

Annual Report
2021



MARION
INSTITUTE

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MARION
INSTITUTE

Creating a Culture of Health



Our Mission

We are building a movement. One that engages individuals and communities in integrative approaches to whole body health. We educate and empower by supporting, connecting, and applying the science of self-healing.

Our Vision

We are committed to our vision of community health, environmental resilience, and social justice. *We believe optimal health is a basic human right, not a privilege.*

Board Members

Board of Directors

Margherita Baldwin,
Co-Founder and President

Michael Baldwin
Co-Founder

John Mannix
Treasurer

Megan Amsler

Kerry Saltonstall

Patricia Sullivan

Joan Tiffany,
Clerk

Greg Watson

Orson Watson, Ph.D.

Board of Advisors

Christina Bascom

Joanie Brady

Nonie Brady

John Burt

Johnnie Chace

Mary Davidson

Mark Finser

Sally Hunsdorfer

Robert Inches

Krystyna Jurzykowski

Ellen McFarland

Elizabeth Oates

Claude Pepin

Elaine Seiler

New Board Member

We welcomed one new board member in FY'21

Kerry Saltonstall is a 30-year veteran of the K-12 independent school advancement community. Retired in 2020, she worked in fundraising, strategic planning, volunteer recruitment and management, and board development early in her career at Moses Brown School and The Gordon School in Providence where she served as Director of Development.

Over the last 20 years of her professional career, Kerry held the positions of Associate Director of Development, Director of



Alumni Relations, and later Director of Communications for Tabor Academy in Marion. A results oriented team-builder, well aware of how community-building drives non-profit success, Kerry is eager to apply her experience to advance our mission and build our network.

Kerry holds a Bachelor of Science degree from St. Lawrence University (Canton, NY) and is currently working as a freelance writer, and Director of

Marketing at Saltonstall Architects in Marion.

Marion Institute Team Members

Liz Wiley
Adam Davenport
Portia DePina
Katie Mannix
Patti Rego
Liz Russell
Angela Silva
Christopher Silva

Abigail Smith
Christine Smith
Mary Twomey
*FoodCorps MA
Service members:*
Shalynn Brooks
Jennifer Frates
Amelia Jones



L to R: Abigail Smith, Angela Silva, Adam Davenport, Shalynn Brooks, Amelia Jones, Christine Smith, Liz Russell, Liz Wiley, Jennifer Frates, Katie Mannix, Christopher Silva.

New Team Members FY'21



Katie Mannix

BioMed Program Manager

Katie Mannix joins the Marion Institute team having worked in schools for the last twelve years. She is a passionate advocate for a more just and humane society, as

well as matters of individual well-being and community and environmental health. Her perspective and skills have been most informed through engagement with the world and its many teachers.



Christopher Silva

Marketing & Communications Manager

Chris is a native south coaster having grown up in Fairhaven, MA and is excited to be back in the area to lead the marketing and communi-

cations efforts here at the Marion Institute. After having lived and worked in Boston, New York City, Provincetown, and most recently Martha's Vineyard, he has settled in nicely at his new digs in New Bedford.



Liz Russell

Development Associate

Liz Russell has worked in the non-profit sector since 2002 and within development and grant making for most of those years. She is passionate about social and environmental

justice and feels privileged to rejoin the Marion Institute. She brings diversity and inclusion work experience, financial and systems management, contract administration, and event planning to the team.



Christine Smith

Southcoast Food Policy Council Program Manager

Christine began her social justice career working in Taiwan to help migrant workers from all over Southeast Asia. Upon her return to

the U.S.A., after several years of seeing injustices in social and economic support systems, Christine moved from direct service to educating people on social justice concerns and legislative advocacy issues.

FoodCorps Service Members FY'21

Shalynn Brooks

Shay is originally from Fall River, MA, where she graduated from Bristol Community College with an associates degree in Liberal Arts. She loves writing poetry, playing her guitar and finding new recipes to cook.



L to R: Amelia Jones, Jennifer Frates, Shalynn Brooks

Jennifer Frates

Jenn was born and raised in Acushnet, MA. She's always had a passion for cooking and loves working in

restaurants. She graduated in 2007 from Old Colony RVTHS from the Culinary Arts Program and went on to get an associates degree at BCC in their Culinary Arts Program.

Amelia Jones

Amelia has always had a love of nature and enjoys making friends with the plants and animals that inhabit the Texas hill country. She graduated with a B.A. in Conservation Biology in 2020 from Middlebury College in Middlebury, VT.

Letter From Our Executive Director



It is hard to comprehend that FY'21 was yet another challenging year of navigating the pandemic and its associated mix of chaos and opportunity. As you will see in the following pages, our team, which is small but mighty, worked incredibly hard to produce an amazing array

of accomplishments despite the challenges posed by the pandemic. With a commitment to promoting health equity, building resilient communities, and advocating for food justice, our mission to make *optimal health a basic human right, not a privilege* is succeeding because each of you – our ardent supporters and steadfast collaborators - continues to invest in our vision and our efforts.

The MI's focus on food and nutrition security is at the core of our many initiatives, energized by the principle that a just, equitable, and robust food system is the cornerstone of civil society. We have worked alongside our partners to illuminate the struggles many of our communities still face in obtaining healthy, affordable, and accessible food and to ensure an understanding of the way our nation's food system has been shaped by its history of slavery, structural racism, and racial injustice. Only by identifying, acknowledging, and unraveling these issues can we confront and solve the problems at the root of many health and nutritional inequities.

In many ways, FY'21 represented a year of deepening our resolve and laying the groundwork for our current progress and successes. Our BioMed program launched its first 21-Day 'Renew You' Challenge, teaching 400+ participants about the importance of incorporating the BioMed Basics into their daily lifestyle habits for improved immune health, and it edged closer to the creation of the first of its kind

BioMed Certification for Practitioners Course. Grow Education made significant strides in implementing our Farm to School initiative and expanded our team through the hiring of FoodCorps members who will further embed our programming in New Bedford's Elementary Schools. Undaunted by the constraints and inhibitions caused by the pandemic, the South-coast Food Policy Council completed the 2021 Food System Assessment for Southeastern MA; continued to respond to the food insecurity needs of our communities; and organized, elected, and implemented

“The MI's focus on food and nutrition security is at the core of our many initiatives, energized by the principle that a just, equitable, and robust food system is the cornerstone of civil society.”

– Liz Wiley, Executive Director

our first 30-member Community Advisory Board. These are just some of the fruits born of this period of recalibration. I am extremely proud of the many accomplishments we have made - and that you will more read about - in the following pages.

The Marion Institute works hard to be strategic in our actions and to address the root cause of issues that undermine the health of our communities. We hope that you will be inspired and motivated by our programs, initiatives, and direction for the future.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading 'Liz', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Liz Wiley
Executive Director

Michael Baldwin Sustainability Fund

In honor of our Co-Founder, Michael Baldwin's 80th birthday, his longtime friends, Whitney and Phillip Long, launched The Michael Baldwin Sustainability Fund at the end of FY'20. With most of the fundraising and the ultimate announcement of the gift occurring in FY'21, we wanted to share that the initial covert effort, affectionately called "Operation 80", raised over \$400,000 from 201 donors! Michael proclaimed he was "Gob-smacked" by the ultimate success of this effort, but beyond the raw numbers is the impact the Longs and the 200 other donors who followed their lead knew would be critical.

The Sustainability Fund provides a crucial cushion for the Marion Institute's (MI) many programs. All non-profits experience fluctuations from year to year in fundraising, and this fund protects our programs and our dedicated staff from funding variations that could harm efforts and progress that have been years in the making. Sustainability Funds help us to maintain financial solvency, provide program expansion opportunities, protect us against unpredictable political behavior, and unstable economic cycles. The last two years of the pandemic have been especially challenging with the loss of in-person fundraising events and programs.

“The Marion Institute is more charged, passionate, and primed to make a positive difference in this world of increasing pressure and deepening challenges than ever. And never have we had such a team of staff members and board participants to bring about the huge change so needed.”

– Michael Baldwin, Co-Founder

To maintain the potential operational power of this important fund, the MI will continue accepting gifts toward the Sustainability Fund. Further, we have launched a planned giving program to encourage our ardent supporters to add the MI as a beneficiary of their retirement plans or to allocate a bequest through a will. Going forward, we will include in our annual report a list of those donors who have made provisions for the MI in their estate plans. Please let us know if you would like to join them or learn more.

“The Marion Institute has never been so vibrant and relevant in meeting the needs of the Southcoast community. The team has risen to the many challenges faced by the pandemic and has continued to deliver and expand upon the organization's mission.”

– Margie Baldwin, Co-Founder and Board President



Dr. Dickson Thom at the BioMed Center of New England in Providence, RI introducing BioMed for Practitioners Certification course.

“Common Wisdom is not Common Practice.”

— Dr. Laurie Santos, Cognitive Scientist and Professor of Psychology at Yale University

BIOMED PROGRAMS

Promoting Health Equity

Advancing integrative healthcare by expanding patient options for the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of illness.

What We Do

Connect people to an individualized, multi-disciplinary approach to whole-body health.

Educate the public about integrative approaches to health care and advocate for complementary health practitioners.

Support innovative ways for consumers to have maximum choice in their health care options.

Biological Medicine (BioMed) is an approach to health care that combines cutting-edge technologies with long-standing wisdom to treat the root causes of disease and support the body's natural ability to self-regulate and heal. BioMed recognizes the innate, evolutionary needs of the human body - water, sunlight, fresh air, whole foods, and social connection - as powerful tools in the promotion of life-long health and disease prevention. BioMed healthcare providers rely on these principles and the latest in diagnostic and therapeutic technologies to help patients regain health and wellness.

In FY'21, the Marion Institute's BioMed Program developed programs that bring awareness of the connection between health and our most basic habits; thereby honoring our commitment to supporting the improved health of our communities, environment, and world.

Through social connection, education, and support, the Marion Institute elevates a wellness-based approach to health and promotes the restoration of our connection with the natural world and humanity's awe-inspiring biology. As we grow in our appreciation of the body's power to prevent disease and preserve health, we move one step closer to realizing a new standard of effective healthcare.

Connect

BioMed practitioners are innovators in healthcare. They integrate a rich understanding of the human body with tools and methods that help patients remove harmful toxins and restore the body's self-regulating ability. BioMed healthcare providers represent a range of modalities and healing traditions, including homeopathy, Chinese Medicine, and energetic healing, to name a few.

Provider Networks

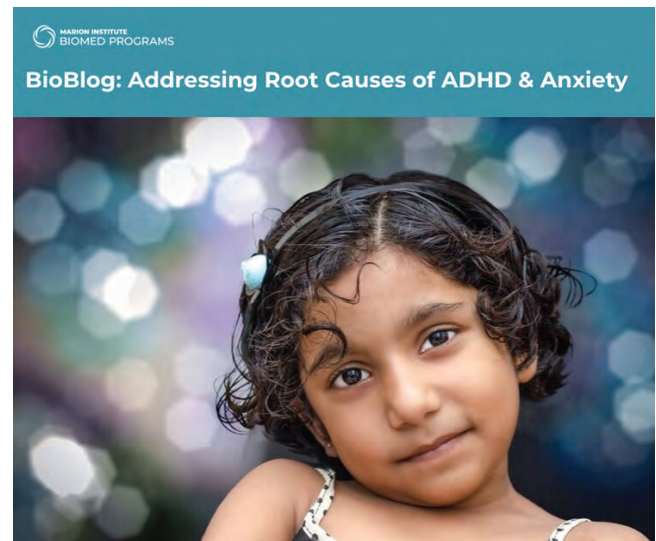
The Marion Institute's **Biological Medicine Network (BMN)** and **Local Practitioner Network (LPN)** are vital to the Marion Institute's mission to provide credible, relevant health information from a biological medicine perspective and connect individuals with providers offering innovative and natural alternatives to conventional care.

The BMN helps prospective patients locate and connect with top level BioMed providers on three continents. Network providers are trained in biological medicine and represent a range of specialties and conditions treated.

Our Local Practitioner Network continues to grow and now includes over 120 providers in the New England region. Different from conventional care, biological medicine requires patients to take an active role in their health and healing journeys. Local providers are vital to supporting patients with services and therapies such as colonics, structural energy therapy, and lymphatic drainage that are aligned with BioMed's core principles of promoting whole-body health.

BioBlog

The Marion Institute's monthly BioBlog provides a regular forum for exploring the evolving world of BioMed research and guidance. In FY'21, guest contributors from our Biological Medicine Network presented content on topics including biological dental care, supplementation, and histamine intolerance.



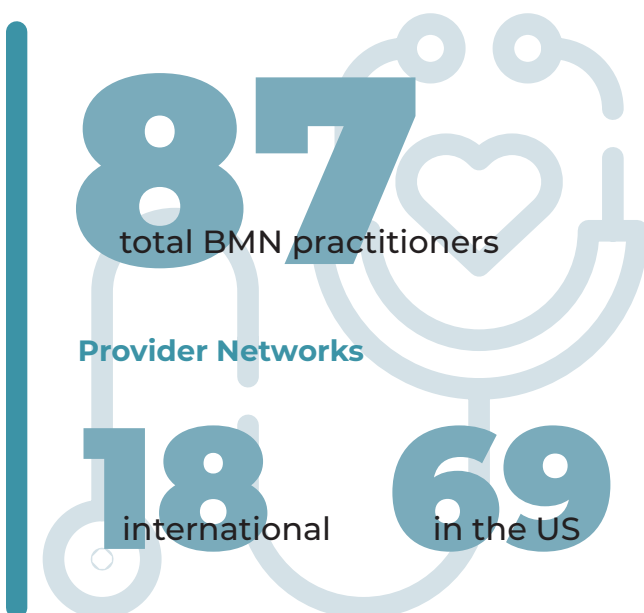
Educate

Our bodies are wise. Designed with the potential for health, they can become burdened and unbalanced over time through exposure to emotional and physiological toxins.

Our BioMed Program offers a wide variety of educational opportunities for the general public. These programs help us learn how to apply BioMed principles to improve health and re-balance the body. They are an invitation to all to become more informed participants in their individual journey to a healthy mind and body.

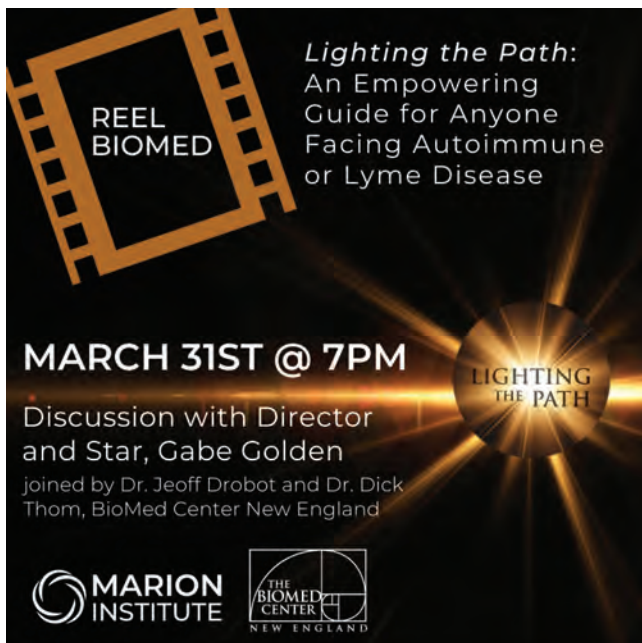
Lighting the Path to Optimal Health

On March 31st, the Marion Institute welcomed Director Gabe Golden, Layne Lyons Pecoff, and BioMed practitioners Dr. Dickson Thom, DDS, ND, and Dr. Jeoffrey Drobot, ND into a moderated discussion of the merits of biological medicine. Inspired by his 25-year challenge with rheumatoid arthritis, Gabe Golden directed "*Lighting The Path*" a documentary on



Biological medicine seeks to bring the body into its natural state of balance and health. Widely practiced in Europe, it is an approach rooted in bio-individuality, treating each person as unique and personalizing therapy to treat the individual. It focuses on fostering wellness rather than suppressing symptoms.

Recognizing that there is common ground, biological medicine can work independently or in tandem with conventional allopathic medicine. The ultimate goal is to restore the body's equilibrium; support the immune system; and cultivate the integration of body, mind, and spirit.



REEL BIOMED

Lighting the Path:
An Empowering
Guide for Anyone
Facing Autoimmune
or Lyme Disease

MARCH 31ST @ 7PM

Discussion with Director
and Star, Gabe Golden
joined by Dr. Jeoff Drobot and Dr. Dick
Thom, BioMed Center New England

MARION INSTITUTE

THE BIOMED CENTER
NEW ENGLAND



PLANT CITY
PLANT-BASED FOOD HALL & MARKETPLACE

**Optimizing Health
with BioMed**

July 20, 5:30pm – 7pm Plant City, Providence
with Dr. Sylvia Zannis and Dr. Dickson Thom
from the BioMed Center NE
Register at bit.ly/july20biomed

Photo: GoProvidence.com/NHilland

BIO MED CENTER
NEW ENGLAND

MARION INSTITUTE

integrative medicine. The film chronicles the stories of patients determined to find solutions and the physicians and scientists who helped light the path along the way. Golden captures patients' years-long efforts to find a healthcare model that fully understands and supports their recovery. Their journeys ultimately lead each of them to biological medicine and to restored health and vitality.

July 20th Introduction to BioMed at Plant City, Providence, Rhode Island

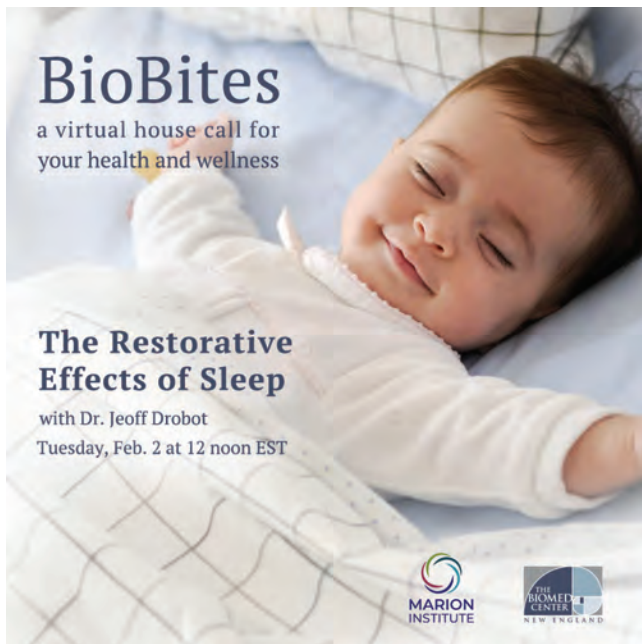
In conjunction with the BioMed Center New England, the Marion Institute hosted an in-person event at Plant City, the world's first plant-based vegan food hall and marketplace. Dr. Dickson Thom, DDS, ND and Dr. Sylvia Zannis, DDS presented on the topics of biological medicine and biological dentistry.

BioBites – A Monthly Virtual House Call for Your Health and Wellness.

Responding to the ongoing health crisis and the need for individual and communal empowerment, the Marion Institute launched its BioBites series in November 2020. This lunchtime series provides a forum for



Visit our BioBites resource page.



expert guests to speak with the public on a variety of health-related topics. BioBites invites participants to engage in conversation with healthcare providers and peers in real time. Topics explored in FY'21 included Detoxification, Immune Health, Stress and Anxiety, Sleep, BioMed Diagnostics, and more.

21-Day 'Renew You' Challenge

Long-term health is a product of the choices we make every day. With wisdom and practice, these choices become intentional routines over time. Launched in January 2021, the Marion Institute's inaugural 21-Day 'Renew You' Challenge supported hundreds of participants in evaluating and re-prioritizing their health habits through daily emails, live events with subject-matter experts, and supporting articles and videos for participants to explore on their own.

Creative Lives Partnership

Creative Lives®, a Vermont-based nonprofit, and the Marion Institute hosted two half-day retreats for local educators in the fall of 2021. Led by Creative Lives Executive Director Maureen Burford and based on Ellen Tadd's Framework for Wise Education®, the workshop was centered around the themes of wisdom and well-being. Both an opportunity for interpersonal connection and restoration, as well as professional development, educators were provided with Framework-based tools that benefit both the practitioner and young people across all settings.

Lighting the Path to Optimal Health

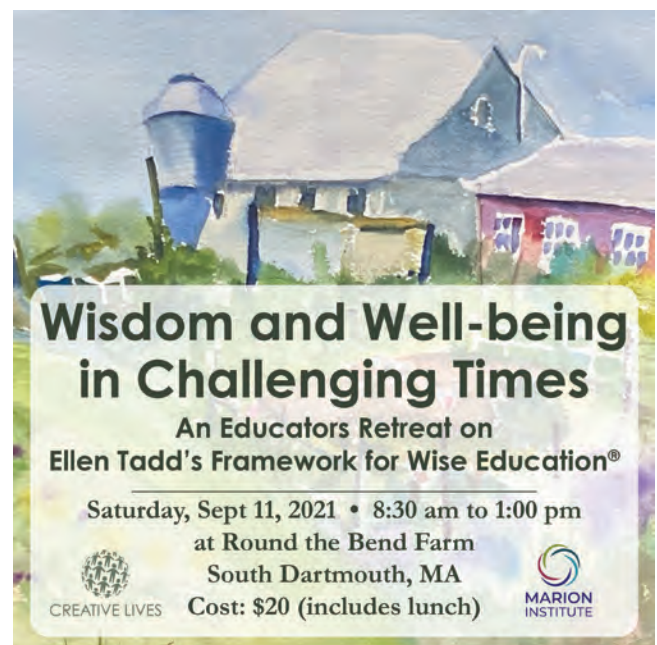
911 736
youtube views registrants

BioBites

17 850+
virtual events registrants

21-Day 'Renew You' Challenge

400+
participants



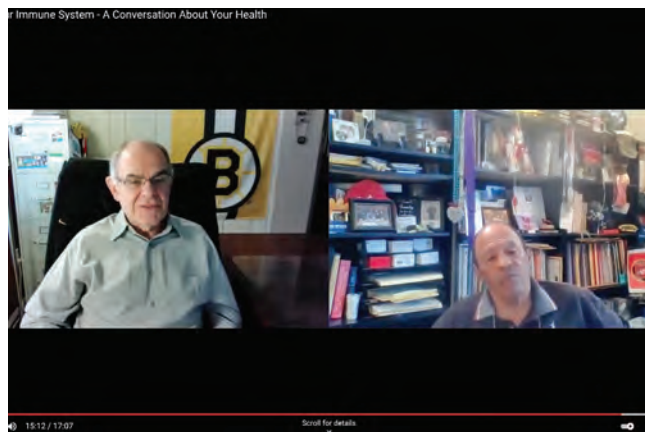
Support

Unlike conventional medicine, Biological Medicine is largely unsupported by today's insurance providers, making it a less accessible healthcare option for many. The Marion Institute combats this by providing no-fee programming and scholarships to help make this form of medicine and vital health information available to all the communities we serve.

The Mary Shands Scholarship Fund

Established in the summer of 2018, the Mary Shands Scholarship Fund provides financial assistance to patients seeking treatment from a BioMed Network Provider or a provider who meets the requirements to become part of the BMN. The Fund was established in honor of Mary Norton Shands, a visionary whose efforts helped bring biological medicine to North America.

Community Health Initiative



In the spring of 2021, New Bedford activist John G. “Buddy” Andrade reached out to form a creative partnership with the Marion Institute. Motivated by the desire to support and protect communities most at-risk from COVID-19, Andrade collaborated with renowned BioMed practitioner, Dr. Dickson Thom, ND, DDS to produce a short informational video offering tips on strengthening the immune system. The Marion Institute also worked with Mr. Andrade to develop an infographic highlighting key habits for supporting a balanced immune system and had that graphic translated into Spanish, Portuguese, and Cape

“I am so very thankful there is an organization that supports biological medicine – it is the only thing that has helped me with my complex health condition.”

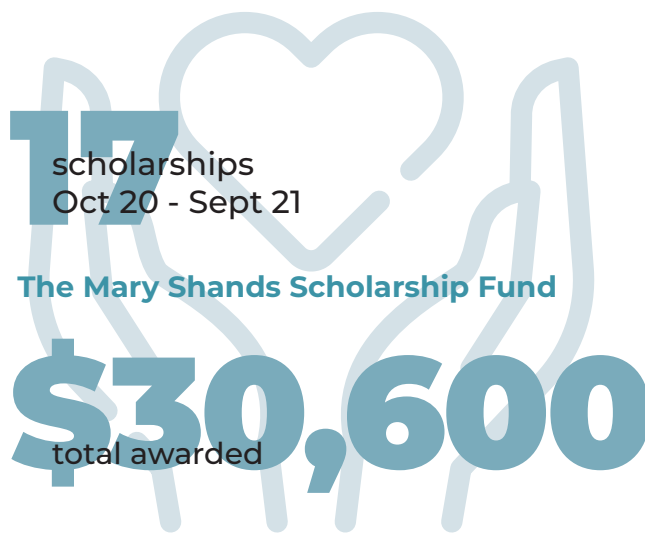
– Mary Shands Scholarship Recipient, 2021

Verdean Kriolu. The infographic as well as resources related to SNAP and HIP access were shared with 40+ local organizations on the Southcoast and with Mr. Andrade's personal network.

What's Next?

The pandemic forced us to pause the roll out of our planned course offerings, including a **BioMed Worksite Wellness Course** and an **Advanced BioMed Practitioner Certification Course**.

We continue to develop content for our certification programs and explore new ways in which to design programs that help practitioners and medical professionals advance their knowledge and application of biological medicine. Currently, we are working on making both courses accessible to practitioners near and far through the use of online learning technologies. **Courses will come on-line in early FY'22.**





Amplifying Our Mission Around the World

For nearly thirty years, the Marion Institute has provided fiscal sponsorship to progressive programs that create deep and positive change in the world. With our financial management and administrative support, organizations are able to focus on their mission to create a lasting impact on individuals and nations around the globe.

GREENHOUSE INITIATIVES

Bioregulatory Medicine Institute (BRMI)

The mission of the Bioregulatory Medicine Institute is to increase public knowledge and integration of Bioregulatory Medicine as a holistic evidence-based medical system. BRMI has created one of the world's largest and most comprehensive non-commercial databases, available in English and Spanish. They strive to provide a bioregulatory perspective on all issues that impact our lives and vitality. The censorship that inhibits unbiased information continues to be one of the greatest threats for the future of mankind. This is not lost on BRMI as they continue to synthesize information and produce it in the most honest and truthful manner possible.

Community Youth Empowerment (CYE)



Community Youth Empowerment is a community-based volunteer group whose primary focus is to uplift and empower youth and guide them towards a successful future. Through inclusivity and open discussion, CYE provides youth with a strong foundation for life beyond high school. CYE hosts open workshops for students in grades 8-12 focused on financial literacy, college readiness, mental health awareness, professionalism, and goal setting. They actively support their Wareham, MA community through annual events such as Trunk-or-Treat, Drive-In Movies, and other family-friendly fundraising efforts.

Lawrence Arts House (La House)

During the second year of COVID-19, Lawrence Arts House was able to support the youth of Phoenix Charter Academy in Lawrence, MA, through their expressive arts group, rooted in art therapy, as a tool for coping with the overwhelming challenges faced by teenagers during a global pandemic. La House's collaboration with Phoenix Charter Academy deepened

during the summer 2021 with the creation of a maker space/creative arts studio on the school's campus. The ultimate goal is for La House to be able to offer expressive arts programming for the greater Lawrence community during after school hours and on weekends.

The Norma G. Canner Foundation for Voice Movement Therapy (VMT)

The Norma G. Canner Foundation for Voice Movement Therapy completed their VMT Foundation Training in person last October, after working virtually from April 2, 2020 - June 1, 2021. The last and final 3 week module, of a 4 module 12-week program with interim reading and research periods, was extended for the whole month of October to make up for in-person time lost during the pandemic. In addition, two NGOs, combining VMT and social work, begun by Xhosa practitioners in South Africa, along with other projects in the USA and Europe, were supervised and supported. Two PhD candidates were advised, one at the Jung Institute, Switzerland and one at Meridian University, California. Three VMT practitioners began writing a book about the practice and created a video, "VMT Virtually? Working through a Pandemic," showing how teachers and students continued their work academically and creatively, writing and researching papers, and composing songs based on the VMT vocal components to express their experiences during this unprecedented time.

Mastate Charitable Foundation (MCF)

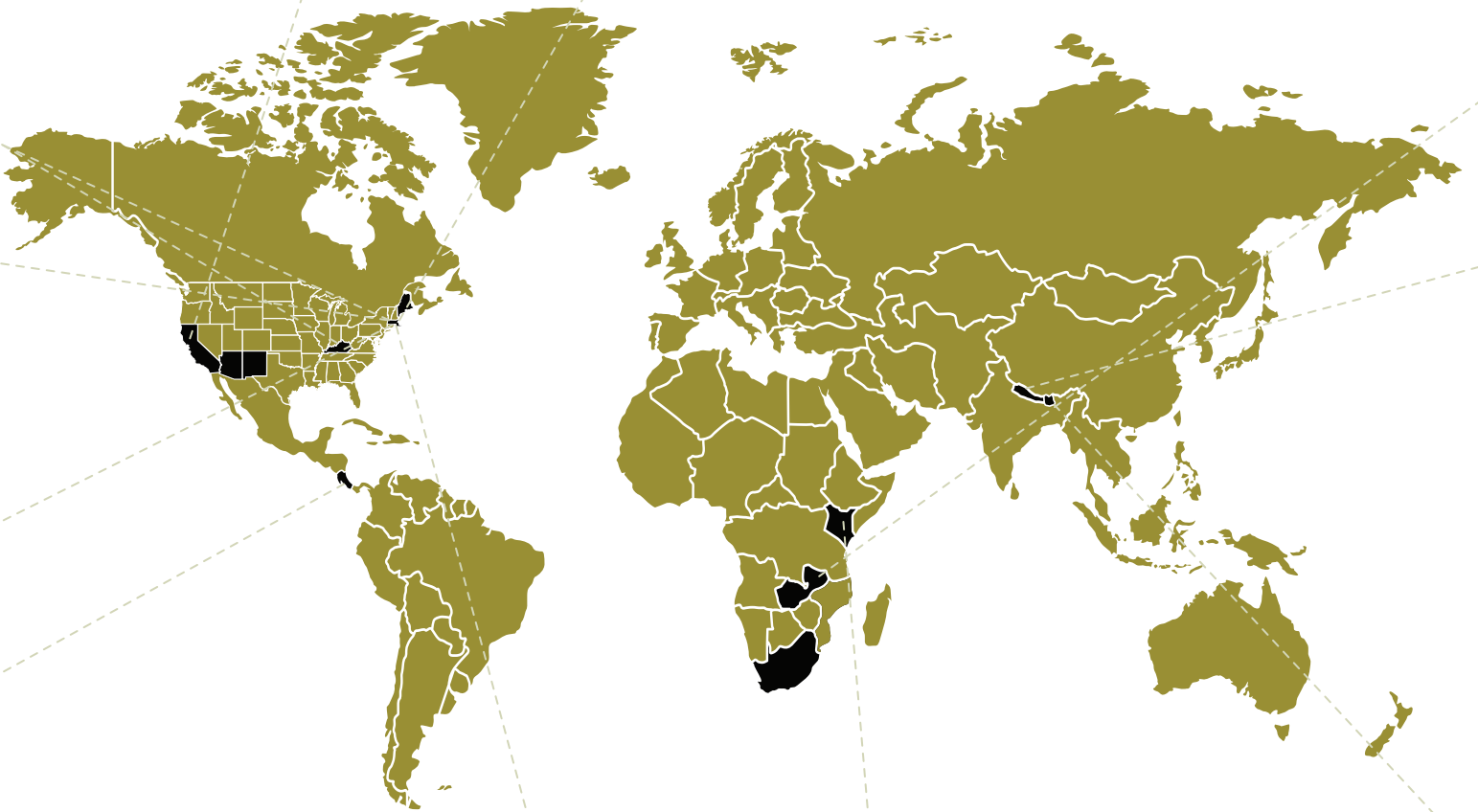
It was another relatively quiet year at Mastate Charitable Foundation with the pandemic still a visceral part of everyday life. Their efforts focused entirely on local community development. MCF continued to finance the maintenance and improvements at the local soccer field, funded local infrastructure improvements, and provided financial boosts for low-income members of their Costa Rican



community. They continue to be a solid source of "no strings attached" financing for local projects that fit within their mission.

STEAM the Streets

STEAM the Streets scaled their impact through the development of an online platform that exposes youth of color to careers through relatable role models and a gamified approach. The platform, designed and built by Black-owned Mobile App Hero, is the first of its kind that focuses on career awareness and



activation for BIPOC students. They have also been impacting youth through their internship programs, one of which was completed with high school students at West Contra Costa Unified School District in Richmond, CA. Students helped produce a series of videos that promoted career pathways to their peers in the district.

Bus Rapid Transit Strategic Grants

Through a grant from the Barr Foundation, the Marion Institute supported rapid-response mobility grants related to COVID-19. The purpose of the grant is to

provide rapid relief funding to prioritize people rather than vehicles on streets.

The Mindful Collaborative

The Mindful Collaborative is well into its second year of mindfulness programming in two New Bedford, MA public elementary schools, Congdon and Devalles. Their program includes 18 weeks of direct mindfulness instruction for the whole student body (K-5th grade), co-teaching instruction for all K-5 classroom teachers, a series of professional development ses-



sions for the educators of the school, and ongoing data collection.

S.A.F.E.

S.A.F.E.'s mission is to harness the power of art to advocate for and support holistic behavior change to create healthy, peaceful, and prosperous communities. Using theatre, film, and education to inform, inspire, and

deliver social, health, and environmental change, S.A.F.E. works hard to reach vulnerable communities focusing on sexual health, gender-based violence, clean water and sanitation, countering extremism and peace building. Three local teams deliver their programs in vulnerable and marginalized communities: SAFE Pwani in the coastal counties, SAFE Maa in Loita and Olderkesi (Narok), and SAFE Samburu in the Westgate Conservancy and Nyiro (Samburu County).

Nourishⁿ

Nourishⁿ supports, creates and leads initiatives with community partners worldwide to help spark and spread cycles of biological, cultural, and economic vitality in society – what they call Nourishment Economies. Their foundation consists of close working relationships and knowledge developed with leading social entrepreneurs and community enterprises. Their work is focused on the benefits that result when social or business approaches cycle a spectrum of nutrients between land, plants, animals, and people, spawning regenerative, rather than extractive, economies and ecologies. COVID-19 and increasingly erratic weather conditions brought an even greater momentum and pressure to their work on this cause around the world, as people and communities increasingly emphasized local innovation and control around food, farming, biodiversity, and health systems. This year, for example, Nourishⁿ partnered with eleven Native American community enterprises; helped replicate COMACO's 220,000-farmer regenerative agriculture and forest and elephant conservation enterprise in a new location in Zambia; and transferred the BeeOmonitoring approach and web technology tools from Belgium to the United States - partnering with thousands of bees as data collectors to identify and remediate specific biological and chemical risks to biodiversity and waterways.

Taktse International School (Taktse)

This was an intense year of learning for everyone at Taktse, especially their teachers. All were stretched to become tech savvy, to balance the responsibilities of home life with online teaching, and to keep spirits up in the face of a global crisis. Despite this, teachers and alumni found space to support

each other and additional communities who were struggling to adapt to the new situation. More than 15 Taktse teachers participated in an online course on Shared Inquiry with Great Books Foundation and five teachers partook in the EdX course "Leaders of Learning," facilitated by long-time friend of Taktse, Christine Stodolski. Additionally, Ms. Reshma Thapa-Gurung and Mr. Sam Khaiba, both Taktse faculty-alumni, led a cohort of Taktse faculty and alumni volunteers through a Taktse-style professional development for 1500 Sikkim government school teachers.

The Himalayan Project (THP)

Last year, as the darkness of COVID held the planet in its grip, The Himalayan Project took a break from fundraising as the heartbreaking reality of the pandemic unfolded in Nepal and its mountain communities. Initially, Nepal went into a total lockdown and closed its borders to outside contact and infection.

However, in a country that absolutely depends on tourism, the extended lockdown put extreme pressure on wage earners and Nepal's most vulnerable families. When the 2021 spring trekking season arrived, the Nepali government agreed to open its borders for expeditions going to Everest. Unfortunately, the Delta variant was increasing around the world and arrived in Nepal with 17 cases diagnosed at Base Camp, exposing all the tiny villages and local communities along the way. Infections climbed rapidly in remote areas where there was no access to medical care of any kind - no doctors, medications, hospital beds, respirators, and certainly no vaccinations. With the Mahendra Jyoti Secondary School in Chaurikharka completely shut down, THP focused its resources on addressing food insecurity and hunger in this mountain community.





“I think more than anything what Farm to School programs do and what place-based education does in general is that they make learning relevant.”

— Barret Williams, School Principal

GROW EDUCATION

Building Resilient Communities

Creating a culture of health by incorporating health-building habits into student Classrooms, Cafeterias, and Communities

What We Do

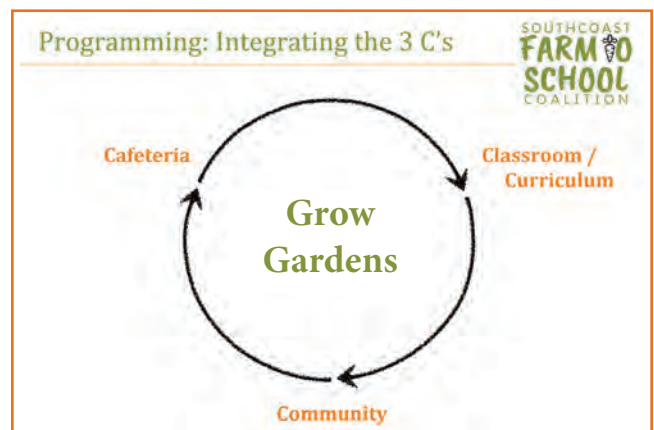
Classroom Educate students and support teachers by creating and implementing nutrition, ecological literacy, and sustainability curriculum.

Cafeteria Partner with Food Service Departments to rebuild cafeteria infrastructure, eliminate processed foods, and introduce culturally-relevant foods.

Community Engage students and families in menu development and project-based learning through school gardens and events.

Our Grow Education program partners with school districts to support teachers, engage families, and educate students about healthier eating and lifestyles. We provide experiential programming for elementary students by leading hands-on workshops in Grow gardens, bringing relevant subject matter experts into the classroom, developing exciting agricultural and nutritional curriculum, and working with school food services to reinforce lessons in their cafeterias.

Grow Education has been developing and refining these concepts over the course of its nine-year partnership with New Bedford Public Schools. **In 2019, we expanded our programming to include a Farm-to-School (FTS) initiative, further connecting Grow gardens with classrooms, cafeterias, and the wider school community.** This FTS framework functions as an integrated program, supporting students as they become more aware, engaged, and motivated to



learn how healthy eating connects with healthy living, healthy environments, and happy families.

Gardens

Over the years, teachers from around New Bedford have reached out to Grow Education with the hope of having gardens built at their schools. This year we

Our programming engages communities on the South-coast to build a more equitable food system through providing fresh, local, nutrient-rich foods to schools and local institutions. We strive to advance a paradigm of improved health, toxic-free environments, and resilient communities.

were able to finally deliver! Thanks to New Bedford's Community Preservation Act (CPA), the Marion Institute in partnership with New Bedford Public Schools (NBPS) was awarded funding to build garden beds, compost bins, and educational features to complete 16 additional gardens and outdoor classrooms at public elementary schools throughout the city.

Grow Education's Program Manager, Adam Davenport, designed garden beds with support from local carpenters, to be sturdy, sustainably built, and able



to last for more than a decade. The beds are made of composite PVC boards, cedar wood 4x4's, and stainless-steel hardware.

We owe particular thanks to Bruce Delano, a local landscaper, who was excited to support this project and who volunteered to build several gardens right

around the corner from where he grew up at the Gomes school. His company, Delano Landscaping continues to build remaining garden beds across the district. Each garden bed is a classroom unto itself, challenging students to analyze soil, dig for worms, and learn how vegetables grow - from seed to fork!

Classroom

Educational Programming

The winter of 2020 into 2021 was an interesting and challenging time in NBPS for teachers, students, and community partners. New Bedford maintained a hybrid schedule for students, but did not allow community partners into the schools for programming. Luckily, Grow was able to shift gears and engage with students virtually and in-person, using the gardens as pandemic-safe outdoor education spaces.

In the winter months, Grow brings local farmers and food system experts into classrooms to present Farm to School related topics. Undeterred by COVID restrictions, Grow created a series of virtual presentations with our community partners. Two videos were created - a seed focused lesson with farmer Bill Braun of Ivory Silo Farm and the Freed Seed Federation and another with Stephanie Perks and Dan King of Coastal Foodshed highlighting their work as a local food aggregator and distributor. The videos provided a portal to the farm and food hub. Students watched Bill demonstrate several of the machines used to thrush and winnow seeds from his farm for saving and future planting and took a tour of Coastal Foodshed's New





Bedford-based food hub operation. Grow-partnered schools watched the virtual presentations and participated in live Q&A's with the experts through their virtual classrooms.

Spring ushered in fresh air for students and teachers as we reunited in the gardens to plant seeds and seedlings. Students experienced tiny vegetable seed sprouts and taste tested them as they practiced cultivation techniques, such as thinning the rows to increase growth. We hired a local Fall River resident, Shalynn Brooks, to maintain the school gardens throughout the summer. School gardens play an important role during the summer as they become community gardens for neighborhood residents.

USDA Farm to School Grant

Grow Education was honored to be awarded funding by the USDA as part of their Farm to School Grant Program. As stated by the USDA, "this support helps The Marion Institute develop the Grow Education farm to school curriculum, including curriculum development and teacher training. In addition, this funding will support the expansion of a comprehensive Farm to School program across the New Bedford Public School District, providing 3rd graders with hands-on, agricultural education and school meals featuring locally grown foods to more than 14,000 students."

FoodCorps Partnership

This year we expanded our Grow team by hiring FoodCorps members Keri Cusson-DeFusco and Mikaela Thiboutot. Keri and Mikaela worked closely with four of our partner schools throughout the 2020/2021 school year. Partnering with FoodCorps allows Grow Education to have a deeper, more consistent pres-

ence in the schools. FoodCorps members help teachers use the outdoor gardens more fully and embed lesson plans into the curriculum.

While Keri and Mikaela completed their year of service in July of 2021, we were excited to expand our FoodCorps team into the 2021/2022 school year through the hiring of three new FoodCorps members. Our summer intern, Shalynn Brooks, stayed on with us in this new role and we added Jenn Frates and Amelia Jones, to our Grow team.

Professional Development

In August 2021, the second cohort of NBPS teachers started their Grow Education experience by attending our in-person professional development workshop at Round the Bend Farm (RTB) in South Dartmouth. Grow Education introduced the New Bedford Farm to School initiative, provided evidence of the importance of nutritious food for student learning, and demonstrated how gardens as classrooms can serve as a great supplementary tool for many subjects. Teachers brainstormed ways to integrate garden lessons into their classroom schedules while enjoying a tour of the farm and a farm to table meal produced by RTB's on-site chef. This farm-based workshop gives teachers the opportunity to feel how experiential learning - getting their hands dirty - can be a valuable tool for increasing student comprehension, first-hand.

Additionally in 2021, teachers who participated in one of Grow's professional development experiences had the opportunity to continue their professional devel-



opment through a 21-day online education program sent to teachers via daily emails. The program provided in-depth content on national and regional food systems, student nutrition, gardens as classrooms, and the benefits of Farm to School programs.

“There was so much learning. I am always intimidated by gardening so I loved the hands-on experience and tour that we took. My passion is helping kids learn how they can make healthier choices and this opportunity for our schools is such a great way to teach them. This hands-on learning experience can help kids understand that what they put in their bodies affects their body and mind.

This was by far the best Professional Development Day that I have been a part of in my 37 years of teaching.”

– 3rd Grade Teacher, NBPS

Grow Education Lesson Plans

The Grow Education team created a series of nine lesson plans connecting MA state curriculum standards - in science, health, math and ELA - to Grow's garden and nutrition topics. These lesson plans provide a vital connection between Grow topics and frameworks that teachers are required to teach in their normal schedules. A few of the lesson plan titles give you a taste of the content provided: Mindful Bites, The Diversity and Resilience of Seeds, Microbes and Me, and The People in Our Food Systems. The lesson plans provide teachers with the opportunity to

reinforce themes from workshops Grow conducts in the gardens, and additionally provide resources that support the use of outdoor classrooms. Embedding Grow lessons into the curriculum is an important part of our long-term sustainability plan for integrating Grow's programming throughout the district.

Cafeteria / Community

With a shared desire to improve the freshness, nutritional density, and cultural relevancy of the district's menu, Grow and NBPS Food Service Department launched the FTS initiative in 2019. A product of collaboration, the learning that happens in the gardens is reinforced with the food service's weekly taste tests of 'Harvest of the Month' vegetables. Additionally, the Food Service Department made great strides this year in building capacity to serve NBPS students' higher quality food by upgrading infrastructure across the district. This included a complete rebuild of New Bedford High School's kitchen. Infrastructure updates will continue over the coming years in support of a locally-sourced, 'speed-scratch' cooking method being adopted by the department.

What's next?

We look forward to another year of growth in 2022 as we move closer to realizing our goal of building a garden and outdoor classroom in each of the 19 NBPS elementary school locations, while simultaneously offering educational programming. A large focus will be on collaborating with the Food Service Department as they develop and implement fresher, more nutritionally dense and culturally-relevant menu items across the district. This, of course, is coupled with taste tests that encourage students to try new vegetables, foods, and flavors. We look forward to sharing more about the Community Recipe Meetings being planned for the upcoming year. These recipe meetings will help source families' ethnic recipes for incorporation into school menus. One bite at a time, students are learning to connect their eating decisions with their health, their local food system, and their family history.



**"The food you eat can be either the safest
and most powerful form of medicine or the
slowest form of poison."**

— Ann Wigmore, holistic health practitioner

SOUTHCOAST FOOD POLICY COUNCIL

Advocating for Food Justice

The Southcoast Food Policy Council (SFPC) provides a platform that encourages and facilitates coordination, collaboration, and improvement of the myriad sectors of our regional food system.

What We Do

Convene a community of practice that assesses and mobilizes resources and encourages and facilitates collaboration to effect social change.

Connect local food producers, consumers, and community leaders to navigate and share resources.

Advocate for policy and systems that strengthen our regional food system, improve community health, eliminate food insecurity, and confront food injustice.

The Southcoast Food Policy Council (SFPC) is a coalition of over 300 food-system stakeholders, working together to promote food and nutrition security. While many of our member organizations are focused on the vital task of providing direct services, the SFPC takes a systems-oriented approach to meld problem-solving, advocacy, and planning to address the overarching governing policies and practices that shape our food system.

The food system is both impacted and influenced by various factors and systems, including the environment, public health, and the economy. These, in turn, are reflective of varying levels of policy, which is often the expression of a society's culture and values. While complex, food policy councils must consider these multi-faceted, interdependent relationships as they consider food and agriculture related policies and programs. To create a food system that works for everyone, we need to address policy and deci-

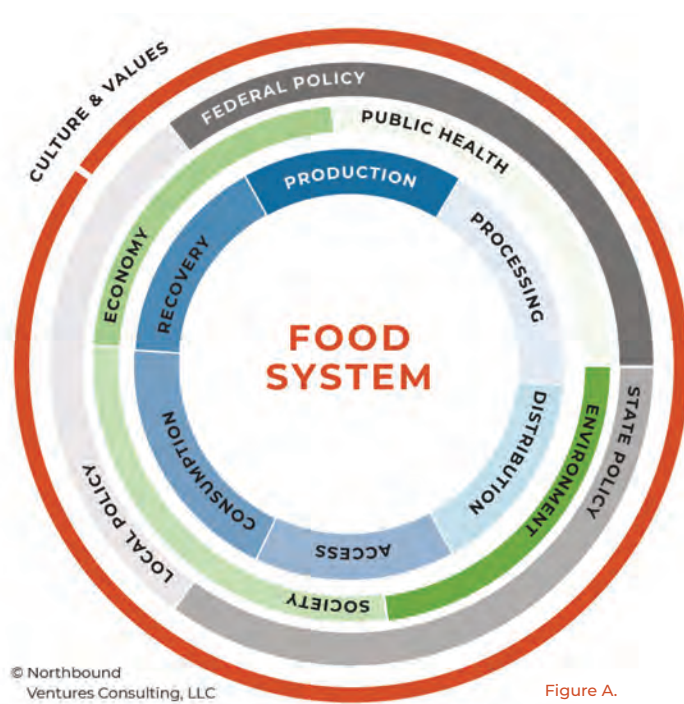


Figure A.

sion-making at all levels. Figure A depicts how food policy councils work in the outer levels (gray and green circles) and focuses on the long-term, systemic changes that need to be addressed in order to elevate the direct services of the inner sectors (blue circle).

An initial goal of the SFPC was to update the 2014 Food System Assessment (FSA) for Southeastern MA. FSA's are a vital tool for providing an in-depth understanding of the regional food system at a fixed point in time. In addition to providing indicators of population, environmental, and economic health, FSA's also increase awareness of the regions' assets, challenges, and opportunities.

Our objectives for the 2021 Food System Assessment for Southeastern MA were to:

- Provide an updated landscape of the region's food system assets. Incorporating broader primary research and food economy perspective.
- Share progress since the 2014 assessment and current challenges.
- Identify intervention points where policy supports an equitable and sustainable food system for all in the region.
- Help raise awareness of Southeastern Massachusetts' context for contributing to state-wide and New England food system planning work.

The 2021 Food System Assessment illuminated insights and opportunities by emphasizing the numerous service gaps and emergencies caused by an over reliance on an industrial food system. Going forth, the SFPC will use this assessment to prioritize policies and projects in the months and years to come.

As an active member of the Massachusetts Food System Collaborative's local food policy councils

The Food System

The food system is the value chain that includes the resources and services of food production, transport, processing or manufacturing, distribution and consumption, and food recovery.



project, the SFPC carries the voice of Bristol, Plymouth, and Norfolk counties to the state, conveying challenges, concerns, strategies, and successes that contribute to and inform initiatives beneficial to the Commonwealth as a whole.

Our FSA was officially released in October 2021 at the virtual Food Summit held in partnership with Senator Mark Montigny's office and UMass Dartmouth LeDuc Center for Civic Engagement. Additional presentations of key takeaways are scheduled for early FY'22.



Scan to view the assessment.

The Assessment can be accessed at our website and

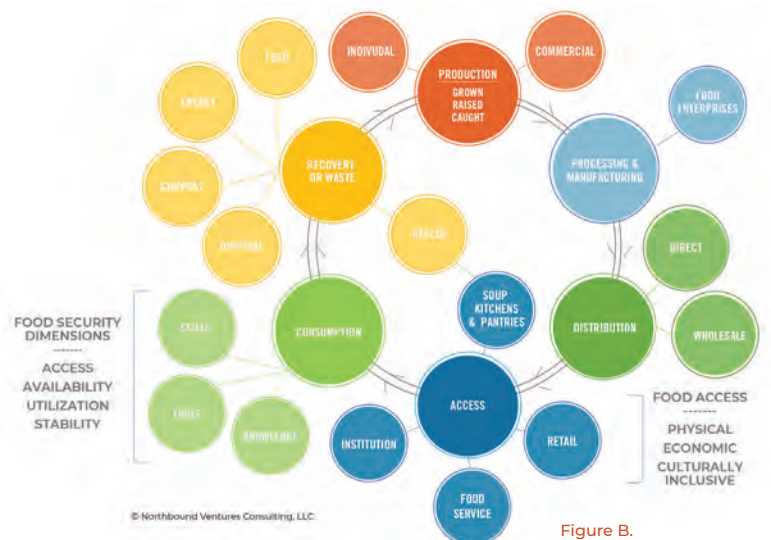


Figure B.

SFPC's goal is to address the long-term systemic issues associated with food injustice and insecurity that plague South-eastern Massachusetts's communities; while supporting a regionally-based, environmentally resilient food economy.

is a reliable resource for those interested in a better understanding of our local food system, for grant writing, legislative advocacy, and education.

Convene

Throughout FY'21, the SFPC continued to convene weekly emergency meetings to assess and mobilize resources and encourage and facilitate collaboration in response to the pandemic. The SFPC's **Emergency Food Resource meetings** proved crucial, as they provided an opportunity for community organizations to come together to continuously identify and remedy service gaps, develop processes to follow as the crisis unfolded, build cooperative relationships among the food sectors across the region, and elevate speakers from other industries that intersect with food, such as housing and healthcare.

Since its inception in early 2020, the SFPC has operated in an emergency response mode due to the exponential increase in food insecurity attributed to the pandemic. During FY'21, we began to shift to the important work of building the core programmatic infrastructure of the SFPC through conducting research and outreach both locally and nationally to identify and model best practices for establishing an inclusive, community-driven food policy council. With our foundational infrastructure in place, the SFPC developed our Guiding Principles for how the SFPC would operate and began recruitment of our Community Advisory Board (CAB).

The SFPC's 30-member CAB is comprised of stakeholders representing different parts of the local food system across the region. The intentional identification of a broad group of stakeholders was meant to break silos and bring people together who usually do not meet to discuss common issues. The CAB began meeting monthly in September '21.

Understanding Discrimination in the Food

System: In partnership with the YWCA of South-eastern MA, the SFPC co-chaired a Food Justice Working group to identify priority issues needing change and to work collaboratively with community partners. Additionally, to center equity and inclusion into the foundational work of the food policy council, we contracted the YWCA to create a Food Equity Training for incoming CAB members.

Connect

Through a collaboration with the Boston-based Shah Foundation's Local Lunchbox program, we partnered with school districts and non-profits in Wareham, New Bedford, and Fall River to deliver fresh, healthy, culturally-relevant hot meals to students in our region. From January 21, 2021 to May 8, 2021, the Southcoast Food Policy Council helped coordinate the distribution of 206,518 breakfast and lunches for kids 18 years and younger. Meals were distributed twice a week at the following Southcoast sites: Fall River YMCA, Fall River Boys and Girls Club, New Bedford YMCA, New



SFPC Emergency Resource Meetings

883

hours logged with partners
Oct 20 - Sept 21

Bedford Boys and Girls Club, New Bedford Salvation Army, Wareham YMCA, East Wareham Elementary School, and Brandy Hill Apartments.

SFPC's Impact in the Community



The SFPC is honored to have received two awards this year in recognition of its work and positive impact on the local food system. The United Way of Greater New Bedford awarded the SFPC with their 2021 Community Partner Award for exemplifying the value of nutrition in their efforts to prevent hunger in the region. The Southeastern Massachusetts Agricultural Partnership's (SEMAP) Recognition Award honors a person or organization that has made a lasting or meaningful impact on local food and farming, demonstrating leadership, and bringing positive change to Southeastern Massachusetts.

Advocate

SFPC's advocacy began in earnest this year. The SFPC submitted seven letters of legislative testimony in partnership with many allies. We captured and utilized stories from our partners and leaned on data from the 2021 Southcoast Food System Assessment when writing these testimonials.

We submitted written testimonials to local legislators during the Senate hearings to ensure the MA State budget included funding for the following:

- Mass in Motion.
- UMass Extension.
- Food System Infrastructure Grant.
- Healthy Incentives Program.
- Second round of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds for MA Food System.

The 2017 USDA research showed that in Bristol, Norfolk, and Plymouth counties 98% of farmers are white and 42% of farmers are over the age of 65. The combination of an aging farmer population and lack of racial diversity in farming points to a need to support young and BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) farmers. In September, we submitted written testimony supporting **An Act Promoting Equity in Agriculture**. This Act would establish a commission comprised of BIPOC leaders across the state to research and make recommendations to create ways that existing programs and laws can better address inequities and create new policies led by BIPOC leaders to ensure equity in agriculture in the Commonwealth. This Act was heard in Joint Committee but has not yet been voted upon – stay tuned!

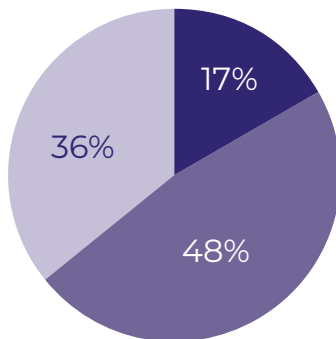
What's Next?

In FY'22, the SFPC will host presentations focused on the key takeaways from the 2021 Food System Assessment for Southeastern MA to increase community knowledge and build allies; we will move to hosting quarterly public meetings for our 300+ Members-at-Large to share progress made by the SFPC; and the SFPC Community Advisory Board will undergo a community-driven strategic planning process utilizing the 2021 Southcoast Food System Assessment to develop our working groups and ongoing priorities for the SFPC.

Financials FY'21

Fiscal Year 2021 (October 1, 2020 – September 30, 2021)

Revenue



- Programs
- Unrestricted
- Greenhouse Initiatives

Programs

\$326,898

Unrestricted

\$936,599

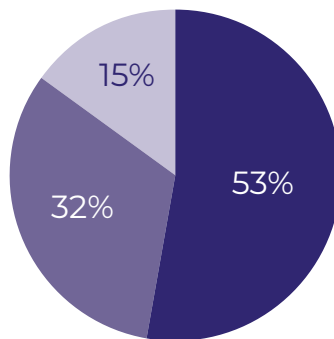
Greenhouse Initiatives

\$702,439

Total

\$1,965,936

Expenses



- Programs
- Greenhouse Initiatives
- Admin/Fundraising/
Program Support

Programs

\$995,695

Greenhouse Initiatives

\$594,321

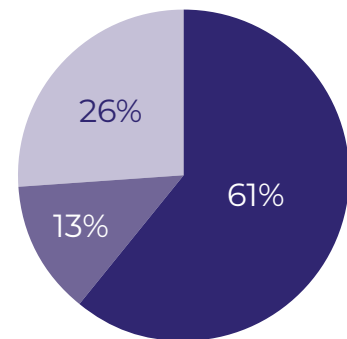
Admin/Fundraising/ Program Support

\$287,671

Total

\$1,877,687

Net Assets



- Without Donor Restrictions
- With Donor Restrictions (Programs)
- With Donor Restrictions (Greenhouse Initiatives)

Without Donor Restrictions

\$892,468

With Donor Restrictions

(Programs)

\$187,375

With Donor Restrictions

(Greenhouse Initiatives)

\$372,752

Total

\$1,452,595

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