



The Food Project

2010-2011 ANNUAL REPORT

THE FOOD PROJECT INDEX
FISCAL YEAR 2010-2011 IN NUMBERS

Number of Food Project farms in Boston & Lynn: 6

Number of Food Project farms in suburban communities: 3

Total acreage of Food Project farms: 40

Number of youth employed through our Local Youth Programs: 141

Total number of hours Food Project youth devoted to doing the work of TFP: 26,481

Total number of hours Food Project youth worked at hunger relief organizations: 3,537

Number of full-time year-round Food Project staff: 31

Number of volunteers who worked on our farms: 2,989

Total number of hours worked by farm volunteers: 9,690

Number of varieties of vegetables grown on our farms: 204

Pounds of vegetables harvested: 288,300

Pounds of produce donated or sold to improve food access in low-income neighborhoods: 77,150

Number of households participating in our Community Supported Agriculture programs: 583

Number of Boston & Lynn farmers' markets where The Food Project facilitated & promoted SNAP/food stamp use: 23

Number of raised-bed gardens constructed in Boston & on the North Shore: 320

Number of college students participating in the Real Food Challenge network: 12,000

Number of colleges and universities in the Real Food Challenge network: 358

Total cost of operations for fiscal year 2011: \$3,944,557

Total amount spent on youth stipends and transportation: \$488,700

Number of individual donors: 1,520

Number of institutional funders: 156

TO FRIENDS OF THE FOOD PROJECT:

As we write this, The Food Project has already embarked on our 20th year. From our origins as a small project of Drumlin Farm in Lincoln, Massachusetts, the organization has grown, encompassing youth, food, and community in an intertwined suite of programs in sites across eastern Massachusetts. In our two decades of work, TFP has played a leading role in youth development, sustainable agriculture, and raising awareness of the importance of “real food” – by which we mean fresh, locally grown food that nourishes consumers, producers, and the earth.

From this awareness has sprung a movement, one that grows in force and reach with every passing year. Within it, The Food Project will continue to lead, drawing on the power of the innovations we’ve been making since the planting of that first seed. In the coming years, we will combine our work with youth and in sustainable farming with a holistic, multidimensional approach to making real food more accessible and affordable for communities facing the greatest obstacles to obtaining it.



That The Food Project stands poised to push the movement for real food in new and exciting directions is a credit to our dedicated staff and their commitment. In the pages of this annual report, you’ll read about the most recent impacts they helped make, on people, in communities, and on the earth. For nearly four years, this extraordinary group of individuals was led by former Executive Director Margaret Williams, who left TFP earlier this fall. We are grateful for the energy and passion she brought to guiding TFP into the new phase of our work and wish Margaret the best as she embarks on new endeavors.

We are also grateful to the individuals and institutions whose generosity makes The Food Project possible. We regard all of you as investors in our vision and partners in our efforts to make real food a reality for everyone. We look forward to our ongoing partnership.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Eugene Benson in black ink.

Eugene Benson
Chair, Board of Trustees

Handwritten signature of Jessica Brooks in black ink.

Jessica Brooks
Former chair, Board of Trustees

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PREPARING THE SOIL

SMARTER LAND MANAGEMENT WILL ENSURE LINCOLN FARM'S SUSTAINABILITY

Spanning 31 acres, The Food Project's farm in Lincoln, Mass. is by far the largest of our growing sites. Since we started farming here in 1998, the farm has produced annual yields averaging 190,000 pounds of vegetables. From summer and winter squashes to tomatoes, potatoes, and other nightshades, this output has been characterized by variety and volume – an achievement that's all the more impressive when you consider the farm's soil qualities.

"It is very sandy, which means it drains quickly," says Pedro Ghirotti, the newest member of TFP's farming staff. This makes the soil better to work with in a rainy year, and more challenging in dry seasons. For The Food Project, the soil's sandiness provides an important benefit: it makes the land suitable for working with lots of people, even in the rain, without damaging the soil's structure or compacting it. Tim Laird, TFP's director of agriculture, observes, "This makes the land a terrific platform for youth development and volunteer programming. But it lacks the nutrients and organic matter that plants need to thrive and yield bountifully."

The good news is that through proper management, even sandy soil can be coaxed into greater productivity. Our resident soil expert, Pedro hails from Brazil and joins us after earning his master's degree in horticulture at Michigan State University. He is leading TFP's efforts to care for the land under our stewardship, devising a management plan that features intensive cover cropping, larger-scale rotations, and aggressive efforts to increase fertility.

"Cover cropping," Pedro explains, "is simply the planting of crops – like grasses and certain legumes – not intended to be eaten," in plots of land marked for rest and recovery. For example, "we might plant some oats, let them grow to about two feet, then mow them and turn them over back into the soil." Cover cropping affords many benefits. By adding organic matter to the soil, its ability to capture carbon and its microbial activity, which is essential for cycling nutrients from the soil to plants, are enhanced. While it's covered, the soil is protected from the rain, sun, and erosion.

We also plan to rotate more of the land into fallow periods. Presently, TFP grows on 19 of the 26 acres available for growing, leaving the other 7 under cover crops. The goal is to reach a ratio of 60 percent in production and 40 percent at rest in five years. In order to get there, improving soil fertility by composting is critical. Indeed, composting on ever larger scales is a key element of our soil management plan. (Just this past season, farm staff applied 780,000 pounds of high-quality compost to all 26 acres, thanks to a generous donation from Brick Ends Farm.)

The real key, Pedro says, lies in our attitude toward the land under our care. "It's critical to look beyond production goals, as important as they are," he says. "Especially given our commitment to sustainability, we need to make the best decisions in planting, rotations, and composting." These steps will ensure that the heart of The Food Project's farming efforts thrives as a platform for learning and growing well into our next two decades. With Pedro's leadership, we are doing just that.





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that Food Project youth experience
in their work with us.

SOWING SEEDS

TFP YOUTH INTERNS TEACH AND INSPIRE PEERS AND ADULTS

Food Project Interns Anika Whitmore and Simon McIntosh are leading an interactive workshop about the high sugar content in popular drinks. With a little coaching from them, Stephen Siv, a 17-year-old from Lynn, Mass., successfully lines up nine different juices, sodas, and iced teas, in order from least to most sugary.

Simon asks his audience, a youth group from KAYA (a community organization serving Cambodian families), why taking in so much sugar is unhealthy. When no one responds, he reminds everyone that the rush of energy from drinking soda is temporary, “leading to crashes that make you feel even worse.”

Pointing to the most sugary beverage, Anika says, “This drink [an iced tea beverage popular among teens] has 20 teaspoons of sugar!” The looks on the KAYA youths’ faces suggest, “So what?” This is when Simon pulls out a clear jar filled with that same 20 teaspoonfuls. “It means you’re taking in all this sugar,” he says, waving the jar in front of them. “How’d you feel about eating just this sugar?” Cries of “ew!” and “gross!” echo through the room. This time, their message hits the mark.

This past year, under the banner of *Food for Thought ... and Action*, Food Project interns presented workshops like this one throughout Boston and the North Shore, reaching nearly 1,000 youth and adults. In addition to sessions about sugary drinks, the *Food for Thought ... and Action* workshops compare the industrial food system to local models of production, examine the situation of workers in the food system, and explain why it’s important to eat fresh, locally grown food. Intended to inform and inspire people to take action, the workshops are a natural outgrowth of the learning and discovery that Food Project youth experience in their work with us.

“It’s a culmination of all that we’ve learned here,” says Alex Nordquist, another TFP intern. “The workshops are a way to take what we know about the food system and eating healthy and present them using the skills that we’ve been trained in since the first day of SYP [Summer Youth Program].”

Youth participation in the *Food for Thought ... and Action* workshops began well before the first session was presented. True to TFP’s belief in youth leaders, interns were engaged in the design of the workshops, from selecting topics to determining sequence and length.

“That’s just the way John [Wang, TFP’s intern program coordinator] works with us,” Anika says. “This project has really been a joint effort between him and all the interns.”

By most measures, the first year of the *Food for Thought ... and Action* workshops was a runaway success. As the project moves into its second year, greater focus will be placed on increasing – and measuring – audience impact. Through it all, TFP youth will continue to play big roles, as they demonstrate over and over that they are some of the most effective advocates of food system change.

CULTIVATING COMMUNITY

DUDLEY GREENHOUSE OFFERS A PLACE FOR NEIGHBORS TO COME TOGETHER

When asked what “community” means, some people might mention places. For others, it’s the people living there. For Dorchester resident Brother Rumas, it also means relationships between people gathered in a particular place and the sharing that happens when individuals come together around a common task and purpose – in this case, gardening. A stalwart of community involvement, Brother Rumas has seen all these dynamics at play in the Dudley Greenhouse, the newest urban growing project undertaken by The Food Project.

A partnership between TFP and the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative, the Dudley Greenhouse on Brook Avenue connects the neighborhoods of Roxbury and Dorchester. Sitting on the former site of an abandoned auto garage, the greenhouse measures about 10,000 square feet. It’s organized into two main spaces. In the “enterprise bays,” TFP youth help grow produce to be sold at market rates to restaurants, with the goal of making the greenhouse financially self-sustaining. The “community bays” are devoted to the benefit of local residents, and TFP is currently working with a community advisory committee to launch a partnership-based program that responds to local interests and needs and builds the capacity of community groups and neighborhood gardeners. In the meantime, neighbors were invited to garden in them this past spring and summer.

Brother Rumas, one of the inaugural greenhouse gardeners, is enthusiastic about the impact it’s already made on him. “[Gardening] is new to me,” he says. “The first thing I saw was the collards – how big, green, and lush they were, in such a short period of time! It makes you realize what life is really about, that it’s much more than what people perceive it to be.”

A longtime worker in shifting people’s perceptions, Brother Rumas shares a story about a group of kids he once took out to a farm. “We asked them where milk comes from, and they all said ‘the corner store!’” So, he continues, “people often don’t realize what food is about, even though they eat it every day.”

It’s for this reason – to show folks where food comes from – that he’s been inviting parents and their children to stop by and see his garden. “They’re amazed by what they see, by all the production that’s going on,” he says. “They help me harvest and I let them take what they want.”

According to Brother Rumas, this spirit of sharing also runs strong in his fellow gardeners and it’s only grown stronger through their learning from each other. “The beauty of this place is that everyone who’s here is someone who loves to share.” Yet, he also says that their strong sense of community wouldn’t have been possible without the energy and expertise of Danielle Andrews, TFP’s greenhouse manager.

“She’s wonderful,” Brother Rumas says of Danielle. “She’ll do anything and everything to help. Her heart is right, and she’s so interested in helping people.”

“That’s what it really takes in this society,” he says. “People willing to help and to do the hard work to make positive changes.”





“The beauty of this place is that everyone who’s here is someone who loves to share ... that’s what it really takes ... people willing to help and do the hard work to make positive changes.”



“[Eating vegetables] was not optional for me growing up, and it’s not optional for my children either. I tell them ‘you need to eat this to grow, you need this for life.’”

HARVESTING HEALTH FOR ALL

CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION DRIVE TFP'S PARTNERSHIPS

Making fresh, locally grown vegetables available to everyone has long been an important part of The Food Project's work. As early as 1992, we donated our entire first harvest to hunger relief organizations. More recently, we've worked to establish farmers' markets in underserved communities. We've also pioneered a coupon program that doubles the purchasing power of low-income customers at those and many other markets throughout Boston. In these and other projects, our efforts have been animated by creativity and marked by a ready willingness to try on new ideas, especially in forming partnerships with others.

This year, we took another step in our commitment to increasing access to healthy food by piloting our *Farm to Family* program, a twist on the now-familiar Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) model. Like CSAs, *Farm to Family* delivers weekly shares of vegetables straight from the farm for families to enjoy. What makes the program different is its emphasis on accessibility, in terms of affordability and location. Participating families pay only one third of the weekly cost of \$15, with the remaining two thirds subsidized by donations. Families pay on a monthly basis, instead of for the entire season, and have the option of paying with their SNAP benefits (formerly known as food stamps). As important, shares are delivered to places that are accessible because they already figure in the day-to-day lives of participating families.

One example is the Parker Hill Fenway Head Start Center, where Tonya Dunker regularly drops off and picks up her six-year-old son Kai. When she first heard about *Farm to Family*, she saw it as an affordable and convenient way to stretch her family's food budget. "I try to feed my family lots of fresh fruits and vegetables," she says, "and this seemed like a good way to help with that."

Having been raised to eat – and enjoy – vegetables herself, Tonya works hard to instill the same values and tastes in her family. "[Eating vegetables] was not optional for me growing up, and it's not optional for my children either," she says. "I tell them 'you need to eat this to grow, you need this for life.' It's important for parents to be firm about this and also to model it, to show their kids that vegetables taste good."

Similar to the experience of many CSA subscribers, Tonya sometimes received more vegetables than she could use in a given week. Whenever that happened, she gave them to friends and family. "I don't mind getting a little extra onions or peppers, because I'm happy to share," she says.

TFP's commitment to partnership led us to work with Healthy Kids, Healthy Futures, an early childhood obesity prevention initiative in Boston, in developing the *Farm to Family* model and setting up distribution at those locations. *Farm to Family* also distributes at community health centers. These places all serve people who face some of the greatest obstacles to accessing fresh, locally grown food. For Tonya's part, her strong awareness of the importance of eating healthy and her enthusiasm for the program show that she, too, is an important *Farm to Family* partner.

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

Our 2010-11 year was The Food Project's nineteenth. We are entering a new, more mature stage – transitioning, organizationally, from adolescence to adulthood. This was a year of outward-looking, community-focused growth, and it saw us continuing to strive for innovation while tending to established bodies of work with great care and long-term focus. Our most significant accomplishments include:

Being selected as one of 10 local host sites for the new national FoodCorps AmeriCorps program out of a field of 108 across the country. With our partners Cambridge-based CitySprouts and Boston Public Schools Food and Nutrition Services, we will harness the energies of young adult service members to build holistic healthy-food programming for children and families at schools in low-income neighborhoods of Lynn, Gloucester, and Boston.

Opening the Dudley Greenhouse as the site of youth-driven social enterprise and community food and agricultural learning (p. 6). The greenhouse is a true oasis, producing abundant vegetables, accomplished local gardeners, and a bumper crop of friendship, joy, and commitment. Dozens of youth and community members participated in our first year, and we aim to involve hundreds more in the seasons to come.

Securing long-term stewardship for the hugely successful Boston Bounty Bucks, which was piloted and tested with our partners in the Mayor's office. In 2012, the Boston Collaborative for Food and Fitness will take over day-to-day program management, allowing TFP to focus on devising the next generation of solutions to tackle obstacles to healthy, local food for all people. Our role in innovating, taking risks, and bringing successful models to scale has proven to be effective and valuable, and will continue to define our work going forward.

Launching a new community education program designed and delivered by Food Project youth

to highlight issues of food justice (p. 5). They spent the year developing workshops – *Food for Thought ... and Action* – to inform the public and motivate peers, and presented them to more than 800 people of all ages. Their audiences responded enthusiastically, and the word spread – we expect more than 1,500 people to participate this year!

Dramatically expanding the capacity of Mattapan, Dorchester, and Roxbury residents to grow their own food

as part of the Center for Disease Control's Communities Putting Prevention to Work initiative. These neighborhoods, which face the highest rates of diet-related chronic illness in Boston, have the most limited access to healthy food. Our youth and volunteers built lead-safe gardens for 246 households in these neighborhoods and provided them with seedlings, training, and support.

Launching a five-year effort to improve soil fertility

at our largest farm. Through annual incorporation of hundreds of tons of compost, along with aggressive cover cropping, we are working to increase the organic content of the soil on our sandy Baker Bridge farm in Lincoln (p. 2). These steps will help ensure that our agricultural practices remain robustly sustainable. Plans for each of our other farms will be drawn up this winter, with implementation to start in the spring of 2012.

These highlights were achieved alongside our ongoing work – intensive engagement and employment of more than 140 teenagers in year-round programming; growing and distributing more than a quarter of a million pounds of healthy, fresh food; and working in farmers' markets, food pantries, backyard gardens, community centers, schools, and many other places in eastern Massachusetts to help fulfill our vision of a world where good food is the norm and people and communities are truly connected to the land and to each other.

REVENUE 2010-2011

CONTRIBUTIONS

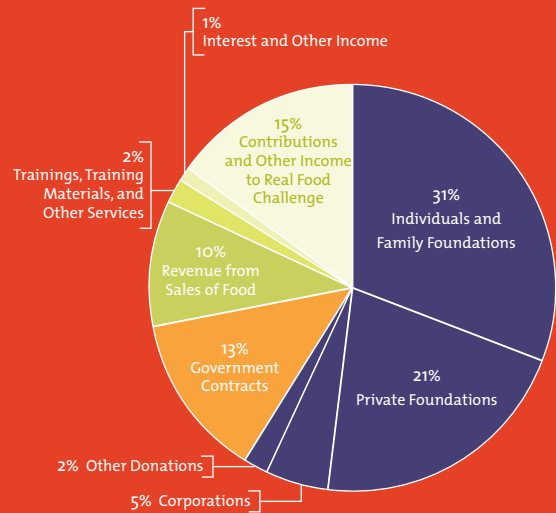
| | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|
| ■ Individuals and Family Foundations | 1,210,071 |
| ■ Private Foundations | 824,105 |
| ■ Corporations | 215,726 |
| ■ Other Donations | 81,992 |

| | |
|---------------------|---------|
| ■ GOVERNMENT GRANTS | 521,231 |
|---------------------|---------|

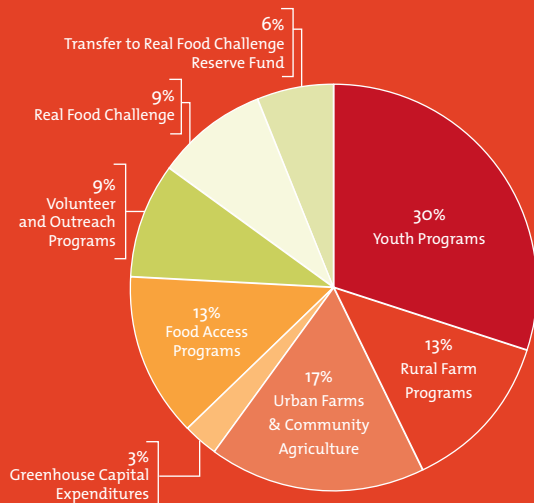
OTHER REVENUE

| | |
|---|---------|
| ■ Revenue from Sales of Food | 376,627 |
| ■ Trainings, Training Materials, and Other Services | 62,972 |
| ■ Interest and Other Income | 48,463 |
| ■ Contributions and Other Income to Real Food Challenge | 603,370 |

TOTAL **\$3,944,557**



EXPENSES 2010-2011



| | |
|--|-----------|
| ■ Youth Programs | 1,167,834 |
| ■ Rural Farm Programs | 521,209 |
| ■ Urban Farms & Community Agriculture | 673,567 |
| ■ Greenhouse Capital Expenditures | 117,065 |
| ■ Food Access Programs | 505,602 |
| ■ Volunteer and Outreach Programs | 355,911 |
| ■ Real Food Challenge | 358,308 |
| ■ Transfer to Real Food Challenge Reserve Fund | 245,061 |

TOTAL **\$3,944,557**

Data is represented on 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 those who invested in our programs between July 1, 2010 and June 30, 2011. We thank them for their partnership and generosity. While we do not have room in this publication to print the names of all of our contributors, every gift, of every size, makes a real difference and means a great deal to The Food Project's youth and our communities.

● THANKSGIVING CIRCLE MEMBERS

INDIVIDUALS WHO CONTRIBUTE \$1,000 OR MORE IN A YEAR ARE MEMBERS OF TFP'S THANKSGIVING CIRCLE. THEY ARE ESSENTIAL PARTNERS IN TFP'S WORK, AND OUR YOUTH, STAFF, AND COMMUNITIES GIVE GREAT THANKS FOR THEIR GENEROSITY!

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Many thanks to all the people, corporations, and other organizations listed below who contributed materials or services that helped The Food Project grow. These donations supported both special projects and daily activities, and we are grateful.

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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.

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Real Food Challenge

BIG STRIDES MADE TO BUILD POWER OF YOUTH FOOD MOVEMENT

This past year, the Real Food Challenge (RFC) continued making major strides toward building a bigger and stronger youth food movement. RFC launched the Real Food Fellows Program, welcoming the inaugural class of 10 fellows. RFC also drew more than 1,400 attendees to its regional summits, gatherings of young people where they inspire and learn from each other, energizing themselves to sustain the pursuit of food justice on campuses and in their communities.

“The Real Food Fellows program fulfills a critical need,” says Anim Steel, a co-founder of RFC and director of national programs for The Food Project. “It supports emerging leaders from low-income communities who are most directly impacted by our industrial food system, whether they live in neighborhoods without access to healthy food or in regions hurt by farm foreclosures and toxic runoff.” Receiving more than 220 applications for the 10 spots was a signal, Anim says, that “we were onto something!”

The 10 fellows began their year with a road trip from Birmingham, Ala. to Detroit, Mich., taking part in the Food and Freedom Ride. The initiative was undertaken, in part, to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the historic Freedom Rides of the Civil Rights era. Food and Freedom Riders sought to link today’s movement for food justice to the urgency that propelled their predecessors’ efforts to achieve social justice for African Americans.

Earlier in the year, RFC completed its calendar of five regional summits. Measured by numbers, the Northeast Regional Summit, held in Boston, was the crowning effort, alone drawing 600 attendees – split evenly between high school and college students. Anim points to the diversity of attendees as one of the event’s strengths, and the welcome and support they received



Real Food Fellows and RFC cofounder Anim Steel pause at the White Cloud Reservation during their two-week Food and Freedom Ride.

as one of its key achievements. “I hope – I think – we created an environment with the ethos of The Food Project: looking injustice in the face while also creating common ground – a deeply respectful space.”

Other highlights of the year included the securing of another \$15 million in real food commitments by universities and colleges and substantial progress in promoting the use of the Real Food Calculator, an assessment tool designed by RFC to track institutions’ food purchasing patterns.

Beyond the world of campus-based advocacy, RFC reached an even larger audience when co-founder (and TFP alum) David Schwartz was selected as a finalist for the Do Something! Awards. Sponsored by the cable channel VH1, the nationally broadcast awards ceremony provided David and RFC the largest stage yet to spread the real food message!

“It’s incredible to witness how quickly our movement has grown – from a few dozen of us just a few years ago to tens of thousands today. I’m now convinced that food justice will be the defining issue of our generation,” David comments. “We’re ready and we’re committed for the long haul.”

A FAREWELL TO CAMMY WATTS

As a farming organization, The Food Project is attuned to the rhythms of change. Especially here in New England, we see the rise and fall of seasons, paying close attention to the way shifts in weather and light affect our efforts to grow. Yet, across years, the regularity of seasons can create an impression of stability and continuity.



When Cammy Watts, longtime director of community programs, announced this past year that she was moving to Maine and leaving The Food Project, she evoked in the minds of colleagues this paradox. A founding staff member, she'd worked with TFP for most of our 20 years, fulfilling various roles along the way. Her presence on staff formed a large part of the foundation on which TFP stands. Still, through her steady and determined efforts to create and try on new ways of doing things, Cammy was also an important catalyst for change, both within TFP and in the communities where we work.

Although her departure marks the end of her tenure at The Food Project, her legacy – the programs she created, the people she touched – is certain to live on, attesting to the durability of her ideas and the power of her commitment to helping “create a thoughtful and productive community of youth and adults from diverse backgrounds who work together to build a sustainable food system.”



We envision a world where youth are active leaders, diverse communities are connected to the land and to each other, and everyone has access to fresh, local, healthy, affordable food.



The Food Project

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