



# SEEDS OF SOLIDARITY

*Cultivating Hope, Educating for Change*

## JUSTICE AND JOY



The right to sufficient and healthy food that is nourishing to body, culture, and spirit.

The right to dignified work that unites hands, heart, and mind.

A safe and sacred place to call home, rest one's head, and to feel the power of the land and of community.

To be loved, and to be of service.



**I**t seems so simple to say, to hope for. But so many, locally and globally, are without these basic needs of existence. The persistence of economic injustice and hunger, greed, and violent ways of being that humans perpetuate against each other and the land form an ever-challenging backdrop but they are not our true foundation. Jimi Hendrix knew: 'When the power of love overcomes the love of power, the world will know peace.'

Individuals and institutions that hold material power and privilege rarely let it go of their own choice. But the power of love and service to humanity is a strong force. Cultivated first from within then outward into each of our

communities, collaborative and compassionate power is transformative. In change-making work, actions and relationships must be joyful because injustice, while it sparks action, is deeply draining especially to those living it and challenging it day after day.

Food, energy, community. A SOLful youth gardening program that, 15 years later, has served 300 local teens. **Grow Food Everywhere** gardens at schools, daycares, health centers, libraries and for families. Community Food Forums to bridge and barter; a Garlic and Arts Festival to heighten happiness and regional vitality. Lives made rich through simple and nourishing beauty. In our microcosmic place in the universe, we create simple and joyful happenings and programs that respond to injustice while celebrating life and honoring resilience.



**Seeds of Solidarity Education Center provides people of all ages with the inspiration and practical tools to use renewable energy and grow food in their communities.**



# LOCAL FOOD RESILIENCY



**W**e create gardens for families in need of fresh food as a manifestation of the GROW FOOD EVERYWHERE message that all communities, especially those like ours where hunger threatens health and hope, can and must become food resilient. The two-year launch of this initiative has been incredibly successful and we aspire to 100 raised bed gardens over five years at homes, family daycares, and community locations to promote access to fresh food for all. Growing and preparing real food engages families and community in positive activity that promotes health, beauty and dignity.

*"There's very limited options — just tacos and spaghetti every day. But this is really nice to have something to do, and they want to eat it because they did it. I ask [my youngest] what he wants to do when we get home, and it's the garden."*

Mother and  
GFE Participant



## WHAT A GROW FOOD EVERYWHERE (GFE) YEAR!

### FEBRUARY:

3rd Annual Food Forum unites residents in a day of skill sharing

### MARCH:

GFE Families attend workshop to learn gardening skills and unite

### APRIL-MAY:

2-3 new raised bed gardens created each week. 14 tons of local Clearview compost/loam, sustainably harvested and soy-preserved lumber, and hundreds of healthy vegetable seedlings grown by SOL Garden youth leaders

### EARTH DAY (APRIL 21):

Community event to create gardens at the Orange Innovation Center to serve the food pantry.



### MAY:

Five raised beds at health center planted; patients and staff enjoy the harvest

### JUNE:

Community event to create gardens at the Wheeler Library

### JULY/AUGUST:

SOL Garden youth leaders make weekly visits to GFE families to support and document

### SEPTEMBER:

GFE demos educate thousands at the Garlic and Arts Fest

### OCTOBER:

Materials for mini-hoophouses and hearty seedlings provided to all for fall and winter gardening!

Get our new Grow Food Everywhere™ garden care guide at  
<http://seedsofsolidarity.org/grow-food-everywhere-for-health-and-justice/>  
with ideas for year-round raised bed gardening







## WE PROCLAIM GROW FOOD EVERYWHERE

for community self-reliance. Ensuring affordable, accessible food takes all of us, not solely farmers. In the late 1930s an agriculturally rich valley of four towns in our region was taken and flooded to create the Quabbin Reservoir for Boston's water supply. With our best soil below 38 square miles of water, the need to think outside the box to produce more food locally is critical. Seeds of Solidarity partnered to create an Earth Day event at the Orange Innovation Center (OIC), a factory converted to studios, social service agencies and small businesses, resulting in three abundant educational gardens, stewarded through the seasons by building volunteers who donated baskets of peas, beets, greens, and tomatoes to those greatly in need of fresh food. Two raised bed gardens with benches for quiet moments were added to the library where a plot created several years ago invites preschoolers to nibble beans and read stories under a sunflower teepee.



*I loved bringing the bounty of the raised beds over to the Food Pantry in Orange; I was always met with eagerness on the part of folks waiting on line to receive their shares. It is a wonderful thing to be able to grow food for the community, and I hope this will continue to spread throughout the town.*

**Pat Conrad,**  
OIC garden steward

### Real Food = Health

Yes, there is such a thing as a free lunch! Staff at our local community health center suggested that patients would better use the five garden beds we created if signs encouraged harvesting, and if recipes for less familiar crops were provided. So we added a simple harvest kit with bags and scissors to the reception desk, signs on each plant about how to harvest, and take-home newsletters to the waiting room with seasonal recipes like kale chips and summer squash soup and health benefits of the garden crops.



Do you **support** local food for all? Will you **participate** to reverse the impact of hunger and grow an innovative model of local food resiliency and justice? Please make a tax-deductible **contribution** towards our goal of 100 gardens over five years!  
[seedsofsolidarity.org/make-a-contribution/](http://seedsofsolidarity.org/make-a-contribution/)





# 15 YEARS OF SOLFUL YOUTH

**W**hen we initiated Seeds of Solidarity in 1997, growing food, using solar energy, and working with local youth topped our list. As we enter our 15th year of educational programs, SOL (Seeds of Leadership) Garden continues strong! SOL Garden teaches young people skills to cultivate food and strengthen personal and community health. Throughout a season, the community created transforms the lives of participants and staff. Imagine these moments: 50 hands washed of soil, clasped before a lunch of our own pesto; an intent circle of trust when someone shares a personal struggle, productive joy while staining wood for new garden beds, the spirit of unity performing theater at the North Quabbin Garlic and Arts Festival. These experiences add even more heart to a SOLful Index of facts and successes.



## SOLful INDEX:

**14**

Years that SOL (Seeds of Leadership) has engaged youth in 'cultivating food and a hopeful future'

Number of local youth participants in the yearlong SOL Garden program since then

**300+**

**2,700**

Additional youth reached through presentations in school science classes and visits from other youth groups

Number of vegetable seedlings grown by youth for schools, families, and gardens in the community

**6,000**

**7,500**

Pounds of food grown and bagged for senior citizens

Handcrafted SOL Bowls made and tee shirts designed to help raise program funds

**375**

**74**

Pages of teaching activities in our Food for the SOL curriculum, freely available on our website

Percentage of youth that report significant increase in understanding of topics like food systems, food and climate change, and nutrition

**90%**

**95%**

Percentage that can describe an experience of personal healing, self-confidence, or more positive outlook on life



*I am emotionally and physically more healthy thanks to the things I've learned and SOL itself...the kind of family that I have grown into at SOL Garden is unlike any other. I feel at home, and loved.*

**Brendon**

*Find the light in your SOL and let it shine, and what grows from your efforts will be quite divine!*

**Meagan**



*Thanks to Carrie Petrik Huff for another season of SOL co-leadership!*



# SHARING STRENGTH

From the amazing circle that forms for our Solidarity Saturday tour, to educators around the picnic tables for our Grow Food at Schools workshop, we love the folks and sharing that come together here for change-making towards strong communities and a promising future. In addition to our regular programs, in 2012 we spread our work through over 25 diverse workshops and presentations including:



**TAUGHT** Grow Food Everywhere™ at the Omega Institute

**HOSTED** Doctors in residency at a community health center

**WELCOMED** amazing youth from Teatro Vida, YouthGrow, and Nuestras Raices

**EXPLORED** our site with grad students in Tom Wessel's Principles of Sustainability class

**CO-TAUGHT** Whole Measures for Community Food Systems to food justice activists from across the nation.

**PRESENTED** to a UMASS class on Greening Arts Events, and on panels at the Slow Living Summit, and PVGrows



**SeedsofSolidarity.org** got a makeover.

It is full of fabulous resources: videos, curricula, and how-to guides, plus our newest additions:

***Our Community Voices: Food, Health and Resiliency.***

Stories gathered and compiled by intern Youn Han to tell of the impact of our programs on participants and community members, and a ***new video*** featuring families in our Grow Food Everywhere™ program, filmed by our SOL youth and edited by GFE super-staff Catherine Bryars.

Winner:  
River Valley  
Market  
non-profit  
hero award

1st Place!  
Pioneer Valley  
Transition  
Town Film  
Festival

## *Make Your Community more Food Resilient!*



Bring us to your town for a day or weekend Grow Food Everywhere™ workshop: a great way to unite residents plus end up with a low maintenance, abundant garden to nourish your community! Perfect for Transition Town or faith-based groups. Contact us to create something perfect for you.

Grow Food Everywhere garden at the Omega Institute





# FERTILE CELEBRATION

**T**he North Quabbin Garlic and Arts Festival is an ever-evolving fully volunteer creation, alive with stunning art, agriculture, entertainment and education for all ages, and infused with unbridled celebration. A question that continues to cause wonder for many is 'how do you produce only 3 bags of trash for 10,000 people?'

Part of the equation is an amazing team of 30 recycling volunteers the weekend of, as no matter how many signs you post informing folks what goes where, nothing takes the place of a smiling recycle enthusiast to remind that yes, that plant-starch fork is compostable, aluminum foil can be recycled, or the fast food foam cup picked up on the way has no happy home at the festival or on the planet. The subsequent transformation of festival compost to fertile soil is made possible because we have a great small business, Clearview Compost, right in our town. Post festival, nature does its work, transforming the 100 or so bags of festival compostables into an average of 10 cubic yards of rich fertilizer for local gardens. In fact, we bought 14 tons of compost/loam blend enriched with this local 'waste into gold' one year later to make gardens for families in our **Grow Food Everywhere** project! Circles and cycles are powerful, and a food system cannot be strong without the transformation of local waste into local fertile soil.



## SOME FERTILE RESOURCES:

*Clean Your Plate: An Event Planner's Guide to Composting*  
by Athena Lee Bradley: [nerc.org](http://nerc.org)

Locally crafted fused plastic fashion: [LousUpcycles.com](http://LousUpcycles.com)

Ben's Bins handmade worm bins: [Wehaveworms.com](http://Wehaveworms.com)

Community compost facility: [ClearviewComposting.com](http://ClearviewComposting.com)

Closing the food nutrient cycle: [RichEarthInstitute.org](http://RichEarthInstitute.org)



## Basic Essentials for Zero Waste (ZW) Events:

- Discussion of ZW values and options among all organizers
- Meaningful and manageable goals that can expand from successes
- All vendors educated in advance about allowable service-ware and packaging
- Enthusiastic volunteers and clear labeling at every station
- A compost facility or farm that will receive the material





# FARMING IN A POST PETROLEUM ERA

At each end of our road, hand-lettered signs for the fresh produce that fills our farmstand are affixed to a cedar post with another sign that reads 'This neighborhood 50% powered by solar and growing!' Many of our wonderful neighbors caught the solar bug this year, with PV arrays adding an exhilarating glow to the already resourceful community of Chestnut Hill Road. Our own solar powered farmstand has been a valuable addition to our off the grid farm, home, and education center. This cozy handcrafted structure offers greens in a solar fridge, seasonal veggies and garlic, cedar meditation benches, and our neighbors' eggs.



The farming methods we practice and teach emphasize no-till growing using cardboard and cover crops, season extension with solar hoophouses, and traditional and GMO-free seeds as critical to sustainable, post-petroleum farming. Findings from our 2-year SARE research back what we have observed using cardboard mulch: increased nutrient enhancing worm and microbe populations, weed suppression, water conservation and reduced labor (go to [SARE.org](http://SARE.org) and search for Seeds of Solidarity for the full report). We use regional fertilizers including fish and seaweed emulsions. And, even closer to home, we are experiencing the great benefits of urine when applied to non-edible plant parts such as garlic leaves.



According to the Rich Earth Institute, a new organization that seeks to close the food nutrient cycle, 30 billion gallons of urine is produced annually in the U.S, and we use 1.2 trillion gallons of drinkable water each year to flush it away. Meanwhile, one billion people worldwide lack safe drinking water. In addition to keeping this valuable resource out of the waste stream, phosphorus, critical to plant growth and therefore our food supply, is being mined and rapidly depleted. By recovering urine, phosphorus is kept in the nutrient cycle.



Thirty years ago, knowledge and passion for our path was ignited and nurtured while young interns at the New Alchemy Institute, which is also where we (Seeds of Solidarity founders Ricky and Deb) met and fell in love. The Green Center evolved from New Alchemy to keep the visionary research that emerged available. Access these publications, and learn about current ecological efforts at [thegreencenter.net](http://thegreencenter.net)







## SEEDS OF SOLIDARITY EDUCATION CENTER

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### THANK YOU:

Super Volunteers: Diane, Jacqueline, Gail, Jennica, Mary, and Caitlin

The North Quabbin  
Garlic and Arts Festival  
Organizers & Volunteers

Tax Preparation:  
Gerald Hersch

Newsletter designed by  
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## FROM OUR TABLE: *Making Love While Farming*

**W**e love teaching and sharing our journey. Recently, when a wonderful regional agriculture organization asked us about a workshop for local farmers, we had just heard a string of sad stories of farmers exhausted, and relationships falling apart. So instead of suggesting

our usual on no-till farming, creating youth programs, or composting at events came the idea for a workshop on personal and relationship health, perhaps with a catchy title like... how to make love while farming! While the workshop idea didn't fly with them the idea opened a new and exciting gateway for us—writing a book! Stay tuned for *'Making Love While Farming: A Field Guide to a Life of Joy.'* There are plenty of books that help people wake up spiritually, but few that simultaneously guide the essential shift to bring food, energy and shelter towards sacred simplicity. Our book will draw on our years of experience transforming land from vacant to vibrant, revitalizing communities, and nourishing a strong marriage. Stories of creative living, love and local resiliency will be woven with do-it-yourself practices to create a 'living workbook' that invites readers to take the plunge into the unknown and a more meaningful life.

We look back at our wedding vows. Among these are: "We commit to working towards peace and ecological balance with conviction, integrity, and compassion... We commit to living our lives together lovingly, simply, humbly, and creatively." We both turn 50 this year. As we conceptualize and write *Making Love While Farming*, we create space and time to reflect together and tell stories.

We have the blessed opportunity to consider how to more deeply infuse our life of family, farm, education and community justice work with intention, joy and creativity. We do this in order to carry on, and to do so with great love in the years to come.

—*Seeds of Solidarity Founders, Ricky Baruc and Deb Habib*

**PLEASE SUPPORT & SUSTAIN SEEDS OF SOLIDARITY:**

**JOIN OUR ENEWS** at [seedsofsolidarity.org](http://seedsofsolidarity.org) to get our calendar of events and participate.

**USE & SHARE** the free resources on our new website.

**BRING US** to teach a workshop in your community.

**ENCOURAGE** your community leaders to hire us to help make your town more food resilient.

Make a tax-deductible **CONTRIBUTION** to support our youth programs and goal of 100 gardens over 5 years for those in need.

**EXCITE FIVE MORE** people to contribute; they trust you!



Seeds of Solidarity Education Center Inc. is a non-profit 501C(3) organization. Our 2012-13 education programs are made possible through grants from The Green Leaf Foundation, The Frances Fund, MA Cultural Council Youth Reach Program, Cardinal Brook Trust, Personal/Planetary Healing Fund of the CFWM, MA Attorney General's Office Health Care Program; Donations from Hannaford Supermarkets, Heyes Forest Products, Johnny's Seeds and Comstock Ferre, and Contributions from Individuals like you!

**We value and need your support. Every contribution is meaningful.**  
Please make a secure donation at [www.seedsofsolidarity.org](http://www.seedsofsolidarity.org).

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