

ANNUAL REPORT 2015

FOOD WAST!





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OUR MISSION



“Food, What?!” is a youth empowerment and food justice organization using food, through sustainable agriculture and health, as the vehicle for growing strong, healthy, and resilient teens. We partner with low-income and struggling youth to grow, cook, eat, and distribute healthy, sustainably raised food and address food justice issues in our community.

Youth from Watsonville to Santa Cruz join the FoodWhat Crew through Spring Internships, Summer Jobs, Fall Project Management positions, Winter Community Education and leading big community events on the farm. We create a safe

space where youth engage in leadership development, personal growth, and job training. At FoodWhat, we inspire personal transformation by supporting teens in finding their voices and developing lasting confidence in themselves.



A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR



Friends,

It is with absolute joy that I share with you that as of January 1st, 2016, FoodWhat is now in our 10th year! Double digits! Amazing to think of the journey from concept and early beginnings with just a handful of youth to now having two sites serving youth countywide with countless meaningful relationships created over this time.

I recently took a walk on the farm with a friend who asked if we keep in touch with alumni. I replied that we most certainly do and it gave me a laugh thinking about keeping in touch with 5 youth in my cell when we started, and the hundreds of youth (and partners, funders, etc) now in my phone after all these years!

Brandon Randle came to mind in that conversation. He was in FoodWhat in 2009 and then hired on as Junior Staff in 2010. Every year on the anniversary of his sobriety, Abby and I

join Brandon with his family and some of his crew to go out to his favorite sushi restaurant outside of the Capitola Mall. When my son was born, he was in frequent contact to find out when he could come over and meet the little man. I took a photo of Brandon and Asa (my son) and texted it to him after he left. Shortly after, Brandon was really amped to share his first music video with me when it came out. His lyrics shared his personal story about the difficulties and pain of racism within his own mixed family, and as he's dropping lines about new found harmony and healing, there flashes the photo I took of Brandon and Asa.

And what's your relationship with FoodWhat at this turning point? No doubt if you are receiving this you are likely someone who has been in the mix in an important way in FoodWhat for a year, or two, or maybe even from day one. You could also be someone just connecting with us recently - Welcome! In both cases, you are needed and we are glad you're with us. This work doesn't happen in a vacuum just because we have a talented staff on a beautiful piece of land. It happens because of the multiplicity and woven tapestry of relationships that offer youth opportunities at every turn and in every aspect of their lives. You are a part of this flow, and before you read any further, please take a moment to acknowledge your gifts in this story.

We are now ten years strong. We are a decade at the service of the young people in our community who have not had the easiest road or who aren't first in line for the many privileges that others may come by. We always put relationships at the heart of what we do, and this guiding force has led to years of transformative experiences for hundreds of young people coming through FoodWhat and will do the same for hundreds more in the years to come as we keep charging forward...going and growing together!

Hope to see you on the farm or over a meal sometime soon,

Doron Comerchero
Founder & Director



“FOOD, WHAT?!” STAFF & INTERNS



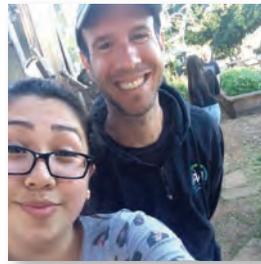
Abby Bell
Farm & Program Manager

Co-leading FoodWhat since its inception in 2007, Abby manages all things related to food, farming and programs.



Nathan Beserra
FoodCorps Service Member

The older brother of a FoodWhat graduate, who witnessed impact first-hand, Nathan brought his passion and expertise in horticulture to the farm.



Doron Comerchero
Executive Director (right)

Doron continues to believe he has the best job in the world while leading the organization with heart, laughter, and intention.



Anna Schlotz Development & Operations Manager (right)

Long-time fan of FoodWhat, Anna joined the team in 2015 to manage fundraising and operations.



Roanna Cooper
FoodCorps Service Member (right)
Serving her 2nd term 2014-2015



Uriel Reyes
Junior Staff Member



Angeles Juarez Munoz
Junior Staff Member



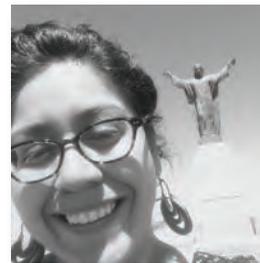
Cesar Mendoza
Junior Staff Member



April Loeza
UCSC Documentation Intern



Lauren Clark
UCSC Farm Intern



Madeline Thompson
UCSC Farm & Food Intern

SPRING INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

FoodWhat (FW) had another slammin' Spring Season in 2015. This year marked FoodWhat's first as a fully countywide organization with 50% of FoodWhat youth living in South Santa Cruz County (Pajaro Valley/Watsonville) and 50% living in North County. For 11 weeks, teens spent one hour with their hands in the soil farming organically, one hour cooking and eating a farm-fresh, healthy meal and one hour in workshops on nutrition, food systems, leadership development, job skills, and mindfulness. When youth successfully completed the Internship, they received a \$175 stipend, 2 school credits, an opportunity to apply for the FoodWhat Summer Job Training Program, and a meaningful place in the FoodWhat Family.

49 Teens Successfully Completed the 11-Week FoodWhat Spring Internship!



Our highlights from the season:

- Youth reported significant growth in this first step of FoodWhat's graduated leadership model: 82% improved their leadership skills and self-confidence. 98% learned how to farm or farm better than before. And 91% felt more prepared to get and keep a job!
- Our annual alumni event, Dig Day, welcomed back FoodWhat youth from each of the 8 previous years to reconnect. We had a fabulous day digging and prepping the farm, playing games and sharing a meal.
- The Strawberry Blast brought over 300 students from across Santa Cruz County to the FoodWhat Farm in May for the unique opportunity to trace a strawberry from field to plate to learn about our local food system.
- Doron co-hosted the FoodSpeaks Radio Show airing once a month on KZSC. This year his stellar line-up of guests included Consuelo Alba from the Watsonville Film Festival, Christof Bernau from the UCSC Farm and Garden, and Cesario Ruiz from My Mom's Mole.

SPRING SUCCESSES

Connecting Diverse Groups!

FoodWhat is a magical space where youth from different walks of life, different cliques, and different circles all come together and build relationships. One example is the Tuesday Crew which included Black youth from Santa Cruz, students from mid-county at Delta Charter High, youth in substance recovery, Latino youth from Watsonville, special education students in Workability, and white youth in alternative education—incredibly shy youth and outgoing youth—skaters, stylish youth, anarchists, gamers—and so on. They came together on the farm every week, engaged in meaningful work, made food together and ate in community, and built relationships they might not have embarked on otherwise.



Opening up to a Rainbow of Veggies!

In the second week of the Spring Internship, we had a great day of prepping beds, planting seeds, doing a workshop called Fast Food Jeopardy, then making veggie quesadillas. When we closed the day with “triumphs,” one of the youth, Jesus, said: “My triumph was eating broccoli for the first time. I’m a super picky eater and have never tried it.” Mind-blowing that he’d never had it (or didn’t remember) but really awesome that by only the second week he was already willing to try new foods that he’d previously rejected. And he wasn’t alone—throughout the Spring, numbers of



youth shared that they were trying new foods, expanding their diets, even bringing recipes home or talking to their families about changing meals to include more fresh fruits and veggies!

At the end of the Spring Internship, Alondra shared, ***“I learned how to farm. I also learned about fast foods and junk food versus healthy food. I eat healthier and exercise a lot more now.”***

Viridiana said: ***“I learned to check my labels now if I’m buying something. My eating habits have improved. I’ve changed by watching what I eat. I now get benefits from what I eat and I helped my parents as well to change our meals a bit more with veggies.”***

THE VOICES OF EXPERIENCE



“I’ve gotten an idea of what it is like to work together on a farm. I learned a lot about farming techniques and how plants live. I feel I really appreciate the lives of plants and trees and crops. I’ve grown stronger, I can work harder and I care more.”

-Grace

SUMMER JOB TRAINING PROGRAM



The Summer Job Training Program is our most intensive core program. Youth speak of the safe space and sense of family created. They report participating in meaningful work, acquiring a whole suite of job skills to succeed in the workplace, and significant transformation. In 2015 we spent two days each week at the FoodWhat Farm in Santa Cruz, one day in Watsonville doing BLASTS (school garden restoration projects) while holding two affordable farm stands at Radcliff Elementary in Watsonville and Gault Elementary in Santa Cruz, and one day busting it at Live Earth Farm, our partner site in Watsonville. Additionally, the 3 Junior Staff who rejoined the FoodWhat Crew for their second year sharpened their mentorship skills and led the crew in everything from planting and harvesting to giving clear, honest feedback through weekly Straight Talk sessions. New this year, each Junior Staff member built further expertise by taking leadership in one of the three main areas of programming: cooking, farming and workshops. In all that we did, healthy, inspiring food and community were at the center.

18 Youth Successfully Completed the 2015 Summer Job Training Program!

- FoodWhat held *two* weekly affordable farm stands for the first time this summer. We provided community members with fresh, organic produce, and youth gained valuable customer service skills and pride from giving back to their community. Summer youth also took home 1550 pounds of vibrant, nutritious food in a free weekly CSA share that they grew and harvested. The family CSA increased access to, and consumption of, fresh produce for their low-income families and around 2/3 of the FoodWhat Crew told us their parents/guardians cooked more fruits and vegetables at home by the end of the Summer.
- This was the first year that we concentrated all our school garden BLAST projects in Watsonville. Youth jumped right in at 8 school and community gardens to clear giant weeds, build beds, prepare the gardens to be functional and inspiring learning spaces for little kids for the new school year, and for growing food for low-income families in the community gardens.
- Youth often report major personal and professional growth through their experiences in the Summer Program and 2015 was no exception: 82% of the youth shared that they learned more about food systems with 76% of youth making more conscious choices about what they ate and drank from everything they learned about nutrition, sustainability, and food justice. 88% of youth said they had improved their communication, teamwork, and leadership skills. And a whopping 94% of youth said they had increased their professionalism on the job! That's youth power.



SUMMER SUCCESSES

Woman Power. This past summer we celebrated something that has not happened since the very first year of FoodWhat—a significantly larger percentage of young women applying for and being hired in positions in the Summer Job Training Program. While we had almost a perfect 50-50 ratio of females to males in the Spring Internship, 68% of Summer youth were female, and we had an exciting season of very strong young women leading the pack.



Raise the Roof Community Success! Thanks to the generosity of an incredible number of individual supporters,



local businesses including New Leaf Community Markets, Companion Bakeshop, Assembly, Orchard Keepers and Charlie Hong Kong, and the County Office of Education, we raised funds for and built our first outdoor classroom/gathering space for FoodWhat youth this past summer. This is a space at the edge of our fields for youth to come together for workshops, for straight talk, for deeply personal conversations, for leadership development, to dig into food justice, and to share meals together. Now FoodWhat youth will have a place on the farm to call their own for decades to come.

Focus on Racial and Economic Justice. Over the past number of years there have been increasing requests by Summer youth for a deeper exploration of structural racism and oppression. This summer we invited in a number of powerful guest workshop leaders and trainers to help tackle these subjects. As staff, we also further facilitated safe space for these conversations to unfold organically outside of these dedicated times. A few of these trainings/workshops included:

- One of our Advisory Council Members, Gerardo Marin, came down from Oakland to offer an Embodied Racial Healing session;
- Adrianna Renteria, the People of Color Sustainability Collective Coordinator at UCSC led a workshop exploring how race, class, and gender shape our relationship with the current food system;
- The gifted facilitators at the Resource Center for Non-Violence led a Conflict Resolution training offering basic tools to identify, handle, and de-escalate conflict;
- Our FW Development and Operations Manager, Anna, offered a workshop on teens' labor rights in the workplace.

As current events unfolded from the hate crimes in Charleston to ongoing police brutality and the Black Lives Matters Movement growing across the U.S., to our local Santa Cruz tragedy with Maddy, to the landmark Supreme Court ruling legalizing gay marriage, we often started the day with one of the youth bringing these issues to the FoodWhat community. Sometimes that was to grieve or pray for the victims and their families. Sometimes it was to process anger or hurt or confusion. There was celebration and discussion around the LGBTQ rights victory and the road ahead. And there was deep reflection throughout...

SUMMER SUCCESSES

Partnerships Partnerships Partnerships!

As part of the Summer Job Training Program, FoodWhat youth were exposed to a number of existing and new partner orgs and projects covering a spectrum of opportunities for their personal and professional growth.

Here's a selection of five key partnerships from this past summer:

- Bike Santa Cruz County led us on a bike trip within Santa Cruz with many youth getting back on bikes for the first time in years;
- We visited both the Kitchen Incubator Project and Farmhouse Culture's kraut production facilities in Watsonville looking at local economic development and entrepreneurship;
- Once a week FW youth and UCSC Farm and Garden Apprentices worked together on site side by side offering FW youth exposure to an inspired and diverse set of adults from around the country interested in career paths in food, ag, and justice.
- The Santa Cruz Community Farmers' Market employed and mentored alumni youth from the previous year to lead their FoodShed community education series, as well as working at their Pop Up Breakfasts partnering with notable local chefs and food businesses.

Watsonville and Equity

As mentioned, 2015 marked the year where FoodWhat became a true countywide organization. By home address we saw exactly 50% of the youth we serve in our core programs living in North County, and 50% in South County. This was a great evolution that we have been moving towards as we have built our capacity to equitably serve Watsonville youth *in*

Watsonville. At the start of 2015, at the request of teachers and administrators at Pajaro Valley High School and Watsonville Community School, we reserved 6 additional Spring Internship positions for Watsonville youth, creating opportunity for more Watsonville youth to graduate to the Summer Job. During the summer, we invited guest chefs from Watsonville like Mario from Ballesteros Catering to come cook with the crew, modeling their professional success. We incorporated a new business and entrepreneurship



element by visiting the Kitchen Incubator Project in Watsonville and then making our own tasty fruit-vitamin waters. We chose to do all of our BLAST projects in Watsonville and shifted the Summer Job (which was formerly 3 days a week in Santa Cruz and 1 day in Watsonville) to an even 2 days in Watsonville and 2 days in Santa Cruz.

This was a really big deal – youth from both sides of the county spent their time and resources on transit more equitably and got to share in each others' communities. We also piloted a new affordable farm stand at Radcliff Elementary School in Watsonville selling youth-grown fresh local organic produce at low cost. All of these elements combined to better serve both the youth and the Pajaro Valley community and we are looking forward to continuing this enhanced programming in 2016!

THE VOICES OF EXPERIENCE



“I accomplished being committed to the job. At first I didn’t want to do the job in the beginning of the summer but I got through it through the whole summer. I learned about more fruits and vegetables and how to cook with vegetables that actually taste good. Also I learned so many job skills that I can take with me in the near future. I have changed by being happier with my work skills and I am more comfortable speaking to a large group of people. I have grown and I’m more mature.”

-Natalie

FALL PROJECT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

The Fall Project Management Program is the last step in our graduated leadership model. Youth who have completed the Summer Job Training Program have the opportunity to apply for positions running the many farm businesses and community projects that operate through September and October. This is the time for youth to apply all the job skills, confidence, and leadership they've acquired over the previous two seasons of programming into real-world responsibility. A major win in 2015: we added 5 new Fall Jobs in Watsonville by piloting a replication of the farm management, harvest management, and farm stand teams that were previously only offered at the Santa Cruz farm. This was huge for Watsonville youth to be able to advance to their next leadership position and to do so in their local community where their jobs felt especially relevant and impactful. In 2016, we will be cementing this pilot to create much needed equity in leadership development opportunities, job training, and support for additional South County youth.

Flower Business

Leilani and Grace ran the Fall flower business, coming to the farm twice a week to harvest flowers, arrange bouquets, manage accounting, and deliver flowers to local businesses. They took full ownership and responsibility over their work, learning the proper cutting and handling of each type of flower and delivering high quality and artistic arrangements.



Harvest Festival

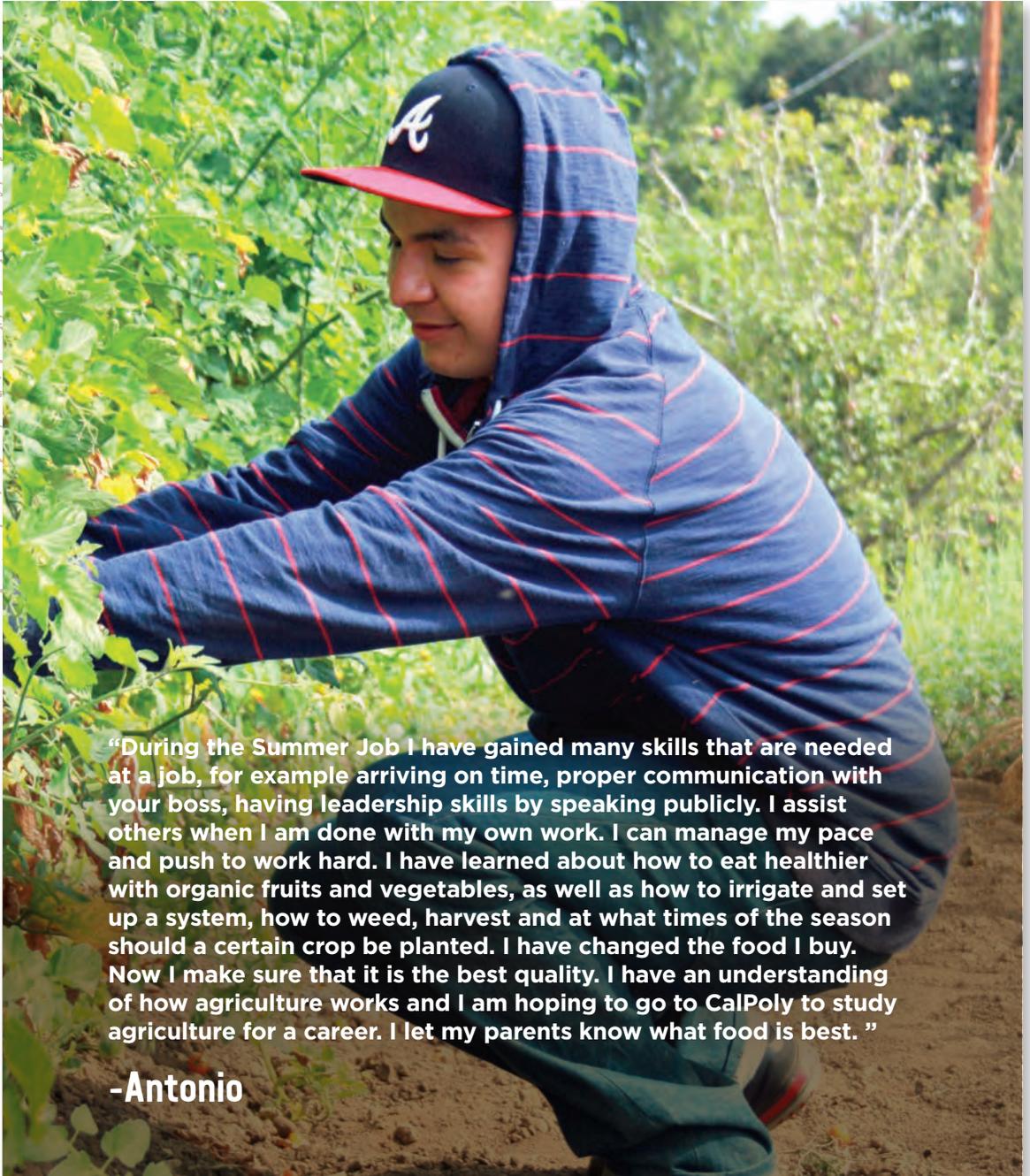
Briana and Ollie were this year's Festival Event Managers. They learned and practiced the skills necessary to put on a major event: planning the stations and the event flow, doing outreach to partners and volunteers, inviting students from the different county schools, writing press releases, setting up and facilitating the day-of activities, and leading post-event clean-up. Some tasks done every day in the work-world, like writing professional emails and staying on top of email follow up, felt daunting at first, but by the end both Briana and Ollie reflected that their communication skills had especially improved. About 325 students engaged in 15 dynamic stations such as healthy apple tart making, Thank-a-Farm-Worker letter writing, a food-themed photo booth, Watsonville Wetlands Watch educational display, how to apply to college, and more.

Culinary Crew

The stellar Fall chef team of Thalia, Stefany and Manuel ran all things culinary this fall. They catered food for events locally like the Equitable Food Initiative Board Meeting as well as the launch of the Food System 6 Accelerator in San Francisco, partnered with local chefs in preparing the meal for the FoodWhat Benefit Dinner, cooked delicious food for their FoodWhat peers, ran a bike-powered smoothie station at the UCSC Harvest Festival, and canned up some salsa for next year's programs. What a mouthful!



THE VOICES



“During the Summer Job I have gained many skills that are needed at a job, for example arriving on time, proper communication with your boss, having leadership skills by speaking publicly. I assist others when I am done with my own work. I can manage my pace and push to work hard. I have learned about how to eat healthier with organic fruits and vegetables, as well as how to irrigate and set up a system, how to weed, harvest and at what times of the season should a certain crop be planted. I have changed the food I buy. Now I make sure that it is the best quality. I have an understanding of how agriculture works and I am hoping to go to CalPoly to study agriculture for a career. I let my parents know what food is best.”

-Antonio

OF EXPERIENCE



“What I’ve accomplished in the Summer Jobs that I’m not as quiet as I was in the beginning of the Spring Internship. I have been more open to talking to new people and open to try new things. I’ve changed by eating more healthier not just at FoodWhat but at my house as well. FoodWhat is a safe space where no one is really judgmental and everybody talks to everyone. Everyone is very nice.”

-Thalia



Watsonville Farm & Harvest

Working in partnership with Live Earth Farm and the Live Earth Farm Discovery Program, Manuel and Antonio spent each Monday afternoon learning and practicing what it takes to manage a small farm. They walked the fields making lists of the work needing to be done, learned how to prioritize that work, created harvest lists for the Radcliff Elementary Farm Stand, and then tackled their to-do lists. They learned about irrigation, crop rotation, soil health, time management and how to think through the different farm needs. On Tuesdays, Viri and Shin joined the team to harvest, clean, wash, weigh, and pack up the highest quality produce for the Farm Stand held the next day.



Santa Cruz Farm & Harvest

Sadie, Grace, Aaliyah and Bree managed the harvest and post-harvest handling of all of our crops at our Santa Cruz site. They came to the farm every Thursday afternoon to harvest, clean and pack the bountiful crops they had been growing all season for FoodWhat's Farm Stand at Gault Elementary School the following day. Over the course of the fall they harvested over 1000 pounds of produce that was sold at affordable prices to mostly low-income families. Grace and Sadie also managed the Santa Cruz Farm this fall, showing up two days a week to take care of all the weeding, planting, composting, irrigation, making the harvest list for the Gault Farm Stand, preparing the farm for the winter and planting cover crops. That's a ton of work!

Garden BLASTS!

Each week Adrian, Stefany, and Aaliyah went to different schools or community gardens to help "BLAST" out major maintenance and infrastructure projects. This fall they worked at eight different garden sites across the county and tackled everything from building garden beds at Amesti Elementary to composting and digging beds at HA Hyde and Chavez Elementary schools and at Costanoa HS to mulching a community orchard with Mesa Verde Garden. Their work helped fortify and expand the educational programs and hands-on learning opportunities for the students at each of these schools – it was especially meaningful for the team to transform gardens at the elementary schools they themselves attended!



Farm Stands

Shin and Viri set up and ran the new Radcliff Elementary Farm Stand on Wednesday afternoons, and Aaliyah and Bree managed the Gault Elementary Farm Stand on Friday afternoons. The Watsonville Farm Stand was incredibly successful in its first year promoting and supplying fresh, healthy food. Shin, Viri, Aaliyah and Bree learned all the skills needed to successfully operate that kind of business: display, sales, accounting, customer service and attention to detail. Everyone felt great in supporting our community by making fresh, local, organic, healthy fruits and vegetables more affordable and accessible for all and in taking an action step for food justice across Santa Cruz County.

THE VOICES OF EXPERIENCE



“Not only did I get to farm, grow my own food, eat my own food and get paid for it, but I made a new family. I’ve become a more open, loving individual. “Food, What?!” opened doors and made me connect to positive people by being around a positive community and making me want to build a community within my own household.”

-Adrian

MOVEMENT BUILDING

Throughout 2015, FoodWhat youth and staff had their hands in many aspects of food justice and social justice movements locally, regionally, nationally, and even internationally. It should come as no surprise that after a number of months stepping into their power and examining issues of justice, oppression, systems, rights, etc., many youth also get fired up to engage beyond our local communities. This past year the youth we served gained significant opportunities to participate in conferences, co-create content, and host groups to dig into empowerment and food justice on our farm sites. The results were huge: the youth received broader exposure to incredibly diverse approaches and efforts for justice, and then got to socially locate themselves in this complex matrix and see themselves as potent agents for real change.



In February, FoodWhat youth were invited to co-lead an evening of community building through food for two delegations of youth from Mexico and Nicaragua from rural farming communities representing the Global Movement for Community Food Sovereignty. After sharing personal stories about each of our community food conditions and how we got involved in food justice, FoodWhat youth then led the creation of a deliciously just meal. We ate in solidarity and community as a resilient cultural tradition.

In July, the entire summer crew loaded into two vans and drove up the coast to Pie Ranch to come together with over 100 youth from around the Bay Area for the Rooted in Community Regional Youth Summit. One highlight came during the lunch break when a number of FW youth started a long massage train, putting into practice a mindfulness exercise to take care of one another.

Later that month, Doron traveled with four youth, Adrian, Gabby, Aaliyah, and Antonio, to Detroit for the 17th annual Rooted in Community National Youth Summit hosted in partnership with The Boggs Center, Detroit Black Community Food Security Network, Greening of Detroit and other community partners. This year's theme was Wage Love, Build Power, Grow Change: Youth Power & Resiliency in Detroit. As RIC Leader and FW Advisory Council member Gerardo Marin said: *"It fires my heart up to see young leaders connect for peer-to-peer education, cultural exchange, and empowering fun!"*

This trip to a vastly different community had a profound effect on the four FW youth and upon returning, they sat down our crew and had a serious debrief about what's happening in Detroit. They also shared that despite the many differences of our two places and populations, we have great similarities and power in our unity.



MOVEMENT BUILDING

During the summer, Uriel (FW Jr. Staff) was invited to be on a panel at UCSC for the 16th Annual International Agroecology Shortcourse. FW also hosted a delegation from Ma'O Organics (a youth empowerment/cultural resiliency/economic development organization from Hawaii) and FW youth led a cipher on “what brought us here today,” opening up people’s very personal stories of pain and recovery. Additionally, the UCSC Youth Empowerment Institute asked FoodWhat to host their all-female teenage participants for a day of food system workshops, farming, and lunch.

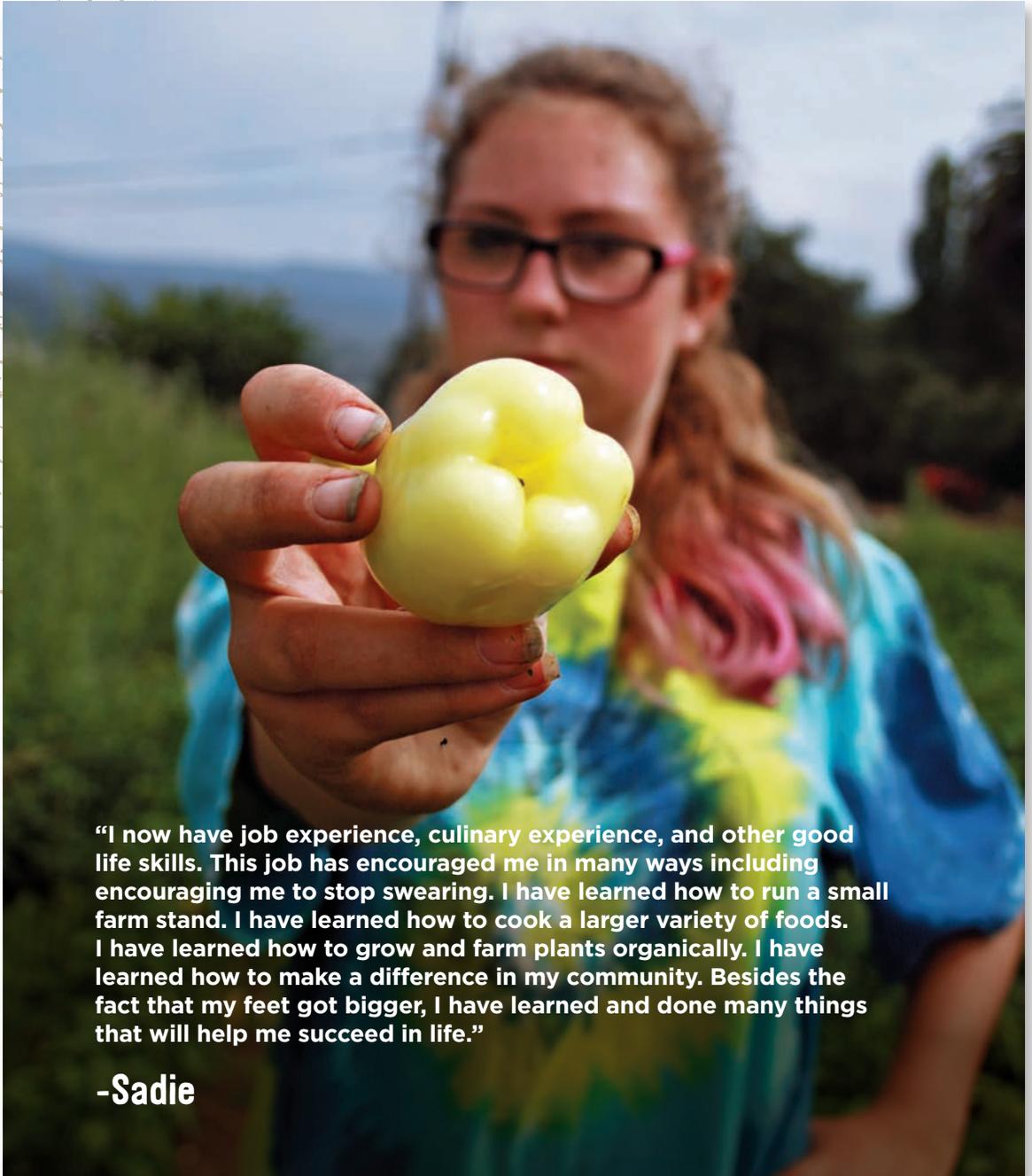
Come fall, FoodWhat youth and staff participated in the Just Us For Food Justice youth pre-conference to Bioneers and then in the main conference itself. (Bioneers defines itself as a fertile hub of social and scientific innovators with practical and visionary solutions for the world’s most pressing environmental and social challenges.)



Later, FoodWhat’s short video was selected to be part of the Watsonville Film Festival’s Healthy Food Film Event for youth. After the many films were shown, FoodWhat youth and staff served as the panelists for the Q&A for the packed house of local students, then led healthy food making and a food systems workshop in the theater lobby.

We’re very proud that FoodWhat joined the statewide UC Global Food Initiative and the Santa Cruz County Youth Violence Prevention Taskforce in 2015; co-founded the Youth Empowerment Alliance (YEA!) with Digital NEST, Jovenes SANOS, and the MAH’s Subjects to Change; and continued our work under the UCSC Higher Education Challenge grant and the Community Foundation of Santa Cruz County’s Education and Job Training Cohort. In partnering with these diverse groups and initiatives, FoodWhat is part of collectively moving the needle of social change for strong, healthy, resilient teens and communities.

THE VOICES OF EXPERIENCE



“I now have job experience, culinary experience, and other good life skills. This job has encouraged me in many ways including encouraging me to stop swearing. I have learned how to run a small farm stand. I have learned how to cook a larger variety of foods. I have learned how to grow and farm plants organically. I have learned how to make a difference in my community. Besides the fact that my feet got bigger, I have learned and done many things that will help me succeed in life.”

-Sadie

WINTER COMMUNITY EDUCATORS

Here's the recipe:

1. Shop for four strong leaders from the previous three seasons of FoodWhat to become Community Educators.
2. Toss the youth hired into this role, Aaliyah, Shin, Antonio, and Ollie, into an intensive training on how to lead two major FoodWhat workshops: "What You(th) Think, What You(th) Drink" and "Trace Your Taco," looking at where our food comes from, how our food choices impact our bodies, society and the environment, and the collective power of youth making conscious consumer choices.
3. Place in various high schools and youth nonprofits around the county during the month of December to stand in the front of the classroom to educate and inspire.
4. When complete, this recipe offers rich content delivery and strong peer-to-peer modeling!



Here's Aaliyah dropping knowledge about sugary drinks and youth dollar power for the MAH's Subjects To Change youth group. Aaliyah, Shin, Antonio and Ollie covered the county connecting with local youth groups and going into Costanoa HS, the YES School, Watsonville Community School, Pajaro Valley HS, and Watsonville HS leading workshops on health, youth power, and food justice.

Short backstory from Doron-- At our annual Harvest Festival this past fall, I asked Aaliyah if she would lead Fast Food Jeopardy to the 325 students attending the

event. She said that was no problem and I gave her a brief training to prepare. The day of the event, I popped by her station to ask her how it was going, to which she said: *"Farmer D—I was MADE to do this! I GOT this."* So true...

FOODWHAT'S LASTING IMPACT

FoodWhat measures program impact each year with various tools including evaluation surveys, youth composed narratives and personal reflections, and staff observations. With the guidance of Morten Kromman Nielson (a Danish PhD candidate and researcher in his 2nd year of a 3-year longitudinal study of FoodWhat) we better analyzed the data collected, and refined these tools to make them more engaging and useful to the youth themselves by offering another way for them to think about their personal goals and how they could meet them.

At Dig Day, we heard from alumni from each year stretching all the way back to 2007 about how their time at FoodWhat has continued to influence their lives in positive ways:

79% of alumni reported that FoodWhat played a pivotal role in helping them to finish high school!

79% of alumni surveyed are currently in college or applying to college!

83% are gainfully employed (compared to a countywide youth employment rate of around 25% according to the 2015 United Way Community Assessment Project)!

93% of alumni reported that FoodWhat helped them build the skills they need for a productive life!



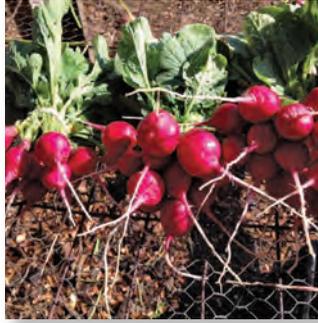
THE VOICES OF EXPERIENCE



“I’ve accomplished my position in this grand job, working at FoodWhat. I’ve changed by I make my decisions and I’m not responsible for someone else’s unhappiness. I’ve grown by taking steps into making myself happy and healthier for myself. Those steps are hard but very real and this is *my* lifetime.”

-Bree

LOOKING AHEAD



Last year we had two major goals in this section: to build an outdoor FW gathering space, and to do the capacity building to grow our team. We are proud to report that we completed both goals!

2016 will bring two new major developments:

• 10 Years of FoodWhat!

We couldn't be more excited to enter our tenth year with the enormous volume of relationships built over this time, thousands of pounds of fresh healthy food grown and consumed, hundreds of youth gaining employment, over 4,000 teens and community members served through FoodWhat's big events and service projects, and the significant personal growth of the 350 youth who have participated in our core programs. We look forward to celebrating with you over the course of this year as we are going and growing into our next decade!

• Growing Our Team

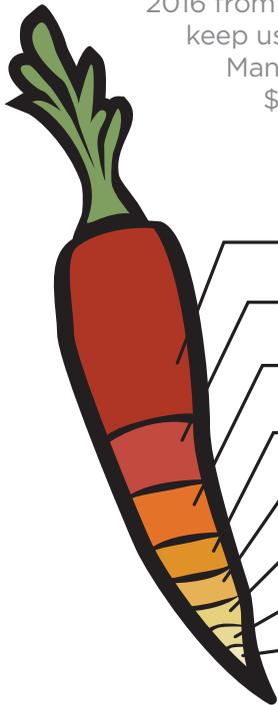
As the volume and depth of FW programming increases, and to continually innovate and strengthen these components to best serve youth countywide, we are now hiring a new permanent full time FoodWhat Programs Manager. Here is an excerpt from the job description to give you a sense of who will be joining our team in this role:

This position demands an individual with a high level of programmatic functioning who is truly gifted in working with youth. You will be a leader in our organization, and a partner, mentor, coach, and cheerleader to the youth. You are someone with outstanding relationship building skills who is personable, approachable, a great listener, and passionate about our mission. You get the big picture while being a strategic thinker who can dive in and get the daily work done. Most importantly you are a deep believer in the power and potential of youth and willing to do everything in your power to support youth in removing any barriers to their success and growth. You're playful, comfortable being you, and willing to share your personal magic with FoodWhat youth while creating safe space.

We can't wait to introduce you to this newest leader in FoodWhat later this spring!

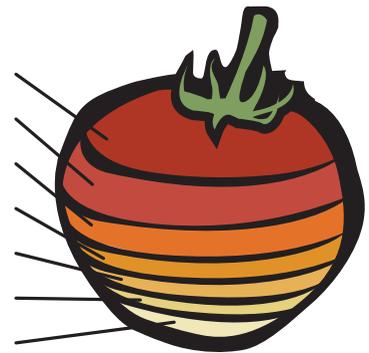
FINANCIAL REPORT

FoodWhat had a strong 2015 fiscal year, continuing our 8-year track record of meeting and exceeding our fundraising goals. As you can see below, we have succeeded in creating diverse funding streams from foundation and corporate grants to individual donations and earned revenue. The 2015 Annual Fall Benefit Dinner was our largest ever, raising \$50,000 and triggering \$30,000 in matching funds and sponsorships! We have secured several multi-year funding commitments totaling \$150,000/year, continued building our operational reserves, and established relationships with over 20 new secured and potential funders that will keep increasing the diversity of our income. We are starting 2016 from a place of strength that we will be working to maintain to keep us on our growth trajectory, allow us to add the new Programs Manager position and increase the FoodWhat budget from \$358,000 in 2015 to \$440,600 in 2016.



- Foundation Grants — **54%**
- Individual Donations — **23%**
- Government Contracts — **7%**
- Corporate Grants — **6%**
- Corporate Donations — **4%**
- Government Grants — **3%**
- In-Kind Donations — **2%**
- Earned Revenue
(Produce Sales, Workshops, Catering) — **2%**

- Program — **45%**
- Fundraising — **18%**
- Youth Stipends — **13%**
- Administration — **8%**
- Fiscal Sponsor Fee — **9%**
- Office — **4%**
- Events — **2%**



SUPPORTERS

We're deeply grateful to the many generous donors, sponsors and community partners who fuel FoodWhat programs!



Community Foundation Santa Cruz County - The Webster Foundation - The Appleton Foundation - Pajaro Valley Community Health Trust - UNFI Foundation - The Goodman Family Fund - The Hastings/Quillin Fund at Silicon Valley Community Foundation - City of Santa Cruz Community Programs - University of California Global Food Initiative - University of California Higher Education Challenge Grant - The Driscoll's Charitable Fund at Community Foundation Santa Cruz County



Our partners CASFS at UCSC and Live Earth Farm generously provide field space, greenhouse space, and technical expertise as a part of their long-standing commitment to our empowerment and agricultural programming.

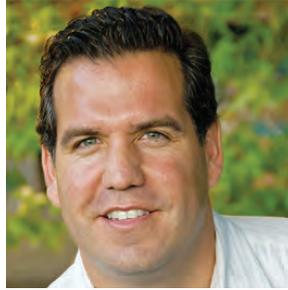
FoodWhat is fiscally sponsored by Life Lab.

Our heartfelt thanks to the amazing 463 individuals who contributed to FoodWhat in 2015!

FOODWHAT ADVISORY COUNCIL



Audries Blake
Assistant Director, Center for Agroecology
and Sustainable Food Systems, UCSC



David Terrazas
Councilmember, City of Santa Cruz



Gerardo Marin
Director, Rooted in Community



Sibley Verbeck Simon
President, New Way Homes



Monica Martinez
CEO, Encompass Community Services

"I joined the Advisory Council because I am inspired by the transformative impact FoodWhat has on youth in our community. When you talk to the youth, you hear that FoodWhat is truly a game changer. I want to help open up this opportunity for more young people across our county."

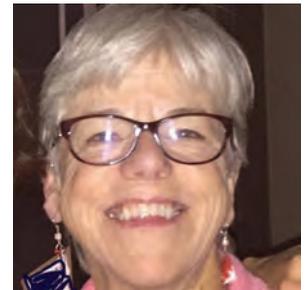


Ron Slack
Publisher, Good Times (Retired)

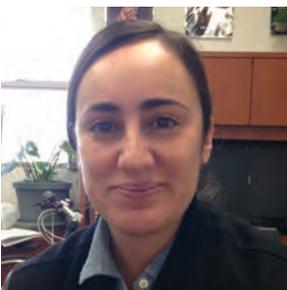


Maisie Ganzler
VP of Strategy, Bon Appetit Management Company

"When I visit FoodWhat the feeling of lives being changed is palpable. The youth seem to be maturing right before my eyes. I'm constantly inspired by their willingness to change and their desire to make a better future for themselves and their community."



Jo Kenny
Principal, Kenny Consulting



Maria Elena Valenzuela
Assistant Principal, Pajaro Valley High School

"FoodWhat is an amazing organization which allows our students to gain confidence and develop the skills that can enable them to experience their own success."

Suz Howells
University Events Strategist, UC Santa Cruz

"Food What is real. Making a tangible impact on lives of youth - and they are changing the world in real, visible ways. That, and c'mon - it's fun to say. What?"



THANK YOU!



YOU MAKE THIS POSSIBLE!

2015 was an incredible year as the stories on these pages tell. And this narrative would not be complete if it didn't acknowledge the backbone of support that we receive from our FoodWhat Family. Whether as a donor, friend, volunteer, partner, or whatever role you see yourself in, we appreciate you. You fuel us personally and organizationally to do this important work in service of youth as they own their potential, generate power, and build a stronger community.

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Special thanks to Matt Farrar of Ignition Designs for an incredible amount of design work including this Annual Report and FoodWhat's new logo!

FoodWhat is fiscally sponsored by Life Lab, a 501(c)3 nonprofit.