

Our Story

Hello Reader!

Welcome to the Foodnomics community! My name is John Liu, founder and President of Foodnomics, a national organization dedicated to empowering inspired high schoolers focused on food reduction waste in their local communities. Growing up the son of two immigrant parents from China, both of whom lived through and seen their families devastated by the Great Leap Forward famine, I've been instilled with a deep appreciation for a full belly from a young age.

In sixth grade, after researching the percentage of people facing food insecurity in the Greater Princeton area for a project (where I'm from), I was shocked by how many of my neighbors, classmates, and teachers saw and experienced low food security in my immediate community. As a result, I started volunteering for Meals on Wheels, a community based program that delivers nutritious meals to those who lack access. After many years of weekly deliveries, I still felt something missing—while I was helping seven to nine families every week, what about the millions of people in the United States who still went to bed hungry? To me, my actions still felt insignificant, and I wanted to do more.

During my freshman year of high school, after observing how much food we wasted in the cafeteria every day, I researched a staggering statistic—the world produces enough food to feed every human—though up to 40% of the food supply is wasted every year. Upon learning this critical information, I immediately started thinking about the most effective ways to reach the most people, specifically for cafeterias and restaurants where food waste is more prevalent. Foodnomics was born!

Over the past two years, I have worked on creating an app (also titled Foodnomics) that uses the explosive power of large language models to identify, track, and highlight how much food a person wastes simply by taking a picture. It tracks and calculates different food categories and the cost of waste, as well as highlighting food categories that are repeatedly wasted more than others.

In addition to the app, I also reached out to several other high schoolers, introducing them to the problem of food waste and pledging them to try and reduce food waste at their schools and homes, using the Foodnomics app and other resources we provide.

Now Foodnomics is a thriving network of ten chapters spanning the East Coast to the west—with more on the way!

If you are curious about our activities, setting up a chapter at your school, or anything related to food insecurity, please navigate to the ‘Application’ section and let us know!

Committed to preventing food waste, one meal at a time.