

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Seed Crew Teens Learn About Food Justice and Themselves

Lincoln, MA--July 14, 2017--On July 3, a six-and-a-half-week summer job began for 72 incredible teenagers at The Food Project. These young people—all between the ages of 14 and 17—began a journey of farming, learning, and self-discovery that they won't forget. While these teens could have chosen to fill their summer with more relaxing activities like days at the beach or other, less intense, jobs, these young people will be engaged in the difficult work of farming, learning about sustainable food systems, personal development, serving at hunger relief organizations, and much more.

Each summer, The Food Project hires teens from diverse cultural, racial, economic, and geographic backgrounds to work on their urban and suburban farms in Lincoln, Boston, Beverly, Wenham, and Lynn on their Seed Crew. During the season, youth work together to grow vegetables and distribute 200,000 pounds of produce through CSA farm shares, hunger relief organizations, SNAP-accessible farmers markets, cornerstores, and other food access partnerships while developing important leadership, teamwork, diversity, and civic participation skills.

“Seed Crew is so much more than a great ‘summer job,’” said J. Harrison, The Food Project’s Executive Director. “A summer working in Seed Crew combines learning about sustainable agriculture and how race and inequality impact the food system. Young people thrive in the diverse atmosphere on the farms and grow as people after a summer with The Food Project.”

After working on the farm each morning, Seed Crew youth spend most afternoons in workshops that address issues such as sustainable agriculture, food access, social justice, and more. They also spend one day a week at hunger relief organizations preparing and serving the produce that they have grown. This connects the work the young people are doing on the farms with the lessons that they’re learning about food security. In this way, they are able to see how their work directly impacts people’s lives.

Seed Crew is the entry point to participate in The Food Project’s youth crews. Following Seed Crew, young people may apply to work each academic season throughout high school in Dirt Crew or Root Crew. In Dirt Crew, The Food Project’s academic year opportunity, members work to build raised-bed gardens for families in low-income communities, lead volunteers on the farms, do research projects that benefit the community, and much more—all while developing leadership and public speaking skills. Following Dirt Crew, young people can apply to Root Crew. This is capstone experience has Root Crew members increasing their responsibilities on the farms as crew and peer leaders,



running farmers markets, managing CSA farm share distributions, and leading community workshops, such as *Food for Thought*, to dialogue around the food system.

Seed Crew is more than a summer job. It is a transformational experience for the young people who spend their summer with The Food Project. In the 26 years since The Food Project was founded, over 1,700 young people have gone through their youth crews. The teens who participate in Seed Crew, Dirt Crew, and Root Crew become agents of change in their communities around food and social justice. Many have gone on to start organizations based on The Food Project's model in other parts of the country, started their own urban or suburban farms built on sustainable agricultural practices, or have founded businesses that are committed to social justice.

Please join The Food Project in welcoming these young food justice leaders to the best summer job of their lives.

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 more than 26 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 local 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.

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