

CELEBRATING WOMXN'S LEADERSHIP IN FOOD

2023 YEAR IN REVIEW

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CO-DIRECTOR'S NOTE

2023 YEAR IN REVIEW

Dear Community,

We are excited to share all that unfolded in this past year at Celebrating Womxn's Leadership in Food. 2023 brought growth, a deepening of relationships and some exciting new developments to our community-based efforts.

We entered into our second season of collaboration with The Cultural Conservancy and our network of North Bay farmers, deepening the work and doubling our impact through the Grow a Row initiative. Plants to the People brought together our urban and rural farming communities for another year of relationship building and mutual aid through plant sharing. Our annual symposium grew into a two day event and we were deeply inspired by the stories shared by both familiar and new voices coming together from across the state. And our gratitude for our farmer network, who make our initiatives possible, continues to expand every year. Inspired by friends and colleagues, this winter we expressed that gratitude with a day focused on rest and care to honor their hard work and collaborative spirit.

This year we also have incredible gratitude for our community of funders, who supported us in increasing our budget so that we can grow our work, more sustainably compensate our team, and dedicate meaningful time to building a strategic vision. Leadership circle member Layla Aguilar shifted into her new role as co-director, helping our small organization live even more deeply into its values of collaborative, relational ways of being. We are also endlessly grateful to leadership circle members Thea Carlson and Stephanie Maldonado and are excited to bring new and additional voices to the table in 2024.

Celebrating Womxn's Leadership in Food gathers people together to connect across difference, build trust, nurture community and grow solidarity. Thank you for taking a few moments to explore what that looked like in 2023. We cannot wait for all that 2024 will bring!

In Solidarity,

Caitlin Hachmyer + Layla Aguilar, co-directors

PLANTS TO THE PEOPLE

INITIATIVES

Plants to the People continued to bring farmers together from across the urban and rural regions in 2023. This initiative launched out of urgency in 2020 when urban growers recognized a critical and impending need to grow more food, and quickly, on their urban community farms. The plant share has grown into a twice-a-year event. This year it brought together fifteen growers to send over 11,500 plants grown in rural greenhouses to urban farms, community gardens and school gardens in San Francisco and the East Bay.

We circled up at West County Community Farm in the Spring and Winter Sisters Farm in the Fall to enjoy snacks, connect with our grower community and load up trucks with vegetable, flower, and herb starts. Some of our urban growers shared that over eighty percent of the crops they're growing come from Plants to the People. These plants bring together and touch not just the handful of growers building relationships over their exchange, but hundreds of families across the Bay that then plant them, tend them, and enjoy their bounty.

Many thanks to [Hummingbird Farm](#), [Castlemont High School + Sankofa Gardens](#), [Sogorea Te Land Trust](#), [Common Vision](#), [The Cultural Conservancy](#), [West County Community Farm](#), [Singing Frogs Farm](#), [Lets Go Farm](#), [Open Field Farm](#), [Little Rainbow Farm](#), [Red H Farm](#), [Beet Generation Farm](#), [Shone Farm](#), [Monan's Rill](#) and [Winter Sister Farm](#) for so much community.



PLANTS TO THE PEOPLE

INITIATIVES



GROW A ROW

INITIATIVES

Grow a Row is a solidarity collaboration between CWLF and The Cultural Conservancy (TCC). Our collaboration seeks to strengthen relationships between Native communities in TCC's network and North Bay farmers. These farmers dedicate one row on their farms to growing produce to be distributed through this network, thereby supporting seed growing at Heron Shadow (TCC's farm in Graton).

This year began with a mutual commitment to engaging with openness and building trust. We began the process of clarifying our organizational shared values and detailing protocols for the Grow a Row network. This resulted in a more fluid relationship and efficient communication between the coordinators. Diving deeper into relationship building in our community is priceless.

In all, 6500 lbs of produce and meat valued at over \$20,000 were donated during the 2023 season. This food was shared with communities across the greater Bay Area through TCC's partnerships with Sonoma County Indian Health Project, California Indian Museum and Community Center, Wahpepah's Kitchen, American Indian Child Resource Center, Intertribal Friendship House - Oakland, and American Indian Cultural District.

This winter we will host our first community harvest, helping bring in the last of the Grow a Row crops for the season. We plan to organize farm visits in 2024 to strengthen connections between contributing farm businesses and receiving organizations, and are looking to expand our farmer network to include more meat and egg producers.

Tremendous gratitude for Coyote Family Farm, Let's Go Farm, Beet Generation Farm, Red H Farm, Open Field Farm, Yagi Sisters Farm, Petaluma Bounty Farm, Singing Frog Farm, Winter Sister Farm, and Shone Farm for sharing so much! These farmers are privileged to tend unceded Native lands, and are deeply honored to do this work as part of our collective effort to be in right relationship with the land and our community.

GROW A ROW

INITIATIVES



FARMER CARE DAY

INITIATIVES

We hosted our first Farmer Care Day in early December. We recognize that our Northbay farmer network is critical to the success of our initiatives and we want to honor their commitment to building and supporting community across Northern California through the Grow a Row and Plants to the People Initiatives.

Supporting the transition into quieter months, we provided these hardworking land tenders with a morning of care and relaxation.

A dozen farmers joined us in the barn at Green Valley Farm + Mill to receive massage, enjoy a tea bar with arts and crafts and nourishing treats, and relax into a guided meditation and movement exercise. Our network had a chance to slow down, connect with one another and feel cared for.

We were inspired by the farmer care days hosted by Agroecology Commons and by the ongoing work of Botanical Bus, which center the need for farmers and farmworkers to slow down, receive holistic care and feel the appreciation for all that they do. CWLF is committed to nourishing our community by being responsive to shifting needs. We believe expressing care to and for one another is critical to knit together our communities, creating deeper and more actionable solidarity.



ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM: COMMUNITY RISING

INITIATIVES

Celebrating Womxn's Leadership in Food held our seventh annual symposium, Community Rising, in mid November. Taking notes and growing off of last year's event, we curated our first two day symposium with two-way interpretation provided by Globally You. This year's gathering included more time to intentionally connect with our collaborators and partners. Saturday was a journey into what community means and how it plays out in different parts of the state. Sunday was full of enriching, interactive workshops. Both days were abundant with local food, drinks and the chance to connect, slow down and find some joy with one another.

Co-director Caiti Hachmyer welcomed over 80 folks from around the state who gathered in the barn at Green Valley Farm + Mill in Sebastopol to participate in Community Rising. We dove into conversations around the ways community shows up for each other when many of the "safety nets" in place fail us. On Saturday morning, co-director Layla Aguilar facilitated a fishbowl conversation with Vick Montaña (Sogorea Te Land Trust), Josefina Lara Chavez (CAFF), Suzi Grady (Petaluma Bounty), Celsa Ortega and Yesenia Lopez (Fondo Solidario) exploring topics ranging from how we define community and what our roles are in it, to what tools we use to support community led efforts. After this fruitful and engaging conversation, participants were able to join a break-out session with one of the speakers to explore their field of work more deeply. Then, after lunch we were led in a world cafe discussion by leadership circle member Thea Carlson, further teasing out our dreams of living more actively in community.



ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM

INITIATIVES

On Saturday evening, speakers, workshop leaders and the CWLF team were joined in the Farm House by Caitlin Joseph, Deputy Director of Women for the Land, a program of the American Farmland Trust. We had time to share a quiet meal, get to know one another better and discuss topics surrounding organizing and communication strategies. Our partners share that these more intimate gatherings are one of the most valuable and appreciated pieces of our annual symposium.

On Sunday morning we welcomed about sixty people back to Green Valley for a half-day of interactive workshops that offered folks the chance to connect and get their hands and brains moving. Workshops included community organizing with Aura Aguilar, Davida Sotelo Escobedo and Anayeli Guzman from North Bay Jobs with Justice, wreath making with Hedda Brorstrom from Full Bloom Flower Farm, herbal medicine making with Lulu Pérez Centurion from the Botanical Bus, impactful storytelling with journalist Camillia Lanham from New Times SLO, and cheese making with Aubrie Maze of Brambletail Homestead. Participants were eager to learn and had a hard time choosing! After the workshops, we all enjoyed a beautiful lunch together outside.

We are so grateful to the volunteers that helped us put it all together and our sponsors for keeping us well nourished throughout the weekend - Cowgirl Creamery, Henhouse Brewing, Sixteen 600 Winery, Martha Stoumen Wines, Straus Family Creamery, Petaluma Coffee and Tea, Healthy High, Biotic Beverages, Traditional Medicinals, Brambletail Homestead, Red H Farm, Community Market and World Centric Paper Goods.

ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM

INITIATIVES



THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

Tremendous thanks to [The Globetrotter Foundation](#), [Paicines Ranch](#), The Martha and Hunter Grubb Foundation, Inc., The Eames Institute, and the [Occidental Arts and Ecology Center](#) for supporting this work!

