



Our Timeline

1993

Margie and Michael Baldwin, and a small group of friends, create the **Marion Foundation**, a member-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit which pursued knowledge through informal workshops and seminars. It also acted as a resource center, distributing a quarterly newsletter with articles and information on a variety of thought-provoking topics.

2003

The Marion Foundation changes its name to the **Marion Institute**, with core, staff-supported programs and global "Serendipity Projects" (fiscal sponsorships.) "Changing ourselves, changing our world" becomes the Institute's mission.

2005

Bioneers by the Bay has its inaugural multi-day event, hosted at UMass Dartmouth and later relocated to downtown New Bedford. The transformative cultural conference is later renamed **Connecting for Change** and goes on to make a big impact in the lives of thousands of attendees throughout the years, until the last conference in 2015.

2009-2011

Energy, Ecology, & Economy: The MI adds a new program that takes a whole-systems approach to meeting the needs of the local community. **The Green Jobs, Green Economy** initiative is established in 2009, in partnership with the City of New Bedford and the New Bedford Economic Development Council. GJGE sought to support the New Bedford community in becoming a national leader in the green jobs and sustainability movement. The group is instrumental in helping to secure funding that is used to create the City of New Bedford's Energy Office.

The program reached out to over 3000 households and small businesses and over a dozen jobs were created through the work of its many partners and collaborators.

In the summer of 2011, New Bedford's energy efficiency efforts, solar efforts, and a grassroots initiative called the Southcoast Energy Challenge (SEC) join forces to create New Bedford Energy Now! (NBEN). The SEC would later become a program of the Marion Institute.

2016

The **Southcoast Energy Challenge**, an initiative started by the Southeastern Environmental Education Alliance (SEEAL) becomes a program of the Marion Institute. The Challenge provided an online portal where residents, businesses, schools etc. in the Southcoast could calculate their carbon footprint and provided a myriad of strategies for reducing ones carbon footprint. The SEC went on to take a greater role in outreach to low and moderate income populations in New Bedford, collaborating with MassSave on promoting energy assistance and efficiency and helping to set up energy audits. Solar energy and wind power also became key elements of the SEC messaging and advocacy work in the Southcoast region. The Southcoast Energy Challenge (SEC) was acquired at the end of 2018 by Self-Reliance, a Massachusetts non-profit organization with over 35 years' experience in the energy sector.

2018

MI celebrates its 25th anniversary with a "Silver Soiree" in October that brings together many faces from the past.

Grow Education expands its classroom programming, bringing a variety of local speakers to schools as part of the 2018-2019 Winter Speaker Series. Over 18 presentations were given to students, focused on bridging community resources for the students of New Bedford.

2019

Under the leadership of a new Executive Director, Liz Wiley, the MI refines its mission to focus on integrative and innovative approaches to whole-body health and adopts a new tagline, **"Creating a Culture of Health – National Impact, Local Commitment"**

Grow Education embarks on a **Farm-to-School Initiative** with New Bedford Public Schools. The program is piloted in 2 schools during the 2019-2020 school year.

1997

The Marion Foundation creates its first core program- the **Biological Medicine Network**. It begins to host seminars for patients and doctors and in time, grows into a referral-based network connecting patients with integrative medicine practitioners across the globe.

2004

Wangari Maathai, founder of the Green Belt Movement, becomes the first African woman to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. The Green Belt Movement was an early fiscal sponsorship program based in Kenya and focused on environmental conservation, community development, and capacity building.

2009

The Marion Institute's Sustainable Education Initiative [SEI] is created; the project seeks to create edible school gardens. In 2013, SEI refines its mission to focus on public schools in New Bedford, MA. The project becomes a core MI program and is renamed **Grow Education**.

2013

Root Cause Solutions: The Marion Institute redefines its mission to reflect changing organizational goals: It "acts as an incubator for a diverse array of programs and Serendipity Projects that seek to find a solution to the root cause of an issue in the realms of sustainability and social justice."

In May, the Marion Institute acquires **Round the Bend Farm**, a Center for Restorative Community, which initially operated as a program of the Marion Institute and evolved into its own non-profit in 2015.

2015

The final Connecting for Change Conference takes place in October and transitions to the **Connector Series** program, which offers more intimate, curated events throughout the year, designed to increase interaction, foster dialogue, and bring innovative ideas to action. The first Connector Series takes place in April 2016 with *Lessons From Cuba: Building Community Through Food*, and is followed later in the year with 2 sold-out appearances by animal behaviorist and autism rights activist Temple Grandin. Since then, the Connector Series has hosted over 25 events with thousands of attendees.

2017

The Marion Institute increases its focus on biological medicine with the incubation of a new organization dedicated to the "science of self-healing." **The Bioregulatory Medicine Institute**, or BRMI, hosts its inaugural conference in 2017 quickly followed by another in May of 2018. During this time, they also establish a seminal educational website on bioregulatory medicine, BRMI.online, with in-depth articles, white papers, videos, and interviews with experts in the field.

MI begins the incubation of what will become the first medical and dental biological medicine center in North America: **The BioMed Center New England**. Located in Providence, RI, the BioMed Center officially opens in October 2018. MI continues to be the educational partner of the BioMed Center, collaborating with its practitioners on a number of events and initiatives designed to promote integrative, whole body health to an ever-growing audience.

2020

The MI welcomes a new program, the **Southcoast Food Policy Council (SFPC)**. Formally known as the *Southeastern MA Food Security Network*, the SFPC's mission is to connect, convene, and advocate for local food producers, consumers, and community leaders who seek policy and systems that strengthen our regional food system, improve community health, and eliminate food insecurity.

The COVID-19 pandemic creates an increased need in the community and the SFPC activates its membership to organize and re-allocate local and regional resources to combat the rising food insecurity on the Southcoast of Massachusetts. Through programs such as **Cooks for Community** and the **Farmers to Families Food Boxes**, the SFPC is able to mobilize resources and assist those in need. The SFPC membership grows to over 300 and weekly resource calls allow the group to stay agile and flexible to the needs of the Southcoast community.

From 1997-2003, the Biological Medicine Network (BMN) conducted a series of educational conferences & lectures with Dr. Thomas Rau, a pioneer in the field. This relationship would continue through 2014; in total, over 20 seminars were conducted, resulting in the education of hundreds of people on the topic of European Biological Medicine.

We have assisted 8 organizations in becoming certified 501(c)(3) charities: Coastal Foodshed, Creative Lives, Green Belt Movement, Gross National Happiness, Institute for Human and Planetary Flourishing, Leadership Brainery, Speak for the Trees, and The Unseen Hand. We've also helped former MI programs become independent organizations, such as Round the Bend Farm (RTB), a Center for Restorative Community, and Cambodian Living Arts.

We are currently incubating 14 organizations through our Greenhouse Initiatives program: BRMI, Community Youth Empowerment, Gold Standard Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Strategic Grants, Lawrence Arts House, Nourish, S.A.F.E., STEAM the Streets, Taktse International School, The Coms, The Himalayan Project, The Mastate Charitable Foundation, The Mindful Collaborative, The Relay Fund, and The Voice Movement Therapy Center.