



2022
SOUL
FIRE
FARM
ANNUAL REPORT







REFLECTIONS ON THE SEASON

Bobby M was on Texas death row for forty years, half of those in solitary confinement, before being released in 2020. We had the honor to host this wise and gentle elder during a farming immersion this summer. After decades behind concrete and steel, he was eager for open sky and nourishing soil. Reflecting on his week at Soul Fire, Bobby said, "I will cherish the real love that I felt, and will use this great experience to move forward in life and make positive change."

Malcolm X taught us, "Land is the basis of freedom." Tenure and belonging to land give us the freedom to heal, play, grow our food, build our homes, bury our departed, gather our families, pass on wealth, and sustain culture. This year, Soul Fire Farm worked with over 50,000 people like Bobby, folks committed to spreading the *freedom fire* of land and food sovereignty.

The Soul Fire team grew food and medicine to feed 225 people through weekly Solidarity Shares deliveries, provided 3,000 farm-to-table meals to program participants, and established a COVID-19 memorial orchard. Over 1,200 learners visited the farm to immerse in Afro-Indigenous earth wisdom during our FIRE (Farming in Relationship with Earth) Immersions, 3D workshops, Youth Programs, SOULstice and Equilibrium festivals. We continued to incubate the Braiding Seeds Fellowship, which graduated its first cohort of farmers and brought on 10 new fellows. Additionally, our Uprooting Racism training, public speaking, Ask a Sista Farmer, and Liberation on Land how-to videos reached over 45,000 learners, and our storytelling was published in 8 new books. We are also investing deeply in our organizational and physical infrastructure so that we can continue to fill our movement niche for the long haul.

We thank you for your support and could not exist without you!

Free the People! Free the Land!

Azuré, Briana, Brooke, Cheryl, Clara, Danielle, Hillary, Ife, Jonah, Kai, Leah, Naima, Ria, Shay, and Susuyu (SFF); Lulu and Sarah (Braiding Seeds)

SOUL FIRE FARM 2022 PROGRAMS

50,670 TOTAL PARTICIPANTS

225 Solidarity
Share Members

390 BIPOC Farmer
Trainees

21 Braiding Seeds Fellows

122 Youth On-Farm
Participants

786 Uprooting Racism
Attendees

1,016 Community Farm
Day Attendees

38,847 Online Class
Participants

28 Soul Fire in the City
Urban Gardeners

141 Technical Assistance
Recipients

8,077 Public Speaking
Audience Members

26 Speakers Collective
Members



FARM ECOSYSTEM



The land was forgiving and generous with us this year, even in the face of severe drought, invasive jumping worms, and deer overpopulation. We find that Afro-indigenous practices like perennial polyculture, heavy mulch, and rotational grazing support this resilience. We continued expanding our native perennial plantings, adding hundreds of elderberries, shagbark hickory, northern dewberry, fox grape, sassafras, highbush cranberry, and dozens of other varieties indigenous to our area. Every inch of cultivated land received a blanket of woodchip or straw mulch, often inoculated with beneficial fungi. The young orchard was managed and fertilized by careful rotations of our laying hens and goats. We also welcomed Jax and Abé to the team. This border

collie and stray kitten are co-workers in the truest sense, helping to keep the deer and voles away from the crops. With their support, we cultivated and harvested over 100 varieties of food crops, including heritage grains like sorghum and amaranth, robust vegetables like eggplant and shishito peppers, and luscious fruits like muskmelon and husk cherry. Every year, our lab tests and observations reveal that the soil is getting healthier, with organic matter consistently over 10%, stable soil aggregates, and richly aromatic humus. We will continue to be students of the soil, learning how to be in better service on a generational timescale.



SOLIDARITY SHARING & PROGRAM MEALS



Solidarity Shares is the oldest program at Soul Fire Farm, having completed its 12th year! We delivered no-cost fresh vegetables, fruits, medicine, eggs, and pastured protein to the doorsteps of families surviving food apartheid in the Capital Region and to community organizations like the West Hill Refugee Center, Free Food Fridge, Focus Churches, and South End Grocery. We are especially grateful to be partnering with South End Grocery, a Black-owned grocery store created at the site of a former McDonald's in Albany's South End, the very neighborhood where the idea for Soul Fire Farm was born. This year, an average of 225 individuals received food on a weekly basis through the program.

Soul Fire Farm also served ~3,000 farm-to-table meals, crafted from 75% Soul Fire Farm grown ingredients. Beloved, culturally-rooted, locally-adapted recipes like sancocho and soup joumou formed the core of the menu. These recipes will be compiled into a cookbook in the year to come. Stay tuned!

We also upped our value-add game, crafting ~2,000 units of value-added products like herbal tea, green tomato confit, berry jam, elderberry-chaga-reishi syrup, fermented hot sauce, kimchi, and miso. We beta-tested a winter CSA box to share these artisanal products with our community.



As a result of being a
Solidarity Share member...

91%

reported improved
health outcomes

100%

ate more vegetables

100%

cooked more often

100%

ate wider variety
of cultural foods

100%

saved money on food



“

DURING THE PAST YEAR, THERE WERE MONTHS WHERE WE SCRAPED BY WITH LESS THAN \$4 IN EBT LEFT. WE WOULDN'T HAVE MADE IT WITHOUT THE FOOD PROVIDED BY SOUL FIRE FARM.

”

~ 2022 Solidarity Share Recipient



SEED KEEPING & MEMORIAL ORCHARD

A cherished elder in our community, Mama Ira Wallace of Southern Exposure Seed Exchange, taught us that every farmer needs to be a seedkeeper and that every seedkeeper is in turn, a curator of the genetic and cultural pathways of our food. After many years when the only seed we saved was garlic, Mama Ira and our friends Chris and Owen at Truelove Seeds trained, inspired, and equipped us to expand our sense of selves as seedkeepers. This year we grew and saved Moyamensing tomato, pretzel bean, bee balm, sweet annie, blue coco snap bean, garlic, and red leaf amaranth. Soul Fire Farm sells our seeds through Truelove Seeds and remits 100% of our proceeds to the Stockbridge Munsee Band of the Mohican Nation.

We dedicated the Soul Fire Farm Memorial Orchard by affixing the names and praise words of beloved ancestors to our young fruit trees. Accompanied by song and intention, we connected the memory of each person to a specific tree. We then reflected upon the importance of having enduring land in our families and communities, so that we can have places to return to for memory and ceremony. Over one million people have died from COVID-19 in this country alone since the start of the pandemic, with Black, Indigenous, and Latine communities disproportionately impacted. May their memories forever be a blessing, and may we continue to work for a world where everyone can breathe.





SOUL FIRE IN THE CITY

“ I FELT A SENSE OF CONNECTION TO MY ANCESTORS AND MY SOUTHERN ROOTS...I WAS ABLE TO FEED MY FAMILY FRESH, SAFE, ORGANIC PRODUCE. ”

~ 2022 Soul Fire in the City gardener

We built 10 new urban gardens and 3 community garden beds this year. We additionally provided resources to over 20 returning gardeners of intergenerational households in the Capital District. Supports included crop planning, technical assistance, follow up visits, and gatherings for gardeners. This year we hosted a plant propagation workshop at an urban farm, and a fall harvest meal at the African American Cultural Center with garlic planting and food preservation demos for our Soul Fire in the City community.

84% experienced joy and satisfaction from their garden

89% wish to deepen their connection to land.

95% commit to doing more farming or gardening



FIRE

IMMERSIONS



We welcomed 4 cohorts of aspiring BIPOC farmers to the land in July and August 2022 for FIRE = Farming in Relationship to Earth. 64 beautiful humans came from as far as Louisiana, London and Los Angeles to learn and grow together as part of our weeklong program that uplifts Afro-Indigenous brilliance. We skilled up on topics from seed keeping to sovereignty to soil, enjoyed delicious farm-to-table meals and danced free under the stars.





2022 FIRE PARTICIPANTS:

22

states and the UK represented

46%

of participants from the South

75%

from urban communities

FIRE ALUMNI:

86%

are growing food or medicine at scale

89%

are teaching others about food sovereignty

71%

are stewarding urban land

SOUL FIRE FARM HAS BEEN A SANCTUARY SPACE FOR ALL THE LAYERS OF MY BEING. IT HAS BEEN A VEHICLE TO PROPEL ME INTO A FUTURE OF FURTHER HEALING AND ORGANIZING WITH THOSE AROUND ME. I AM ETERNALLY GRATEFUL FOR THIS LIFE CHANGING EXPERIENCE AND ALL THE BLESSINGS THAT WILL UNFOLD FROM HERE.

~ 2022 FIRE Immersion Participant





if you would like to
send me a Facebook
message or email
please contact me at
LeeAnn@...
LeeAnn
she/her

LeeAnn
she/her



WORK & LEARN DAYS, FARM TOURS, YOUTH PROGRAMS

We welcomed over 1,000 intergenerational community members to the farm in 2022 for day-long programs designed to build connection to the land and ecosystem. The programs included our monthly Work and Learn Days where we shared communal labor, hands-on skill building, and a delicious farm-to-table meal. 122 youth attended our on-farm youth food justice programs. The land has been blessed by the multigenerational footprints of Ubuntu from Brooklyn, the Darrow School from New Lebanon, and Williams College ROOT from Williamston, to name a few. Together we learned about seed saving, soil health and the structural inequities in the food system.

“IT WAS AN ABSOLUTELY LOVELY EXPERIENCE. I FELT SAFE AND SEEN THE ENTIRE TIME. I CAN SEE HOW MUCH LOVE AND ENERGY YOU ALL POUR INTO YOUR FARM AND WORK. PLEASE CONTINUE TO DO THE WORK YOU'RE DOING. THE WORLD/ WE NEED YOU!”

~ 2022 Work & Learn Day attendee



HANDS-ON INTRODUCTION TO CARPENTRY



We hosted a day-long “Hands-On Introduction to Carpentry” workshop in the fall designed to equip and inspire changemakers, community builders, farmers and food fighters to ‘level up’ their hard skills in building and construction. This daylong deep dive provided an opportunity to learn safe hand and power tool use, layout, measuring, fastening, and some of the basics of working with wood through a beginner building project.





SOUL STICE

We honored the summer solstice and fall equinox with joyful gatherings that brought together our alumni and local community members to dance, play, enjoy music, eat delicious food, fellowship and participate in rituals to praise the land.

On the first days of summer, hundreds of kindred souls converged to celebrate our interdependence with the land and each other for our SOULstice Party. Highlights included a gravity defying aerial trapeze performance from the tree tops by Neshima, a multilingual hip hop / Afro-Colombian folkloric set by Kombelisa Mi, and the





mind-opening and masterful flows of Kala and the Lost Tribe. Taína Asili and Naima Infinity sprinkled their vocal magic throughout and DJ Trumaster, DJ AyO and AJ Jungle Punk kept us dancing until the wee hours. There was a community altar, gratitude wall, photo booth, bonfire, hammock grove, and scavenger hunt. Taína Asili and Naima Infinity sprinkled their vocal magic throughout and DJ Trumaster, DJ AyO and AJ Jungle Punk kept us dancing until the wee hours.

On the Fall Equinox, we hosted a weekend campout called EQUILIBRIUM. The gathering centered around movement with Congolese Dance, Capoeira, Yoga, Xi Gong, and Thai Massage, inviting folks to reflect on and embody balance in our world, in our beings, in our reciprocity with the Earth and each other.

EQUINOX



VIRTUAL SKILL-SHARES

We were joined by 300+ participants for our virtual and in person BIPOC-centered 3D skill share series. New topics included learning how to use natural dye plants, miso fermentation, and kimchi making. We also hosted a day-long workshop for Spanish speakers called “Escuchando la Tierra,” during which participants spent time listening to the language of the earth.

We produced 2 new how-to videos as part of our Liberation on Land Video Skillshare series (LOL) featuring BIPOC land stewards sharing hands-on skills. Offerings included natural dyeing and the debut of our first Spanish-first LOL offering about growing Mexican crops in NYC. These videos were viewed by over 500 learners. To date, our collection of 15+ LOL videos have been viewed by over 10K learners.



“ HOW BEAUTIFULLY AND CREATIVELY YOU REMIND EVERY ONE OF US BIPOC FOLKS THAT THE LAND BELONGS TO US, AND THAT WE IN TURN BELONG TO THE LAND. ”

~ 2022 3D participant

UPROOTING RACISM

This year we hosted 9 Uprooting Racism in the Food System trainings reaching 978 participants. Through storytelling, interactive exercises, lively discussions, and poetry, we excavated our food and land histories and interrogated our complicity in- and resistance to- systemic racism. As a result, individuals and organizations have developed powerful action plans rooted in fierce love, courageous self-reflection, and healing connection to land.

“ I AM FOREVER GRATEFUL FOR THE TIME AND DEDICATION OF YOUR FACILITATORS. YOUR PASSION AND COMMITMENT ARE PALPABLE. THE TRAINING WAS LIFE CHANGING FOR ME. ”

~ 2022 Uprooting Racism participant



DR. MUHJAH SHAKIR



LESLIE WOODARD



DREU VANHOOSE



BEATRICE KAMAU



JULIANA MARIA QUARESMATA



NIVEK ANDERSON-BROWN



KIMBERLY HAYNIE



JENEVIEVE AMMA



RYAN BEACHEM



ASK A SISTA FARMER

One of the ways we work to democratize and share our platform is through the Ask a Sista Farmer monthly instagram live series. Ask a Sista Farmer brings Black womxn together to learn to grow their own food and medicine for self-reliance and community resilience. This season we welcomed the teachings of Dr. Muhjah Shakir, Leslie Woodward, Dreu VanHoose, Beatrice Kamau, Juliana Maria Quaresma, Nivek Anderson- Brown, Kimberly Haynie, Jenevieve AMMA, and Ryan Beachem. Topics ranged from beekeeping to shepherding, hemp cultivation, navigating USDA programs, and entrepreneurship. By the end of 2022 we created 42 episodes and over 40,000 views.

STORYTELLING (PUBLIC SPEAKING)

We aim to catalyze the transfer of resources and power to BIPOC Farmers through powerful storytelling, inspiring listeners to take concrete action toward food justice and land sovereignty as a result of what they learn. This year we reached over 6,000 people with our public storytelling work. In furtherance of our efforts to share our platform, we turned away and redirected ~75% of the media and public speaking requests we received, referring them to alumni and comrade organizations.



2022 PUBLIC SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

United States Senate - Agriculture Subcommittee on Food and Nutrition, Speciality Crops, Organics, and Research

TEDx Boston

Real Organic Symposium

Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture

Central Park Middle School

James Beard Foundation

Daily Harvest

University of Kansas

Rachel's Network

NOFA Rhode Island

Fidelity Investments

Grassroots International

Yale University

University of Vermont

United Way of Capital REgion

Humboldt State University

Washington and Lee University

Nuns & Nones Land Justice Project

Edelman Consultants

Schenectady March for Climate

Harlem Grown

Cafe Noir Memphis

Michigan State University

Nature Evolutionaries

NAACP Albany

TrueLove Seeds

HOLLA - How our lives link altogether

Buffalo Food Equity Network

Health Acadia

Community Food and Agriculture Coalition

Black Farmers and Urban Gardeners Conference

Women's Earth Alliance

Nutritional Therapy Association

Women and Sustainability National Conference

University of Rhode Island

Action Against Hunger



**“I’M WALKING AWAY
WITH MY HEAD
HELD HIGH TO THE
SKY AND SUN, WITH
GREAT PRIDE AND
DEEP INSPIRATION.
I FEEL EMPOWERED
TO MANIFEST
MY DREAMS AS A
BLACK FARMER AND
I FEEL INCREDIBLY
HELD BY THE
COMMUNITY I
MADE HERE.”**

~ FIRE Immersion Participant





Jackson
PROFESSIONAL TOOLS

BRAIDING SEEDS FELLOWSHIP



In December 2022, the Braiding Seeds Fellowship graduated the program's first cohort of fellows, several of whom achieved key milestones:

With the assistance of the program Co-Directors, several fellows, including SUSU CommUnity Farm, Abundance Farms, and Nnenia Farm all completed the program with either purchased or leased land which they hadn't had prior to starting the fellowship.

Fountain Heights Farms received a SARE research grant and built an aquaponics learning center.

The Earthlodge Center built an earth pit for ceremony.

Iron Path Farms partnered with the Hudson Valley Farm Hub and the Akwesasne Seed Hub to grow Haudenosaunee ancestral corn that was brought back to Akwesasne communities in northern New York state.

Bare Bones Farms played a core team role with Akwesasne Seed Hub, expanded and took over full management of the Akwesasne Farmers Market, and made key infrastructure upgrades and equipment purchases, including a tractor.

With the help of the Selection Committee, Braiding Seeds welcomed 10 new fellows to start the second year of the fellowship which include Hrvnrvckwv Ueki-honecv/Hummingbird Farms, Starlit Roots, Orais Hand Farm, Popsie & Vivian's Lowlands, Junipers Garden, Mawiomi Garden, Justevia Teas, The Uyoga Farm, Sistah Seeds, and Green Wealth Farm. Lastly, we awarded twelve \$2,500 mini-grants to fellowship runners up.

FLOWING FUNDING & RESOURCE SHARING

We helped to move over \$1.5 million in resources to organizations and initiatives helping to advance land and food justice by serving on grant review committees and regranting funds generously given to Soul Fire Farm for such purposes.

On grant review committees, we worked with:

- The Young Farmers Coalition to provide 50 young farmers with a total of \$250,000 in small grants.
- The Food and Land Justice Fund to grant more than \$1million to 32 Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC)-led organizations leading food and land justice and sovereignty efforts across the country.
- RAFI - USA Climate and Equity Policy Project to grant \$250,000 to 11 grassroots organizations to advocate for policies and practices that benefit their communities.

We distributed \$72,600 in Soul Squad grants to 10 alumni (\$2,500 each), 12 runners up to the Braiding Seeds Fellowship (\$2,500 each), the Farmers of Color Network Midwest (\$5,000), The Free School (\$10,000) and the Schenectady Greenmarket Food Box Program (\$2,600). These resources are helping to advance valuable work, including building capacity of BIPOC folks to grow and share food and knowledge, getting farm grown produce in the hands and stomachs of families in greatest financial need, permanently protecting 250 acres of forested land near Soul Fire Farm and the Grafton Peace Pagoda, and much more.

Finally, we joined a Chorus Foundation-initiated, movement-led praxis community for collective liberation. The purpose of this body is to collaborate on a strategy for moving over \$300 million over the next 10 years.



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

2022 FIRE IMMERSION GRADUATES

CamerAn J. Bailey (he, him, his) is working on reverting the turf yard of his new cooperatively-owned home to a diverse, balanced, and vibrant ecosystem that can self-sustain itself in Minneapolis, MN. He is also working with a small group of friends to build out a seed bank and tree/shrub sapling bank to gift to others, and plant in public spaces under cover of night. Ultimately, they are doing this to collaboratively replicate their own version of Soul Fire Farm in Minnesota: A restored ecosystem, retreat space, education space, and space centering the joy of Black people in nature in Minnesota.



LeeAnn Morrissette (RYT 200) is a mother, storyteller and cultural strategist based in Charleston, South Carolina where she is currently working to rematriate her family's heirs property on Wadmalaw Island. She is committed to documenting and amplifying the stories of Black people to reclaim what it means to live well and free from the wounds of generational land-based trauma. LeeAnn currently serves as the Communications and Culture Director of the National Black Food & Justice Alliance.



Xochitl Bervera is a queer, mixed race, Latinx organizer, oyster farmer, and water and land steward based in the Gulf Coast of FL. She is the founder and Director of Near Futures Projects, an experiment in creating vibrant, sustainable, and inclusive food networks. Prior to this, Xochitl spent 20+ years building community power and waging campaigns to dismantle the criminal legal system in the American South.



Nico Le Blanc is an emerging steward of the land, yogi, meditation facilitator, and racial equity architect who strives to shift time and space to open portals towards Black Liberation and radical imagination. Located between the Lenape (New Jersey) and Catawba (North Carolina) lands, Nico provides yoga, meditation, and racial equity/racial healing work for BIPOC individuals and communities.



COALITION & POLICY WORK

We are among many kindred spirits working alongside one another in coordinated networks, partnerships and coalitions to heal and transform the food system by training Black, Indigenous, Latine, Asian and Farmers of Color in the Northeast and beyond; moving resources into the hands of land protectors, stewards, and relatives; advocating for more just and equitable markets and policies; and feeding families impacted by systems of food apartheid.

In 2022, we supported efforts to protect birds, bees, water, and people from neonic pesticides; address impacts of factory farms on environmental justice communities; oppose factory fish farming; and advance a transformational farm bill. As a member of the Agriculture Sector Advisors and we provided input into NYS Climate Impacts Assessment by helping shape the scope and content of the assessment and case studies.

In addition, we offered recommendations to strengthen NY Senate bill 9169 in response to a request by Senator Jabari Brisport's Counsel & Legislative Director, and we provided input into new draft NYS legislation on watershed health and farming justice. Co-Founder and Co-Executive Director, Leah Penniman testified, alongside Senator Cory Booker, at a public hearing with the Food as Medicine subcommittee on food and nutrition, specialty crops, organics, and research.

We continued to engage in the meaningful and productive partnerships and coalitions from the previous year, while joining the Ujamaa Cooperative Farming Alliance advisory counsel for a Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (NESARE) grant.

REGIONAL COALITIONS

Black Farmer Fund - Capital
Black Farmers United NYS - Policy
Corbin Hill Food Project - Markets
Farm School NYC - Urban Farmer Training
Federation of Southern Cooperatives
Northeast Farmers of Color Land Trust - Land
Ujamaa Cooperative Farming Alliance - Markets
Soul Fire Farm - Rural Farmer Training

NATIONAL COALITIONS

HEAL Food Alliance - Policy
Liberating Investment for the Food and Farm Ecosystem - Capital
National Black Food and Justice Alliance - Land Commons and Policy
Praxis Community for Collective Liberation - Capital
RAFI-USA - Land & Policy
US Food Sovereignty Alliance - Organizing

INTERNATIONAL COALITIONS

La Via Campesina - Worldwide Organizing

PUBLICATIONS & MEDIA

Black Earth Wisdom is born! This soulful collection of illuminating essays and interviews that explore Black people's spiritual and scientific connection to the land, waters, and climate seeks to revive our collective practice of listening to the earth. In addition to this full book, we published six essays and 27 media interviews related to food and land justice.

PUBLICATIONS

Chapter in [Portraits of Earth Justice: Americans Who Tell the Truth](#), by Leah Penniman

Chapter in [Nature Swagger](#), by Leah Penniman

Recipe in [Groundbakers](#), by Leah Penniman

Recipe in the [Cookbook in Support of the United Nations](#), by Leah Penniman

[Black Land Matters: Climate Solutions in Black Agrarianism](#) in Harvard University's Transition 133, by Leah Penniman

MEDIA

Podcast on [Black History Year by PushBlack](#) with Cheryl Whilby

Interview in [Refinery 29 - How Black Farmers are Freeing Themselves & Preserving our Culture](#) with Leah Penniman

United Nations Cookbook feature in [New York Times](#) with Leah Penniman

Article in Yes! Magazine with Leah Penniman [[Part 1](#) | [Part 2](#)]

Interview article in [Afroféminas Revista](#) with Leah Penniman

Article in [Bloom in Doom Magazine](#)

Interview for the [Future of Food Summit](#) with Leah Penniman

Blog post on [The Chicago Council On Global Affairs](#) by Ife Kilimanjaro

Feature in Opening Plenary for United Nations [SDG Action Zone](#) with Naima Penniman

Feature on [Bow Seat](#), Leah Penniman - 2023 Climate Heroes in Action

Article in Grist's [Fix Solutions Lab](#) with Azuré Keahi

Article in [Atmos](#) with Danielle Peláez and Azuré Keahi

Interview in [Foodtopia: Communities in Pursuit of Peace, Love & Homegrown Food](#) with Leah Penniman

[NYBG Plants as Liberation Interview](#) with Leah Penniman

NYS Division of Human Rights [Juneteenth video](#) with Leah Penniman

Article in [Angi](#) with Brooke Bridges

MSU's Race in 21st Century Americas Conference [Panel](#) with Naima Penniman

UVM's Inclusive Excellence Symposium Keynote: [These Gardens are Blueprints: Sowing the Seeds of Food Justice](#) with Naima Penniman

Article in Nonprofit Quarterly [Rethinking Food Culture Might Save Us](#) with Leah Penniman

Article in Grist's [Fix Solutions Lab](#) with Leah Penniman

IG Live with [WeINSPIRE Movement](#) with Brooke Bridges

Article in [Saveur](#) with Naima Penniman

Panel for [James Beard Foundation: Black History Month](#) with Brooke Bridges

Podcast on [Feeding America: Elevating Voices, Ending Hunger](#) with Cheryl Whilby and Naima Penniman

Profile in [Grounded Solutionists](#) with Leah Penniman

Podcast on [Positively Green](#) with Leah Penniman

Podcast on [Stepping Into Truth](#) with Leah Penniman

LEAH PENNIMAN

CO-FOUNDER OF
**SOUL FIRE
FARM**

AUTHOR OF
**FARMING WHILE
BLACK**



BLACK EARTH WISDOM

SOULFUL CONVERSATIONS
WITH BLACK ENVIRONMENTALISTS



CAMPUS BUILD

This fall, we offered the land gifts of maize, palm oil, honey, and gin in thanks for permission to dig a very big hole and build a program center at the heart of campus. By autumn 2023, we will gather inside this beautiful straw-bale building, meticulously designed for accessibility, energy efficiency, and earth-care. There will be a teaching kitchen, dining area, library nook, root cellar, and cozy spaces to learn and play. As a commercial construction project, it will be our most substantial in 15 years of building on this land.

Our partners New Frameworks Cooperative, with the help of Migrant Justice, are constructing the prefabricated straw bale panels for the program center. New Frameworks is a worker-owned cooperative committed to creating dignified jobs and business co-ownership opportunities for their neighbors. Migrant Justice works to build power in the migrant farmworker community, and has been supporting opportunities for job training and secure employment. The two came together to create four professional construction jobs

at NFW. As they build straw bale panels together, the NFW-MJ team is also actively working on language justice, accessibility in the workplace, political and popular education, and leadership development.

Straw bale panels are part of carbon-neutral construction and a just transition solution. Early in 2023, these bale panels will be installed at Soul Fire Farm and we are so grateful for the intentionality that has gone into their construction. The care will be infused into the very walls of the kitchen and dining space, emanating out to grace generations of future land stewards.

We also finished the office renovation this year, making it possible for staff to work together, ideate, and pack online store orders in a safe, heated space. The office, program center, and forthcoming community lodging are all part of our work to complete our campus so it can be used year round, comply with code, and offer accessibility and dignity to our participants.





ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT & HEALTHY WORK CULTURE

We value the humanity and wellness of our staff, which means that we do our best to listen, practice shared leadership, and provide opportunities for wellness and development. In 2022 we brought on new staff to increase our capacity to hold the work; encouraged staff to use their health, wellness, professional development and personal time off benefits; pro-actively discussed and addressed interpersonal and team dynamics; and created opportunities to deepen relationships with one another. We celebrated birthdays, and during the two annual staff retreats when the entire team came together, we worked collaboratively, played hard, shared delicious meals, and strengthened our bonds.

SUPPORTERS

100 Women Who Care
Amalgamated Charitable Foundation
Argosy Foundation
Bank of America Charitable Gift Fund
Bare Bones Systems LLC
Barton Family Foundation
BEA Fund
Berkshire Blanket and Home Co.
Bloomfield Family Foundation
Cardinal Book Trust
Cedar Tree Foundation
Chipotle Cultivate Foundation
DABA Fund
David Burd Foundation
David Wilkens
Diana Limbach Lempel
Doris Duke Charitable Foundation
Dr. Bronner's
Fidelity Charitable
General Motors
Germeshausen Foundation
Gore Family Memorial Foundation
Intentional Philanthropy
Jaideep and Rachel Khanna Foundation
Jewish Communal Fund
JP Morgan Charitable Giving Fund
Kataly Foundation
Keri Jackson
Kirin and Beth Fund at Common Counsel Foundation
La Semilla Food Center
Laura Kirk
Life Comes From It
Love Beauty and Planet
Marvin Israelow & Dorian Goldman
Merck Family Fund
Michele's Granola
Molly Schulman
National Philanthropic Trust
Newman's Own Foundation
NoVo Foundation
OXO
Patagonia
Presbyterian Hunger Program
RAFI-USA
Regenerative Agriculture Foundation
Rockefeller Capital Management
RSF Social Finance
Seattle Foundation - Mason Family Fund
Seeds, Soil and Culture Fund
Silicon Valley Community Foundation
Spindrift Beverage Co, Inc.
The Children's Trust
The Donna M. Kletjian 2014 Charitable Lead Trust
The Jacquiem Family Foundation Inc.
The Janey Fund
The JPB Foundation
The Martha and Hunter Grubb Foundation
The Opaline Fund of the Jewish Community Federation and Endowment Fund
The Whitehead Foundation
TIDES Foundation
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
Valentines Farm Foundation
W.K. Kellogg Foundation
Waverley Street Foundation
Wend II, Inc.
Wyomissing Foundation

We additionally thank the 3,433 individual donors who contributed to our work in 2022.

REGENERATE



- 1** Maintain soil organic matter at an average of $\geq 10\%$ for carbon capture & perennial cover at 75% land area. Install 1-2 additional high tunnels for expanded annual crop capacity & improve ecological pest & weed management through integration of a farm dog, improved fencing, & mulching.
- 2** "Solidarity share" \$25K+ of naturally-grown farm products through weekly doorstep delivery to households and BIPOC-centered organizations surviving food apartheid, reaching 100+ individuals, with 80% reporting positive impacts on their health & household economies.
- 3** Provide 60% SFF farm-fresh ingredients for 1300+ culturally rich meals served to farmer trainees. Develop a SFF cookbook with northeast adapted heritage recipes. Distribute 1200+ units of herbal medicine & preserves through a replicable microenterprise.
- 4** Increase the efficiency, safety, & quality of life of staff and participants by completing the design-build process for the Program Center, Abode, & Lodge renovations & improving landscaping through accessible pathways, native species plantings, & tree safety management. Develop multilingual signage & building manuals.

EQUIP



- 1** Train 400+ rising BIPOC farmers & land stewards through 5 multi-day intensive immersions, 4 daylong in-person trainings, 4 online workshops (3D). 50%+ graduates go on to work as growers, rural land stewards, &/or food system changemakers.
- 2** Build 10 new urban gardens & support 50 built previously with crop planning, seedling deliveries, technical assistance, and educational workshops. Host two outdoor SFitC events in the 518, and invite gardeners to other SFF programs.
- 3** Inspire 600+ local and regional community members to connect to the land, respect farmers, and advocate for food justice through 16+ work and learn days and 6+ farm tours. Facilitate on-farm youth food and land justice programs for 150+ local and regional BIPOC youth.
- 4** Support 21 existing and 10 new BIPOC beginning farmers in the 18-month Braiding Seeds Fellowship. Provide technical assistance and referrals to 100+ alumni and community partners. Engage 30+ alumni as members of our speakers collective. Regrant \$60K+ to alumni and fellowship networks.

MOBILIZE

- 1** Collaborate regionally, nationally, and internationally with frontlines BIPOC-led coalitions on campaigns to support farmworkers, rematriate land for indigenous people, advance reparations for Black farmers, & regenerate ecosystems.
- 2** Reach 50,000+ people through publications, media interviews, Ask a Sista Farmer live show, Love Notes blog, & other virtual forums. Develop a Black Earth Wisdom virtual keynote. Publish a new book Black Earth Wisdom with a target reach of 50K & complete the manuscript for Soul Fire Farm's cookbook.
- 3** Catalyze the transfer of resources & power to BIPOC Farmers through powerful storytelling to 8,000 attendees of public speaking events, with a focus on sharing our platform among staff, alumni, & partners, & 1000+ Uprooting Racism in the Food System asynchronous training.



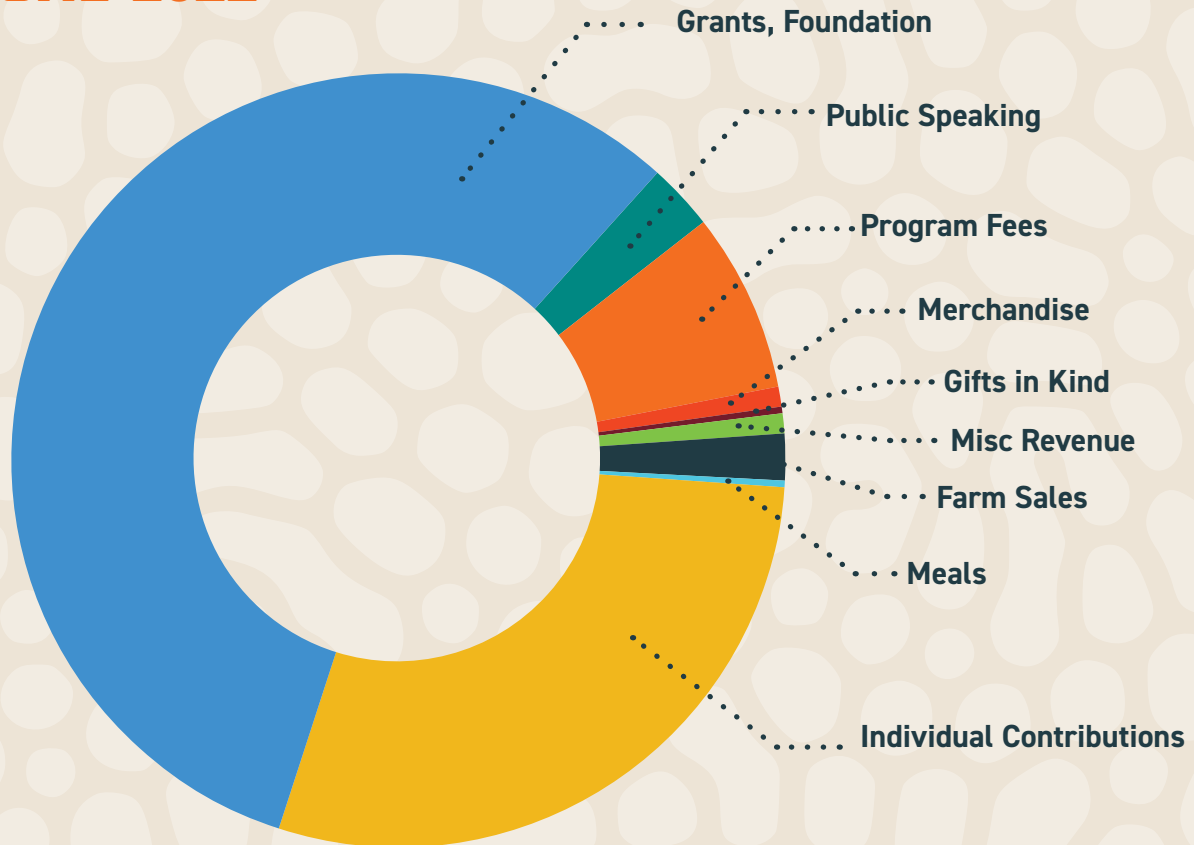
SUSTAIN

- 1** Review & revise organizational policies & related practices so that they remain timely, just, relevant & grounded in our values. Support strong staff relations & staff confidence in our ability to successfully attain organizational goals with joy given anticipated staff changes.
- 2** Improve stewardship of finance by program area, e.g., an annual review of profits and loss by program. Improve our donor retention and donor acknowledgment strategies.



FINANCIAL STATEMENT

INCOME 2022



EXPENSES 2022

Payroll	\$1,001,364	Office	\$33,010
Contract Services	\$168,673	Postage	\$6,178
Regranting	\$73,222	Travel & Training	\$29,334
Operations	\$4,740	Equipment Maintenance	\$27,368
Program Expenses	\$52,195		
Farm Expenses	\$23,794	TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$1,794,123
Insurance	\$34,618		
Fuel	\$963		
Buildings & Grounds	\$172,887		
Property & Facilities	\$143,697		
Business Expenses	\$12,070		
Merchandise	\$10,010		

TEAM

2022 STAFF

Azuré Keahi, Business Manager
Briana Alfaro, Administrative Program Manager
Brooke Bridges, Food Justice Coordinator
Cheryl Whilby, Communications & Development Director
Clara AgborTabi, Alumni & Partnerships Co-Coordinator
Danielle Peláez, Education Coordinator
Hillary Gaeta, Office Manager
Ife Kilimanjaro, Co-ED & Managing Director
Jonah Vitale-Wolff, Site Director
Kai Thomas, Site Coordinator
Leah Penniman, Co-ED & Farm Director
Naima Penniman, Education Director
Ria Ibrahim, Farm to Table Manager
Shay Collins, Administrative Program Director
Susuyu Lassa, Alumni & Partnerships Co-Coordinator
FARM PETS

2022 BRAIDING SEEDS CO-MANAGERS

Lulama Moyo
Sarah Sohn



2022 CORE CONTRACTORS & INTERNS

Brittany Levers
Dr. Crissaris Sarnelli
Elizabeth Gabriel
Emet Vitale-Penniman
Gabriel Membreno
Gaetano Vaccaro
Marketa Edwards
Maya Hector
Nathalie Halcrow
Neshima Vitale-Penniman
Raei Bridges
Raina Robinson
Taína Spicer
wendelin regalado
Winter Exley



2022 BOARD

Dr. Claudia Ford
Dr. Gail Myers
Gerald Mitchell
Jalal Sabur
Karen Washington
Kavitha Rao
Keisha Cameron
Tagan Engel
Taína Asili





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