

2020 ANNUAL REPORT
FARMING FOR RESILIENCE



2020

2 •
**FOOD ACCESS
PARTNERSHIPS**

4 •
LYNN TECH FARM

6 •
**MARKET
PERFORMANCE**

8 •
FINANCIAL REVIEW

9 •
DONOR SUPPORT



Dear Friends of the Food Project,

As it was for so many of you, 2020 was an incredibly challenging year for The Food Project. The pandemic laid bare the inequities of our current food system and demonstrated why fundamental, inclusive change is critical to ensure that access to fresh healthy food is available to everyone, regardless of their zip code.

Despite the struggles, we found and shared moments of hope and resilience. Thanks to the generosity of The Food Project community—all of you—we were able to launch Farming for Resilience, a swift and significant response to the pandemic that focused on getting as much food as possible to the people who needed it most. The need to rethink many of our operations provided the opportunity to meet new community members, form new food distribution partnerships, and come together to help each other in creative ways.

Our staff, youth, and partners adapted to rapid changes with poise and flexibility. Youth stepped in as leaders, staying active and connecting virtually. Farmers worked hard amidst unrelenting heat and drought to grow and distribute the much-needed food. Farmers' market staff created thoughtful and safe models for community members to access fresh, local produce. In total, we distributed close to 400,000 servings of fresh, healthy fruits and vegetables to those facing food insecurity in Boston and Lynn.

The Food Project is always grateful for your support and encouragement—but especially this past year. We hope reading these stories of resilience will bring you hope and optimism for the season ahead.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anne Hayes'.

Anne Hayes
Executive Director

BOARD OF TRUSTEES *as of Oct. 1, 2019 – Sept. 30, 2020*

Tara Agrawal, *Chair of the Development Committee*

Amy Ballin

Cassandra Campbell, *Alumna*

Valerie Cardoso, *Alumna*

Peter Demuth

Michelle Dyer

Charlene Fibbe, *Youth Member*

Sarah Gould

Norris Guscott, *Chair of the Governance Committee*

Geneliz Herrera, *Youth Member*

Carole Kasper

Anmol Mehra, *Co-chair of the Finance Committee*

Daniel Peirce

Diane G. Remin

Marta Rivera

Katie A. Ryan

Diane Stansbury, *Clerk*

Matthew Tetreau, *Treasurer and Co-chair of the Finance Committee*

Carolyn J. Zern, *Chair*



ELVIRA TEJADA LEMUS

North Shore Root Crew Member

What has your Food Project experience been like during the pandemic?

When I was on the farm, I felt like there were good rules in place to keep us safe from COVID. Now that things are all virtual, I'm amazed at the space created in the Zoom calls we have. A house sometimes doesn't feel like a safe place where you can share and be vulnerable, and yet The Food Project creates a safe space where we can share comfortably in the Zoom calls.

What are some things your crew has been working on?

Currently, my crew is working on a cookbook with diverse recipes for young people that use culturally-relevant and/or locally grown produce. It has different difficulty levels to accommodate the experience levels of young chefs. We each contributed a recipe and now we are searching for restaurants who want to be involved and share their recipes.

What has been exciting?

Coming into The Food Project Zoom calls where people bring positive energy is exciting because that's what makes it different from school Zooms. It's a different atmosphere. For me, I get excited about extra work opportunities, especially now that they have become opportunities to work in the greenhouse.

What are you looking forward to for the coming season?

I'm looking forward to getting back onto the farm and learning more and taking part in things I didn't get to take part in last spring. I'm also excited about potentially getting more involved with the farmers' market and of course I'm excited to complete the cookbook!





FOOD ACCESS PARTNERSHIPS

Building Community Through Food



To meet our goal of distributing as much fresh, healthy food as possible during the pandemic, we forged new food distribution partnerships, expanding our reach beyond Dorchester, Roxbury, Acton, and Lynn to include Chelsea, East Boston, Malden, and other locations in and around Boston. All told, Regional Directors John Wang and Maritza Rosario forged 10 new distribution partnerships. Through these partnerships, as well as through our affordable farmers' markets, we distributed nearly 400,000 servings of fresh fruits and vegetables in the neighborhoods most impacted by COVID.



THE FOOD PROJECT DISTRIBUTED **100,000 lbs** OF VEGETABLES,
NEARLY **400,000** servings

NEIGHBORHOOD OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING (NOAH) & FRESH FOOD GENERATION:

The Food Project partnered with Fresh Food Generation—a farm-to-plate food business run by two of our alumni—and NOAH to deliver veggies and prepare meals in East Boston. Together, The Food Project, Fresh Food Generation, and NOAH created a resource hub for 85-100 residents where they could access fresh produce, prepared meals, and hygiene products, among other resources.



Ernie's Harvest Time

FOOD DISTRIBUTION PARTNERSHIP ON THE NORTH SHORE

For all of us, few things generate a feeling of comfort as powerfully as familiar flavors cooked at home. This is something that Diana and Johnny, owners of Ernie's Harvest Time in Lynn, understand deeply—their multicultural customers hail from all over the world and often request the fresh vegetables and herbs that they cannot find in conventional grocery stores. In response, Diana and Johnny partnered with The Food Project to ensure that Ernie's is a place where people can find affordable food that is both locally grown and relevant to customers' preferred cuisine—whether it be Guatemalan, Haitian, Russian, or Congolese. This season, our Lynn farmers shifted their crop plan to grow more of the most sought-after ingredients, including cilantro, parsley,

radishes, collard greens, hierba mora, and chipilin—an herb from Central America that brings beautiful flavor to beans, soups, and tamales.

To ensure that people across Lynn know where to access affordable and culturally relevant produce, youth and staff at The Food Project worked with Ernie's to develop a new marketing plan for the store. Together, we've designed a new logo—with the help of Good Egg Marketing and a grant from the Massachusetts Food Trust—and created a series of fliers featuring many varieties of herbs and vegetables that are essential for cuisines from all over the world. We are excited to continue this partnership and help Ernie's become a food hub for the City of Lynn.



Community Food Crew



The self-proclaimed Community Food Crew, recent grads of The Food Project, answered the call for help to ensure that we could safely continue our Build a Garden program.

With an increased demand for growing spaces, this small but mighty team of four built 30 raised bed gardens for residents of Dorchester and Lynn last fall. When our partner, the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative, developed a pandemic-related food distribution hub, the Community Food Crew pitched in and handled everything from food sorting and bagging to marketing, communications, and COVID protocols.

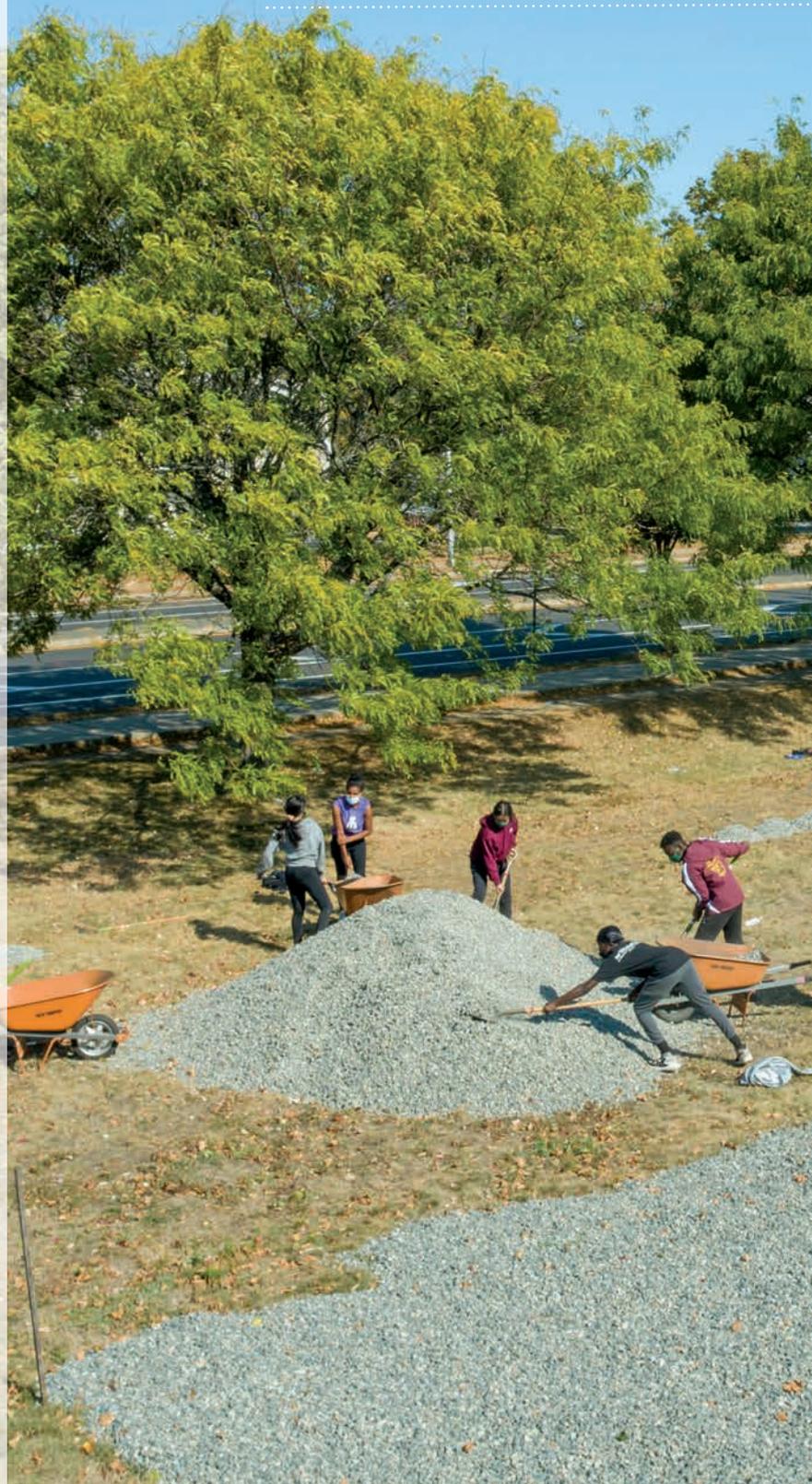


Driving down Neptune Boulevard in Lynn during the fall of 2020, you would have likely noticed a crew of youth and farmers, piles of compost, and lots of activity on the grounds of the Lynn Vocational Technical Institute.

The idea for the new farm came from Lynn Grows, a network of residents and community partners committed to building a stronger food system. Despite the challenges presented by COVID-19, we were able to complete most of the initial build in the fall of 2020. Youth in Root Crew and Sprout Crew helped farmers spread over 100 tons of gravel, lay landscape fabric, and form beds to create over 8,000 square feet of growing space. Additionally, staff constructed several elevated raised beds to ensure that the farm is accessible to all.

As a community asset, the farm will increase food access across the City of Lynn by providing new growing space for Lynn residents and more space for The Food Project. Food Project youth will help manage the farm and support residents as they plant and tend their gardens. It is a true win-win for residents who wish to grow culturally relevant fruits and vegetables and for youth from The Food Project who have a new opportunity to gain hands-on experience creating local food system change.

The Food Project is excited to welcome the first community gardeners to the farm in 2021 and expects the farm will be a space for learning, growing, and connecting for the Lynn community.



FARM

progress made in 2020



It feels exciting to provide space for folks to grow their own food—and especially to offer larger plots than we have been able to in the past. There are so many Lynn residents with extensive gardening knowledge who have expressed, over the years, their desire for more space to grow food. I'm excited for the LVTI farm to become a community-centered space, addressing food insecurity in the most sustainable way possible—giving folks access to land.

**JENN COVERDALE, LYNN URBAN
AGRICULTURE MANAGER**

Market Performance

DUDLEY



28,000

pounds of fresh produce sold

68%

of this produce was purchased via federal, state, and local benefits, such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Healthy Incentives Program (HIP), and farmers' market coupons.



\$9,000

worth of coupons, sponsored by the City of Boston, redeemed for produce



Dudley Farmers' Market

2020 was a record breaking year for the Dudley Farmers' Market, with more sales than ever before. In the spring, we reviewed all available information on COVID transmission and created a protocol to run the market safely. The community had a great response—we frequently opened up to lines wrapped around Dudley Square.

Dudley Food Hub

When the farm season ended and the Dudley market closed, many community members lost a vital access point for purchasing fresh produce using farmers' market coupons or EBT. With winter looming and no end in sight for the pandemic, people were struggling and scared.

We got together with the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative to envision a winter food distribution process on Saturdays. Through the Dudley Food Distribution Hub, we distributed fresh fruits, vegetables, and bread sourced from Fair Foods, a local food rescue organization. Our Dudley Greenhouse quickly became a large-scale food distribution center. Since December, we've served almost 200 community members each week and distributed a total of 25,000 pounds of food.



Lynn Central Square Market

In 2020, The Food Project decided to focus its limited resources on coordinating food distribution at The Lynn Central Square Farmers' Market and ensuring customer safety instead of selling its own produce. Food Project staff stepped in to help serve upwards of 800 customers during peak days in August and September. We donated the produce that we would have sold at Central Square market (about \$10,000 worth) to the New Lynn Coalition's grocery delivery program for families affected by COVID.

Lynn Mobile Markets

With increased food-access issues due to COVID, we tripled our mobile market rotation, visiting the low-income neighborhoods and senior housing developments on our schedule four times as often as we would during a typical summer. Many residents of the senior housing developments—communities especially vulnerable to COVID-19—expressed their gratitude for the ability to have fresh produce delivered directly to their neighborhoods.

LYNN



Tripled our mobile market farmers' market presence to a total of

11
SITES AND

60
MARKET EVENTS

serving seniors and others with mobility challenges.



The Lynn Central Square Market redeemed more market coupons for seniors and WIC than any of the other farmers markets in the state.



Financial Review

Now, more than ever, young people are at the core of our work. Their service to their communities and the world beyond highlights the relevance of our mission and the responsibility we all have to create change that leads to a better food system and a better world. You make this critical

work happen through your financial support. Changing food systems takes time and effort and the overarching goal is crucial to every community. Your support means that you join with The Food Project to make access to healthy, affordable food a priority for all of us. Thank you.

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITY

2020 Fiscal Year

REVENUE

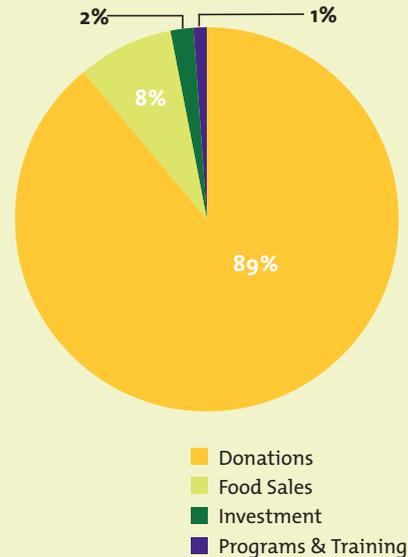
Donations	\$2,923,865
Food Sales	264,031
Investments	69,550
Miscellaneous Income	11,462
TOTAL REVENUE	\$3,268,908

EXPENSES

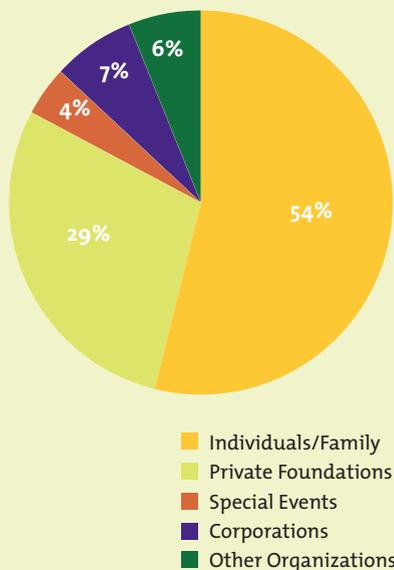
Youth Development	637,512
Suburban Farming	494,979
Urban Farming & Community Agriculture	392,660
Volunteer & Outreach	110,279
Food Access	82,253
Fund Raising	542,195
Supporting Services	574,380
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$2,834,258

Data is represented on an accrual basis and based on audited financial statements. Indirect costs are allocated to program areas based on the size of each program.

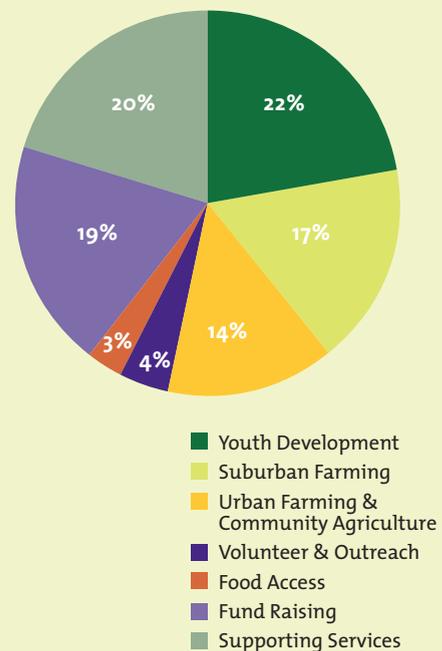
REVENUE BY SOURCE



DONATIONS BY SOURCE



EXPENSES BY CATEGORY



The Food Project community is diverse, engaged, and generous. This is true at any time, but especially in 2020.

-  Almost **2,000** people gave gifts to The Food Project, including **35** program alumni, **110** program parents and **100%** of our Board of Trustees.
-  While many of our donors are local, we received gifts from **22** other states.
-  **504** new donors signed on to support our mission.
-  Gifts ranged from **\$1 to \$250,000**.

May 2020—early on in the pandemic—was our highest grossing month in 5 years. Our community definitively said yes when we asked them to help us grow as much food as possible and get it to the people who needed it the most.

-  **170** institutional and corporate funders made grants to The Food Project.
-  **25** institutional and corporate funders increased their giving.
-  **29** new institution and corporate funders began supporting The Food Project.
-  Grants ranged from **\$500 to \$150,000**.

Many supporters stepped up with in-kind gifts, such as hand sanitizer, masks, bug spray, and sunscreen; and others provided significant discounts on items we purchased.

Others generously donated their time to support us with a wide range of tasks, from tying up tomato plants to addressing our legal needs.



THE FOOD PROJECT MISSION

Create a thoughtful and productive community of youth and adults from diverse backgrounds who work together to build a just and sustainable food system. Our community empowers and equips youth leaders, grows and distributes healthy, affordable food in the city and suburbs, and inspires and supports others to create change in their own communities.

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES

10 Lewis Street Lincoln, MA 01773

PROGRAM OFFICES

555 Dudley Street Boston, MA 02125
120 Munroe Street Lynn, MA 01901

thefoodproject.org · 781-259-8621

