



SEEDS OF SOLIDARITY

GROW FOOD EVERYWHERE!

Revolution

Seeds of Solidarity was conceived twenty-five years ago, just before founders Ricky Baruc and Deb Habib set off on an 8-month interfaith pilgrimage from Auschwitz to Hiroshima. The seeds carried back from this journey to a barren forest clearing in Orange that would become a farm, education center, and birthplace of a Garlic and Arts Festival held more than the crops they would grow to be. Walking in communities profoundly impacted by war, our international pilgrimage group encountered individuals and sought organizations that embodied non-violence; enacted community building across religious and political divides, and engaged in painful, promising efforts towards reconciliation. This journey, along with the inspiration and skills gained at the New Alchemy Institute—a breeding ground of ecological thinking and design—ever-informed the values and practices of Seeds of Solidarity.

As we look back and look forward, we recognize non-violence as a thread that inspires and unites Seeds of Solidarity's farm, education, and community building practices.

With guiding values, our initiatives evolve each year. We didn't know that years of garden partnerships with schools would lead us to create healing gardens for people in recovery or those incarcerated. An initial need to find ways to farm on raw forested land—all we could afford—led to a more reverent connection to food and life as we innovated no-till techniques, nowadays sought after. The quest to keep love strong through it all currently finds form in workshops and a book to help others magnify love in relationships and through outward action.

Divisive language perpetuated by those on the political stage; hate crimes and racist policies; and legislation that rolls back protection on water, land, and air are devastatingly rampant. And too, there is an upsurge of great creativity, passion and movement building across communities. What can be learned from new visions, organizing, and actions that heal and unite?

May we—individually and collectively—choose where and how to respond and resist, and simultaneously envision and enact ways of being that transcend violence in all forms.



*"Love and Compassion are necessities, not luxuries.
Without them, humanity cannot survive."*

The 14th Dalai Lama

Seeds of Solidarity Awakens the Power among youth, schools, and families to Grow Food Everywhere to transform hunger to health, and create resilient lives and communities.

PARTNERSHIPS THAT HEAL

Our conversations to envision therapeutic gardens began with Heywood Healthcare a year before they purchased a beautiful former monastery and transformed it into Quabbin Retreat, a forward-thinking outpatient and residential center to support people struggling with addiction and mental health issues. Our designs took root and became visible through workshops that united the local community with Quabbin Retreat and Heywood staff and volunteers. We created accessible height raised beds for vegetables and a meditative path of nine stations featuring perennial plantings and accompanying contemplative activities with themes such as gratitude garden, scents/sense of hope, and shine brightly, all nestled along the stonewalls at the facility. The gardens provide a space for staff and patients to re-awaken senses, connect with nature, and practice daily rituals of mindfulness as they engage in breathing and awareness activities described on cedar signs among the healing gardens.

The disease of addiction that afflicts many across gender, age, class and race is a critical social issue—we are moved to do what we can to address this epidemic with the preventative and healing qualities of plants and the natural world.



An excerpt from our
'healing garden path' design:

Scents/Sense of Hope

Gently touch a leaf of each scented plant between thumb and finger and then 'sample' the scent with a sniff of your fingertip...as you inhale the scent, let your breath fill your belly and gently rise up to your heart and collarbones. Then allow the exhalation to release through your nose from collarbone to belly. Repeat several times. Allow your shoulders to rise and fall with your breath. Keep your jaw and face soft as you breathe by maintaining a gentle smile.

What are a few words of hope that come to mind for you and for others?

Scented plants include geraniums, bee balm, sage, lemon balm, lavender and rosemary.

Experience more at:

[http://seedsofsolidarity.org/
healing-garden-design/](http://seedsofsolidarity.org/healing-garden-design/)

It is always exciting when a new project grows in unanticipated ways. Dr. Rebecca Bialecki, Vice-President of Community Health and Chief Agent of Change at Heywood Healthcare shares such an outcome:

"...One participant who was particularly involved in the vegetable garden was ready to complete his treatment program. Although he was very pleased with his progress, he expressed concern with leaving treatment and asked if there were on-going ways to stay involved. Staff were able to identify a small group of participants that were ending their treatment to bring some of the vegetables grown to the local Farmer's Market ... This was an invaluable addition to treatment in that it allowed people to feel that they were giving back, and to begin to feel more valued by their community."



COMMUNITY



What would our communities be like if gardens filled public and unexpected spaces; gardens from which people could freely sample a sungold cherry tomato, snip a few kale leaves to try on the recommendation of their doctor, or simply observe a bee on a flower? Over the years, and towards this vision, we have created raised bed gardens in settings as diverse as our community health center, schools, low income housing, family childcare centers, a factory turned social incubator, a library and a local food coop. Several of these are sustained through creative approaches: we offer childcare providers a 'seed grant' to nourish their growing efforts; master gardener Pat volunteers to maintain the beds at the Orange Innovation Center that brighten the entry to a counseling agency and literacy center, and Helen and the youth in her workforce training program discuss their successes and challenges while tending the library gardens.

In the third year of a collaboration among several agencies and a community college, we taught gardening to low income women who not only enriched their own lives and homescapes, but collectively established raised bed and container gardens in a downtown 'pocket park' located next to an apartment building for young people facing homelessness.

Fruitful partnerships can serve multiple goals and multiply food!



We value our collaboration with the Franklin County House of Corrections that expands along with their wellness programming. Men incarcerated—many for drug related offenses—learn techniques for greenhouse and raised bed gardening while gaining college credit for their participation in the organic gardening course we teach. To bring more fresh food and families inside, the jail staff engaged us to help launch seasonal family activities that united men with their children. Together they prepared kale salad, shook fresh cream into butter, and made applesauce along with a meal of pizza topped with the garden veggies.

In addition, Seeds of Solidarity staff serves on a Transition Jail to Community Task Force hosted by our local Community Coalition, and on the board of the Foundation for Community [restorative] Justice. Above all, we hold faith for a future that invests in caring education, not mass incarceration.



NO TILL, YES LIFE!

Until recently, the growing techniques we came to love and rely on were at the margins. These days, farming magazines and conferences increasingly proclaim no-till, regenerative methods as an essential direction in response to climate change and the end of fossil fuels. In addition to home gardens and farms, 'no till, yes life' techniques on urban land are a great way to build soil fertility from the ground up.

Three techniques comprise our no-till toolbox at Seeds of Solidarity Farm, evolved over two decades. These build organic matter, promote beneficial soil microbes and mycorrhizal fungi, reduce weeds, conserve water and labor, eliminate machinery, and keep carbon in the earth.



In a nutshell:

THE CARDBOARD METHOD is our low tech, high productivity favorite. Our simple refrain for visitors: "cardboard is a perfect worm food and worm castings are perfect plant food." Layering large sheets of plain corrugated cardboard then covering with mulch hay or manure opens up new land, serves as weed and moisture control, and results in nutrient rich worm castings—a valuable natural fertilizer. We love the look of amazement when visitors reach into our deep dark soil where there once was none and find copious worms and abundant castings under the cardboard.



SILAGE COVERS create darkness to rapidly turn biomass into mulch and leave bare soil below. Seedlings thrive in cardboard mulch, but to direct sow seeds like cover crops or salad greens silage covers (also called bunker or panda covers) are a great method. These are much thicker and more durable than regular black plastic, last many years, and can be easily moved around a farm or garden as needed. Weeds or cover crops below die and become mulch that is transplanted into, or raked off and composted in the paths.



COVER CROPS are great when sown on bare ground in between crops or at the end of the season. Most can be simply crimped- bent to then decompose and planted into. These add 'green manure' to the land, suppress weeds, invite pollinators, fix nitrogen, and help detoxify soil.

Check out our NEW how-to video!
CARDBOARD METHOD INVENTOR TELLS ALL:
No-till Gardening Guide to Worm Sex and Good Food – <https://youtu.be/9SE8RjyTq3A>

Good News! Seeds of Solidarity co-founder and farmer **Ricky Baruc** now offers **consulting** on no-till and natural fertilizers for low maintenance, high productivity gardens and small farms.
Contact us.



THE WORLD WE LOVE

The day after the North Quabbin Garlic and Arts Festival is in some ways the most fun for our organizing committee. The mega-details are in the past, and we tell stories of the weekend antics as we take down tents and enjoy a hearty lunch together. The post-festival fields at Forster Farm are remarkably free of litter considering the 10,000 people, a complement to only two bags of trash produced all weekend along with 120 of compostable materials to make gardens not garbage. The only scraps found on the grass were a few colorful pieces of paper blown lose from the hundreds of messages of hope scripted in the kids activity tent and knotted onto a giant steel globe hand crafted by committee members Bruce and Terry.

An integral theme at this year's festival was climate justice, particularly critical given the dangerous denial on the national level. Local environmental organizations brought creative education and a parade/performance with the theme 'the world we love is in our hands.' In our 'Portal to the Future' area, local living and renewable energy workshops complemented a new partnership with the Rich Earth Institute, resulting in urine diverting potties and distinguishing the festival as the largest known public event to pee-cycle! With special permits from the departments of agriculture and public health, the diluted urine enriched the festival hay fields with valuable nitrogen and phosphorus and eliminated the release of these into rivers, conveying a dual message of reclaiming the nutrient cycle and protecting sacred water.

A month after the festival, the globe remained a lasting artifact. Among the still fluttering messages was one from a four-year old named Gil, written by their parent's hand: '...for everything to exist' and another poignant one: 'I wish the world was funr.' It is an honor to be part of an organizing group that unites joyful celebration of culture and community with 'just do it' sustainable action. This is what resilience looks like. Let's do it for the kids.



Contact us about our workshop on building your own home-scale 'urinator' for natural fertilizer.

Looking for ideas for composting at small or large events?

nerc.org/documents/guidance_for_special_event_food_waste_diversion.pdf

"...I'll always have a soft spot for Orange, Massachusetts with its Garlic and Arts Festival."

— Dar Williams

***What I Found in a Thousand Towns:
A Traveling Musician's Guide to
Rebuilding America's Communities***



GENERATION RISING

What do chopping greens for saag paneer, theater activities on the cultural history of the Quabbin Valley, becoming an active bystander, the philosophy of biophilia, making seed embedded paper, and foraging have in common? All are among the workshops that the teens, staff and interns that comprise our SOL (Seeds of Leadership) Garden program experienced this year thanks to a great cast of presenters. That is just the short list of learning, along with much growing in the SOL Garden and greenhouse tended by the group each Thursday. The result is fresh food for their own families and donation to those hungry, and lasting skills as youth prepare healthy and economical meals. Rounding things out are the weekly opening and closing conversations to practice the arts of inspired inquiry, active listening, and deep caring.

"I have come to this place when I was lost. I have come to this place when I was hurt. And I have come here when I needed a place to belong. This place has given me the tools to feed myself, and the tools to not only heal, but grow. I was given the environment to ground myself and expand my reach and views in this world. The person I have become is a product of many things, but SOL Garden can be found all throughout my life." — Cody

We launched a NEW program for youth this year, the 'How to Live' summer mini-internship to extend our model to older teens from multiple communities. Under the guidance of our SOLful staff, 'How to Live' combined DIY building, gardening, and cooking with conversation, creativity and contemplative practices like yoga and meditation. These ways of living and being are not only essential to the transition to adulthood, but for a resilient and whole life.

Words from 'How to Live' participants sum this new initiative:

Rejuvenating. peaceful. **GROWTH.**

Dignity. **EXPLORATION.** *Passion.*

Restorative. **EYE OPENING.** *unique.*

Sustainability. **Mindfulness.** **WELCOMING.**



WE CELEBRATE OUR 20th consecutive year of youth programming in 2018, with **over 400** SOL Garden program 'graduates,' **35** interns mentored, and **3,000** students reached through our school presentations on sustainable living!



REACHING OUT

We love teaching! Our free, seasonal visiting days for the general public, tours for college groups, and customized workshops encourage people of all ages to take inspiration back to their own lives and communities. Tours and presentations in 2017 engaged students from UMASS, Brandeis, Mt. Wachusett Community College and Antioch. Additionally, we provide workshops off-farm to nourish ideas, inspiration, and more good food for all! With regenerative, no-till techniques increasingly in demand, we were pleased to be among the recent trainers for the Western Massachusetts Master Gardener program, plus provided a webinar and workshops for the Northeast Organic Farmers Association.

On a creative note, we were honored to unite land, art and ceremony in Seeking the Sacred on the Farm; a Seeds of Solidarity family show hosted by the Augusta Savage Gallery at UMASS. At the opening and surrounded by furniture Ricky crafted of trees from our land, Deb's photos through the seasons and functional pottery, and son Levi's pen and ink mandalas, visitors added natural materials to a cornmeal and soil interpretation of a Kolam, geometric designs drawn on the earth by women in many parts of India to bless the entry to home.



We strive to infuse spirit and creativity into the two weekend workshops we offer at the Omega Institute in Rhinebeck New York. We love teaching Grow Food Everywhere for the Ecological Literacy Immersion Program at Omega. After many years of sharing practical techniques for food resilience along with the experience of doing so in partnership, the vision for a second workshop at Omega arose. Our course, Magnify Your Love: Sharing a Life of Passion and Purpose invites couples to increase happiness, deepen intimacy, and expand love outward through service and action. Participants even make handcrafted altars embedded with a new or strengthened vision forward. Creativity, love, and vision in action are at the essence of our book in progress as well. Stay tuned for *Making Love While Farming: A Field Guide to a Life of Passion and Purpose* — due for completion in 2018!

PLEASE SUPPORT & SUSTAIN SEEDS OF SOLIDARITY:

JOIN OUR ENEWS & blog at seedsofsolidarity.org

USE & SHARE our free resources and
videos on our website

Read our 5-star **REVIEWS** at Greatnonprofits.org

Make a tax-deductible **CONTRIBUTION**
to support our youth and community programs

EXCITE FIVE MORE people to contribute;
they trust you!



Interested in bringing us to your community
for a workshop? We'd love to hear from you!
solidarity@seedsofsolidarity.org





SEEDS OF SOLIDARITY EDUCATION CENTER

From our Table: Power to the People

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In full recognition of dire times, we are heartened by many manifestations of courage, creativity, and change making. Here are just a few examples of inspirations:

The Sojourner Truth School that teaches free movement building skills; Soulfire Farm's Black and Latinx Farmers Immersion program; 'Families for Justice as Healing' who advocate to end the incarceration of women and girls; Hands across the Hills, a replicable model uniting diverse communities across perceived divides; Our brother Dan Habib's documentary films that promote inclusion of people with

disabilities; Movimiento Cosecha and all national sanctuary efforts; and Van Jone's Love Army that anyone can join.

In these times, many are amping up their activism; others are not sure where to start. Strength can be found in connecting with others, and pursuing contemplative or artistic practices that contribute energy and beauty to personal lives and social movements. Excerpted from our book in progress:

Making Love While Farming: A Field Guide to a Life of Passion and Purpose

We offer some ideas to carry on:

Know the source of your food and energy, and the path of your waste. **Change something** you do or consume to **reduce your impact** on the lives of others and the earth. **Stay aware** of 'the news,' but **with care** to how you get it and when you take it in. Cultivate three things in your personal toolkit **that are centering** — a poem or quote, herbal remedy, trusted friendships, art, meditation or exercise. **Engage** with a cause **that inspires** you; one that you create, or an existing effort or organization. **Participate with kindness** and generosity, not stress — it's a long road. Be attentive to power and privilege. Challenge, own, and transform these. Activate resilience in your life and community. **Make Things.** **Share what you learn** with others. Seek wisdom through nature, your ancestors and the unseen. **Model hope** for the rising generations.



Onward with Love!



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We value and need your support. Every contribution is meaningful. Please make a secure contribution at www.seedsofsolidarity.org.

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