

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Youth Leadership Meets Food System Change
at The Food Project's Winter Institute**

Lincoln, MA—January 4, 2019—Each year, The Food Project hosts its biannual Institute, bringing together social-justice-minded youth development and agriculture professionals from around the country and the world. This year, The Food Project is proud to announce Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Foundation as the sponsor of the Winter Institute, held February 7 – 9, 2019, with a second session added on January 31 – February 2 to accommodate the increased demand. The three-day Institute is packed with activities, workshops, and conversations for participants to learn about youth leadership and sustainable agriculture—from The Food Project's staff and youth, as well as from each other.

With 28 years of experience, The Food Project has long been a leader in the fields of youth development, healthy food access, and sustainable agriculture. Rather than replicating its work elsewhere, The Food Project provides training and tools to other organizations and individuals who are developing similar models, specific to the needs of their own communities.

“In the 19 years the Institute has been offered, The Food Project has supported hundreds of individuals and organizations doing similar work locally, nationally, and often internationally,” said Cindy Davenport, Director of Learning & Design. “Because much of our preparation is done during the winter months, the Winter Institute gives participants an inside look into how we plan, implement, and evaluate a year-round, tiered youth leader development structure, as well as gain experience in building powerful youth/adult partnerships.”

During the Institute, participants take part in hands-on workshops facilitated by both The Food Project's staff and the young people in Dirt Crew and Root Crew. This allows both for youth to build their leadership skills and for participants to experience The Food Project's models in an immersive way. With a cohort of roughly 20 people, participants have the opportunity to ask questions and learn in an intimate, small-

classroom setting. This year, Harvard Pilgrim's Director of Service and Giving Janelle Woods-McNish will offer a special session on volunteerism, offering participants new ways to engage volunteers in strengthening their mission.

Over the past five years, Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Foundation has advanced food justice efforts throughout New England, supporting local growers and distributors, like The Food Project, who are dedicated to increasing healthy food access to low-income families and communities. "We are proud to support The Food Project's Winter Institute this year, not only providing training to younger organizations working with youth and agriculture, but also learning opportunities based on the successes and challenges The Food Project has experienced over its 28-year history," said Karen Voci, President of the Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Foundation.

Held twice a year—once in the summer and once in the winter—The Food Project's Institutes continue to inspire and train others to bridge difference, expand access to locally grown food, and develop young leaders in their own communities. To learn more about The Food Project's 2019 Winter Institute, including how to register, visit thefoodproject.org/institute.

About The Food Project

Since their founding in 1991, The Food Project has grown into a nationally-recognized non-profit organization that works at the intersection of youth, food, and community. For 28 years, The Food Project has brought youth and adults from diverse backgrounds together on their farms to produce healthy food for residents of the city and suburbs to build a just and sustainable food system. The organization believes that food is a unique vehicle for creating personal and social change. The Food Project aims to transform our food system into an equitable and inclusive model that is community-controlled and supports food justice for all.

Contact

Hannah Ladesic
Marketing & Communications Associate
The Food Project

The Food Project

(P) 781-259-8621 x26
hladesic@thefoodproject.org