel with a wonderful two day behind the scenes look at Leket Israel’s food rescue operations. We were joined by dozens of large donors, board members, three representatives of food banks from around the world, the President of GFN and our regional coordinator.
12. Established the Leket Presenters Forum – A group of employees recently completed a workshop aimed at enhancing their public speaking and storytelling abilities. This training was focused on equipping them with the skills necessary to effectively present the story of Leket when called upon to do so in various situations.
13. Leket Ambassador Program – Leket has provided training to numerous students across different schools, focusing on crucial subjects such as sustainability, environmental conservation, nutrition, and Leket Israel's food rescue initiatives. These educational efforts have been carried out in collaboration with The Administration of Settlement Education (no political affiliation). The primary objective of this initiative is to empower students to educate their peers about Leket's vital mission and to cultivate a new generation of advocates for the cause.
14. Farmer Appreciation Project – under the leadership of Anat Hatuel, regional celebratory events were hosted, in conjunction with local municipal councils. The aim was to show Leket Israel’s appreciation for our partners in the farming community. Each farmer received the Leket Tree Statue and a letter of recognition.
15. 52,000 volunteers – 52,000 volunteers volunteered with Leket Israel for over 100,000 hours, in the fields or in the Logistics Center. The volunteers were both local and from around the world. Aside from their invaluable assistance, they are also our most important ambassadors, sharing the work of Leket Israel and their positive experience led by our volunteer and logistics departments. They are also, all potential donors.
16. Submitted 300 formal grant requests this year to federations, foundations, and private donors each uniquely curated according to the needs of the funder. Paul led this to his retirement in June, since then Rosie picked up the writing and with some support from Abi (new recruit for grant writing) and is leading the way.
17. What a Waste! Campaign – a national media campaign, featuring Israeli actress and comedian, Nelly Tagar. promoting Leket Israel’s partnership with the farming community.
18. Endowment Fund – two years ago we established an endowment fund which is held by the Jewish Federation of MetroWest, NJ. This functions as an economic tool that will generate future income for Leket Israel.
19. Citibank – In a collaboration between the Israel Resource Development Department and the grant writing section of the Overseas Resource Development Department, we submitted a proposal and were granted a significant donation from Citibank Global. We are one of only 11 beneficiaries worldwide, and the only one from Israel.
20. NIS 505,000 donation – Maya successfully converted a NIS 100,000 donor to NIS 505,000 over the course of a few phone calls.
21. President’s Climate Forum – a cross disciplinary forum established by President Isaac Herzog, with the goal of discussing issues and potential solutions to climate change. Ravit is Leket Israel’s representative at the forum relating to food and food security.
22. Meetings with 21 Members of Knesset and GMs of government ministries including an appearance at the Shas party meeting. The meeting led to a second meeting with the Minister of Welfare, who is working to introduce fruit and vegetables as a criteria for welfare support and as a stand-alone option of support.
23. Financial Statements – as is the case every year, Leket’s financial statements were released in July. The reports indicate positive economic and operational performances and continued development of the organization.
24. Information and Privacy Protection – In accordance with developments in the cyber world, Leket Israel is committed to protecting the organization and our stakeholders so that confidential information is guarded according to strict laws and best practice. This undertaking has been in-depth, ongoing, and requires a large investment, which is part of the cost of doing business.
25. New Gift Site – after a year and a half of development we are proud to announce our new ecommerce website. Initially the site will only sell our Ecards but down the road we will use it to “sell” additional items. It is already in use this Rosh Hashanna campaign.
26. Leket’s 7th Annual Food Waste and Rescue Report – last November, the 7th Annual Food Waste and Rescue Report was written by BDO and published, for the third time, in collaboration with the Ministry of Environmental Protection. The Report, with the help of globally accepted measurement tools, examines the governmental steps in OECD countries to implement policy tools to reduce food waste. The Report received excellent press exposure in both English and Hebrew, despite being released during the elections in Israel.
27. The Atlas Report – written by the Harvard University Food and Law Clinic in collaboration with Leket and the Global FoodBanking Network, the Atlas Report was published in June and revealed at an event held at the Leket Logistics Center and supported by the Ministry of Environmental Protection. The Report analyzes food donation laws and policies in Israel as compared to other OECD countries and provides recommendations on how Israeli leaders can reduce food waste, alleviate hunger, and mitigate climate change.
28. MENA2050 – as part of Leket’s focus on sustainability, we joined a new sustainability organization for Middle Eastern and North African countries. The goal is to learn and share best practices on food rescue and environmental protection issues in the region. Leket Israel is the only organization actively working in the field.
29. Abu Dhabi Conference – Leket Israel was invited to a conference in Abu Dhabi on the topics of climate change and environmental protection. At this conference, excellent international connections were made which brought Leket Israel to the forefront of food rescue as part of the solution to climate change. A striking and important relationship was made with Dr. Hakima Al Haiati, former Moroccan Minister of Environmental Protection who also joined us for Leket Live.
30. Global FoodBanking Network’s Food Bank Leadership Institute – After a break, due to the Corona pandemic, GFN hosted its annual conference, this year in Mexico. At the conference, we presented at panels on topics of rescuing cooked food and agricultural harvest. We also learned about carbon credits and how we can utilize them.
31. Mana Agreement – In the last few weeks, Leket Israel signed a partnership agreement with Mana. Mana produces quality food and meat substitutions from fruit and vegetables. The intention is to expand the usage of the rescued produce which began with the production of soups. The goal of this partnership is to generate profit and donations.
32. Carbon Credit Agreement – In recent weeks, Leket Israel signed a contract with a Boston based company that will conduct an analysis of the potential for Leket Israel to sell carbon credits. We hope that in addition to the positive impact our food rescue operations have on the environment, this will also generate significant profits for year.
33. A bill passed a preliminary hearing – thanks to our strong relationships with various Members of Knesset, a private bill was submitted which passed its preliminary reading. This is an important step in the passing of new legislation. The bill obligates government contractors to donate their surplus food. We have 5 additional bills awaiting implementation.
34. Measure of Effectiveness – We are in the final stages of renewing our certification for the Midot Measure of Effectiveness. This is an important and necessary certification that shows the level of impact of the organization. This certification is required to be counted as members of Igul L’Tova (Round up for good) and is used as a resource development tool.
35. Webinars – this year there were 11 webinars for the public on various topics relating to health, nutrition, cooking tips and holiday preparation. Thousands of people registered for the zoom sessions in both Hebrew and English and signed up to receive Leket’s newsletter.