

100 on the table

WASTE NOT, WANT NOT

Know what? We throw away up to 40 percent of the food we buy.

Bite by bite, Waste Less Solutions is working to change that.

The United States puts about 80 billion pounds of food in the garbage every year. Food takes up more space in our landfills than anything else. Landfills account for about 20 percent of methane emissions.

That's disgusting.

Dana Williamson thinks so too. So she founded Waste Less Solutions, a nonprofit committed to making a significant reduction in food waste in Utah.

"We hear about it all the time," says Williamson. "Meat plants disposing of tainted meat, food shortages in grocery stores reflecting food wasted in the fields." While the mere existence of recycling bins has made us more aware of our garbage, most of us still throw away a lot of food. Restaurants and institutions throw away even more. Waste Less Solutions partnered with technology-based nonprofit Food Rescue US divert to our community's food waste to those who continually struggle with food insecurity, i.e., hungry people. In Utah, that's about 400,000 people.

"To date, we have saved over 216,000 meals—equivalent to providing three meals a day to over 72,000 individuals," says Williamson.

Small bites, that's what it takes.

"We are getting donors in the food industry, agencies that work to feed the hungry and volunteer rescuers who will deliver the food from donors to the receiving agencies. We educate consumers and food entities on the



issue and solutions, and we offer a food diversion program that engages our community to help rescue edible food and get it to those who are food insecure."

Waste Less certifies restaurants that are working with them, giving out a checklist of 10 things to do. The restaurant gets marketing promotions and good karma by being certified.

"We also want to teach consumers

about food waste—we're working on doing rescue from backyard gardens and encouraging people to take home food they don't eat in restaurants."

Like we said, small bites. Rico's, The Pago Group, The Downtown Farmers Market have all signed up.

Why not encourage your favorite restaurant to join the effort? wastelessolutions.org

PHOTO ADAM FINKLE