



The Food Project

2008-2009 ANNUAL REPORT



THE FOOD PROJECT INDEX
FISCAL YEAR 2008-2009 IN NUMBERS

Number of Food Project farms in urban neighborhoods: 7

Acres under cultivation in urban neighborhoods: 4

Number of Food Project farms in suburban communities: 3

Acres under cultivation in suburban communities: 36

Total number of youth employed through our Local Youth Programs: 142

Total number of hours Summer Youth Program participants worked on our farms: 19,695

Total number of hours Food Project youth worked at hunger relief organizations: 2,800

Number of children and teens participating in workshops at our Urban Learning Farm: 160

Number of volunteers who worked on our farms: 2,849

Total number of hours worked by farm volunteers: 11,064

Number of varieties of vegetables grown on our farms: 186

Pounds of vegetables harvested: 200,394

Pounds of vegetables donated to hunger relief organizations: 48,668

Number of households participating in our Community Supported Agriculture programs: 492

Number of farmers' markets in low-income neighborhoods where Food Project food was sold: 4

Number of farmers' markets where The Food Project facilitated and promoted SNAP/Food Stamp use: 14

Number of raised bed gardens constructed in Boston: 111

Number of college students participating in the Real Food Challenge network: 2,800

Number of recorded visits to The Food Project's website: 101,092

Total cost of operations for Fiscal Year 2009: \$3,280,258

Total amount spent on youth stipends: \$440,132

Total amount spent on youth transportation: \$38,056

Number of individual donors: 1,593

Number of institutional funders: 75

DEAR FRIENDS OF THE FOOD PROJECT:

Nature's rhythms—the cycle of the seasons—guide the activities of every farm. At The Food Project, our youth programs and community work follow the rhythm of the land. In early summer, as crops are just starting to come in, our year begins with the arrival of a new group of teenagers ready to work, learn and grow together. As the fertile days of summer give way to the frosts of autumn, and even as our farms rest for the winter, each season brings new challenges—and opportunities.

This past year was no different. With this report on our fiscal year ending June 30, 2009, we're proud to offer you a glimpse of how challenges were met and opportunities seized. Along the way you'll read how the lives of teenagers are transformed, how the produce grown on our farms in Boston, Beverly, Ipswich, Lincoln, and Lynn feeds local families from all walks of life, and how hundreds of youth and adults come together under the aegis of The Food Project to care for the land. You'll also learn through our financial report how our proactive actions in the past year buffered the shock of the rapid economic downturn. Like a farmer managing uncertain weather, The Food Project continues its vital work in uncertain times.

We've also taken a good look at our strategic vision and brought it more in line with the needs of this new world, emphasizing accessible and affordable locally grown food for communities too often overlooked. Via this realignment—along with the deep support of all those who care about our work and the remarkable commitment of our staff—we have emerged in very good shape and more relevant than ever.

Though nature's cycle is firm, the future, as always, remains unknown. Except in this way: we know that by continuing our work—with our youth, our communities, our volunteers, and with generous support from our donors—we can change lives for the better by creating the world we all want to live in. We are grateful for your partnership in this effort.

With sincere thanks,



Meg Coward

Chair, Board of Trustees



Margaret Williams

Executive Director

summer

Our farms bustle with activity
as youth and adults
work hard together.

OUR HEART IS SUMMER

Summer is the season at the heart of The Food Project, when our farms bustle with activity as youth and adults work hard together to tend and harvest crops and bring food to thousands of people from all walks of life.

In the summer of 2008, 91 young people from Boston, suburban communities, and throughout the North Shore began their experiences at The Food Project as crew workers in the SUMMER YOUTH PROGRAM. This program is our cornerstone, where teenagers come together to work on our urban and suburban farms, planting, cultivating, harvesting, and distributing fresh vegetables. They also grow as individuals and a community, with over 30 workshops on topics as varied as Diversity, Food Choices, and Personal Finance (many earn their first paychecks here). The teenagers involved with this program are an intentionally diverse group—an even mix of boys and girls, 60% coming from city neighborhoods, and about two-thirds people of color. For many youth, this is a powerful and unforgettable experience. Through hard work in a supportive, fertile community, youth transform themselves, strengthen communities, and build new bridges.

Our farmers' markets sold \$83,834 worth of produce in Fiscal Year 2009, largely in communities that lack easy access to fresh food. We aim to make farmers' markets accessible in historically underserved neighborhoods by keeping our prices income-appropriate. One-third of these sales were to customers using the Women Infants and Children (WIC) program and/or the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly Food Stamps). Along these lines, we partnered with the City of Boston to create the innovative BOSTON BOUNTY BUCKS. This program, modeled on the successful Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) promotion at our Central Square Farmers' Market in Lynn, encourages the use of SNAP via EBT at many farmers' markets by doubling the purchasing power of these transactions.

The Food Project's COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE program (CSA) is a partnership between our farms and over 450 households in eastern Massachusetts. CSA members purchase a share of our crops, generating over \$250,000 in revenue for the organization. In return, we supply fresh vegetables, flowers, and herbs once a week for 22 weeks. Shareholders enjoy locally grown produce for the entire length of the season and the satisfaction of knowing they are part of a local, sustainable food system.





The bright tastes of late summer crops
converge with the sweet flavors
of the fall and early winter harvests.

autumn

REAPING THE HARVEST

In autumn, the bright tastes of late summer crops converge with the sweet flavors of the fall and early winter harvests. It's the time of year when hard work pays off. It's also the time when young people return to school. This past year that meant the official launch of the REAL FOOD CHALLENGE.

The Real Food Challenge is a collaborative, student-driven campaign to change the food procurement policies of U.S. colleges and universities. The 2008 launch of this program represented the first step toward our major goal of 20% "real food" in college and university cafeterias by 2020. We define "real food" as food that is local, fair, ecologically sound, and humane. Momentum continues to build. The new campaign is now firmly established on campuses around the country, with more than 2,500 individuals at over 300 schools in our network.

Locally, nearly 50% of residents in Boston's low-income neighborhoods want to grow their own food, but much of the land is poisoned with lead. In our BUILD-A-GARDEN PROGRAM, teen interns build and install backyard raised-bed gardens for residents. They also provide the materials, resources, and training necessary for safe and productive urban gardening. During the course of the year, our staff and interns built 111 raised beds. Build-a-Gardeners reported that their new gardens strengthened friendships with their neighbors as they spent more time outside, sharing knowledge and helping one another. As a result, we are now working to distribute beds in neighborhood-based clusters throughout Boston and Lynn.

Although there isn't much farm work
to be done during a New England winter,
The Food Project's youth programs
don't stop.

WINTER

NO TIME TO HIBERNATE

Although there isn't much farm work to be done during a New England winter, The Food Project's youth programs don't stop. From September to May, our **ACADEMIC YEAR PROGRAM**—also known as the D.I.R.T. Crew (Dynamic, Intelligent, Responsible Teens)—gives teens an opportunity to build on what they learned during the Summer Youth Program.

Over two-thirds of our Summer Youth Program participants applied to become part of the 2008-2009 Academic Year Program. We hired 18 teenagers to work on the North Shore, and 23 in the Lincoln/Boston program. They honed their public speaking and leadership skills by instructing and leading over 700 community volunteers on our farmland. Program participants also prepared and presented an analysis of the 2008 season at our Roxbury and Lynn farmers' markets, worked with agricultural staff to craft the plan for our rooftop garden at the Boston Medical Center, and played key roles by recruiting and interviewing youth for the 2009 Summer Youth Program.

Teens in the Academic Year Program worked 1,400 cumulative hours in soup kitchens and food pantries in Boston and on the North Shore. This service was paired with workshops and conversations regarding the nature and root causes of the homelessness, hunger, and inequality they confronted in their work.

THE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM is our third-level youth program and is the culmination of many young peoples' hard work here as they take on leadership roles within the organization and in their communities. During the year, 45 interns worked at The Food Project. They acted as peer leaders within the organization and at our Urban Learning Farm workshops. They built raised-bed gardens for urban gardeners and helped to manage our farmers' markets and Community Supported Agriculture programs. They spoke with city and state officials to push for better school food. In the process, our interns continued to refine and expand their food system knowledge, public speaking ability, job readiness, and leadership skills.





The days grow longer and the first green shoots and sprouts peek out.

SPRING

YOUNG AND VIBRANT AND GROWING

The spring is a magical time in our fields as the days grow longer and the first green shoots and sprouts peek out. It's also a time for hard work, on our farms and in our communities. In the spring of 2009 we expanded our NORTH SHORE SITE, establishing two new farms, and our SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS flourished at our URBAN LEARNING FARM.

Through our School Partnerships, we worked with approximately 100 third and fourth graders from schools in Dorchester and Roxbury. Students attended a series of 14 workshops in the fall and the spring, illustrating the annual phases of the growing cycle. These classes take place at our Urban Learning Farm, an agricultural demonstration site located in the heart of Roxbury. Here, in the summer, we also host nearly 100 youth involved with partner programs in the community.

Our North Shore Site took on several exciting new expansion projects this spring:

- The Glen Urquhart School in Beverly restored a spectacular 7,000 square-foot greenhouse on their grounds and invited The Food Project to use half the space to start seedlings.
- A new quarter-acre farm near our office in downtown Lynn added precious urban farmland and created an inspiring public face in the heart of the city.
- Much of the spring was occupied with the planning and establishment of a new farm in Ipswich, made available to us by New England Biolabs, a local business with a deep commitment to sustainability. In March we began to prepare this land and market a new Community Supported Agriculture program. Unfortunately, this June and July were among the wettest and grayest on record, making our launch extremely difficult. Waterlogged soils were a persistent problem, seriously challenging both our crops and our teenaged farmers. Thankfully, the sandy soil on our Beverly farm at the Trustees of Reservations' Long Hill was well suited to this unusual weather, and our crops there thrived, yielding a bountiful harvest throughout the late summer and fall.

The impact of this work will continue to grow
for many years to come.

Year end

From a financial perspective, The Food Project's fiscal year ending June 30, 2009, was both challenging and validating. CHALLENGES included difficult weather, which affected our crop yields and thus our earned revenue, and the severe economic downturn. In the fall of 2008, as the economy spiraled into recession, it became clear that we would need to reassess our plans.

We took a number of actions to ensure programmatic impact and to keep the organization financially sound. Senior staff took a 5-10% pay cut, and four valued staff positions were eliminated. We initiated strategic partnerships with other community organizations whose values are aligned with ours and whose missions could be advanced through collaboration with The Food Project. We adjusted our summer schedule to create cost savings while lengthening a "post-season" farm apprenticeship for those teenagers who wanted to extend their work. We sought out and received public funding to cover some of our youth stipends.

VALIDATION came from you, our donors. Your support resulted in an increase, over fiscal year 2008, of \$186,000 in donations to support our work. This generosity, combined with careful control of our expenses, meant that we ended the year on solid footing with expenses in line with expectations, new collaborations bearing fruit, and a strong sense of our organizational priorities.

The charts on the next page show how The Food Project's expenditures of \$3.28 million in fiscal year 2009 were distributed among our various programs and activities, as well as the sources of those funds. It is important to note that demand for our programs continues to grow; The Food Project addresses critical needs in the Greater Boston area and on the North Shore. Through careful planning and focused action and, most importantly, with the support of our donors, the impact of this work will continue to grow for many years to come.

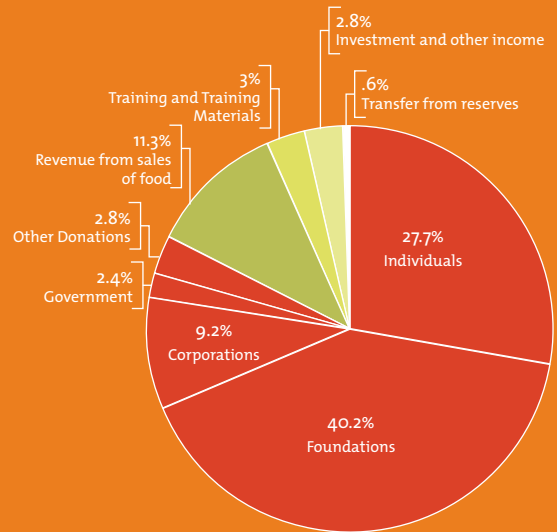
REVENUE 2008-2009

CONTRIBUTIONS

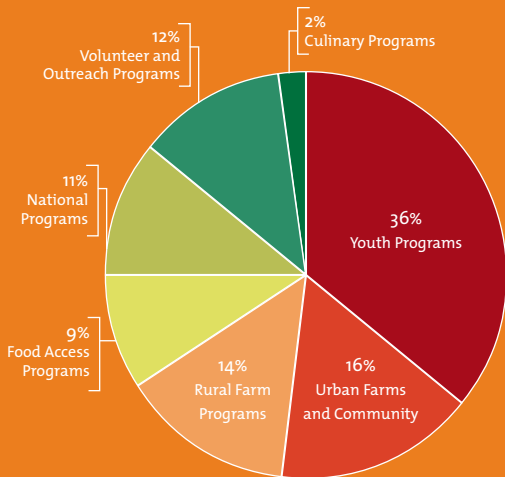
Individuals	907,862
Foundations	1,318,087
Corporations	302,674
Government	79,399
Other donations	92,200

OTHER REVENUE

Revenue from sales of food	370,115
Trainings and training materials	97,797
Investment and other income	93,316
Transfer from reserves	18,808
TOTAL	3,280,258



EXPENSES 2008-2009



Youth Programs	1,201,731
Urban Farms and Community Agriculture Programs	518,912
Rural Farm Programs	456,037
Food Access Programs:	
Farmers' Markets and Hunger Relief	303,564
National Programs	357,251
Volunteer and Outreach Programs	380,193
Culinary Programs	62,570
TOTAL	3,280,258

Data is represented in a modified cash basis, and based on unaudited financial statements.

Indirect costs are allocated to program areas based on the size of each program.

The Food Project's donors make our work possible. The following pages contain the names of many of our individual and institutional supporters, and we thank them for their commitment to making the world a better place by supporting this organization. While we do not have room in this publication to print the names of all of our supporters, every gift, of every size, makes a real difference and means a great deal to the youth and the communities The Food Project serves.

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The Graney, Provost and Woodward Families			

GIFTS WERE MADE IN MEMORY OF:

Marjorie Spencer
Margaret Hill

SERVE AND GROW

The following organizations brought groups of volunteers to our farms during the course of the year to work in the fields – planting, weeding, harvesting and preparing food for distribution. The hard work and care of these volunteers help our farms be both productive and joyful places, and we thank all of them.

Advent School	Essex County Garden Club	National Grid	South Asian Bar Association
Agassiz Baldwin Community	Excel Academy Charter School	Neighborhood Schools, Inc	SquashBusters
Bank of America	Fenway High School	New American Center	Starbucks Coffee Company
Beaver Country Day School	First Church in Jamaica Plain	New Balance Athletic Shoes	State Street Bank
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Boston University FYSOP	Goldman Sachs	Oak Meadow Montessori School	United States Army Reserve, 411th CA BN
Boston University Hunger Relief	Gordon College	Old North Church	University of Massachusetts Boston
Boston University School of Public Health	Goulston & Storrs	Phillips Academy	W.S. Parker Middle School
Brandeis University	Grand Circle Foundation	Pleasant Street Congregational Church	Walpole High School
Brookwood School	Green Apple Festival	Princeton Project 55	Warren/Prescott K-8 School
Cambridge School of Weston	Harvest Co-op Markets	Putnam Investments	Wellesley College
Center for Public Interest at Harvard College	Haverford Alumni Association	R.J. Grey Junior High School	Wellesley Congregational Church
Chapel Hill-Chauncy Hall School	Heifer Project International	Root Capital	WellPoint
Charlestown High School	Intuit	St. Ann's Home	Weston High School
Collins Middle School	Jewish Family Services of the North Shore	St. Bartholomew Church	The Winsor School
Commonwealth of Massachusetts	Jonas Clarke Middle School	Saint Susanna Parish	YMCA Teen Center of Gloucester
Crimson Summer Academy	Karuna School	Shore Country Day School	Zion Baptist Church
Eastern Bank	Landmark School	Showa Boston	
Electric Insurance Company	Marblehead Charter School	Single Volunteers of Boston	
	Massachusetts Institute of Technology	Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom	
	Massachusetts Academy of Math & Science	Social Venture Partners	
	Millis High School		
	Mount Saint Joseph Academy		
	My Turn		

GIFTS IN KIND

Throughout the year, individuals, corporations and other organizations contributed materials or services that helped The Food Project in myriad ways. Many thanks to all of those listed below.

b.good	Haley House	Not Your Average Joe's	Stop and Shop - Jamaica Plain
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We have attempted to be as accurate as possible in listing our donors. If you note any errors or omissions, please accept our apologies and let us know so that we can correct our records.

The belief that diversity creates a stronger and more compassionate world is at the heart of our work.

FINDING COMMON GROUND

Since its first season in 1992, The Food Project has been making a difference in a unique and compelling way. The belief that diversity creates a stronger and more compassionate world is at the heart of our work. By growing food together, teenagers and adults can bridge the acute divides that separate our communities. From our youth programs to our urban initiatives, The Food Project demonstrates what is possible. Here is just one example from the past year.

Dorchester and Concord, just twenty miles from each other, are culturally and economically worlds apart. In the normal course of events, Kira Rogers (from Dorchester) and Jacob Addelson (from Concord), would be unlikely friends—even unlikely acquaintances. They attend different schools, their circles of friends didn't overlap, and they live in very different neighborhoods. Yet today they are the best of friends.

At The Food Project, Jacob and Kira found common ground—by farming on it.

Kira joined the Summer Youth Program in 2006 when she was 14. She worked on the farms, planting, weeding, harvesting, and preparing vegetables for the market, as part of a crew of ten youth. She not only got to know her fellow crew members, but really connected with them. "I started The Food Project with the goal of making money," Kira explains, "but I stayed because of all the friends I made." She's been with The Food Project ever since, working in D.I.R.T. Crew, as an intern, as a representative at national conferences, and as an Assistant Crew Leader.

In 2008, Jacob Addelson heard about The Food Project. Farm work was new to him although, unlike Kira, he grew up in a town where farms are still common. He was curious about the farm, but was mostly interested in getting a summer job—he quickly discovered that this was much more. Working alongside people with vastly diverse life experiences and perspectives, he learned that he had more in common with them than he ever could have imagined. When he continued his work through the academic year, Kira was his Assistant Crew Leader, and they hit it off right away. Today, Jacob says that "she's probably the best friend I made at The Food Project."

Although Kira and Jacob are no longer working together, they stay in touch, and expect they will for a long time. They know that people from different backgrounds aren't necessarily all that different.



Kira Rogers and Jacob Addelson

FARE WELL, DEAR FRIENDS

With every new season comes change: we make new friends, and old friends take new paths.

In June, after 18 years at The Food Project, founding staff member GREG GALE left to pursue new



directions. Greg has worn many hats at The Food Project and played a key role in shaping our vision, our culture, and our programs. We will miss him in the office and in the fields, and we're excited for him as he begins work as an Associate Director at

Visions, Inc., a diversity and multiculturalism training organization that The Food Project has worked with for many years.

A number of our key board members also departed in 2009. After seven years of service, Board Chair SUSAN DONAHUE concluded her last term, as did KATE DEYST, who previously served as our Board Chair for many years. The impact of this pair is immeasurable, and we are very grateful for their tenure. We also want to thank ALEX GOLDBERG, CATHY HUGHE, JAHERA OTIENO, and youth trustee MICHAEL VELING for their invaluable service on the Board of Trustees.

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The Food Project's mission is to create a thoughtful and productive community of youth and adults from diverse backgrounds who work together to build a sustainable food system. Our community produces healthy food for residents of the city and suburbs, provides youth leadership opportunities, and inspires and supports others to create change in their own communities.



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