

# ROUND THE BEND FARM

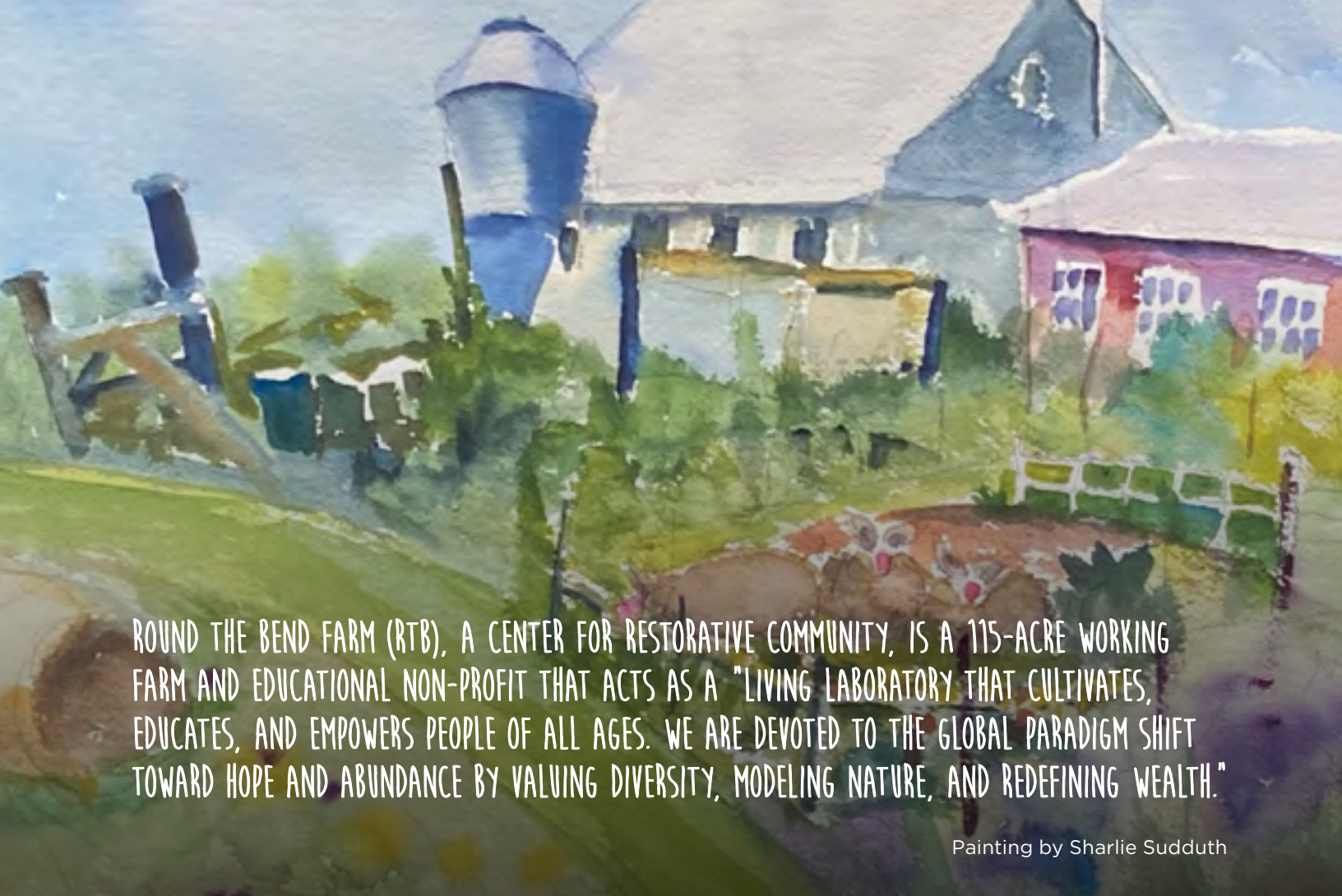
A CENTER FOR RESTORATIVE COMMUNITY



ANNUAL REPORT  
FISCAL YEAR 2021

OCTOBER 1, 2020 - SEPTEMBER 30, 2021





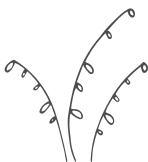
ROUND THE BEND FARM (RTB), A CENTER FOR RESTORATIVE COMMUNITY, IS A 115-ACRE WORKING FARM AND EDUCATIONAL NON-PROFIT THAT ACTS AS A "LIVING LABORATORY THAT CULTIVATES, EDUCATES, AND EMPOWERS PEOPLE OF ALL AGES. WE ARE DEVOTED TO THE GLOBAL PARADIGM SHIFT TOWARD HOPE AND ABUNDANCE BY VALUING DIVERSITY, MODELING NATURE, AND REDEFINING WEALTH."

Painting by Sharlie Sudduth



#### VALUING DIVERSITY

With diversity comes strength, resilience, and vitality. Whether this be within a human community or a farm ecosystem, diversity is key to balance and success. RTB strives to reflect diversity in all that we undertake.



#### MODELING NATURE

As we do our human work, we seek to model the inherent wisdom of natural systems. Nothing stands alone on this earth; each tree and each person is interconnected. When we model nature, regeneration springs forth.



#### REDEFINING WEALTH

Prosperity is not constrained to material goods or dollars. We see wealth as equitable access to all that makes life meaningful. RTB continuously seeks to cultivate shared abundance and communal well-being.

# LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



DESA & NIA



As we approach the end of year two of the pandemic, we reflect on the uniqueness of this moment in time. Society is reexamining the workplace, schools are toggling between in-person and online education, and many global supply chains are continuously disrupted. Climate change, structured inequalities, and COVID-19 are central to the daily news cycle. It's difficult to think of a time when personal, community, and ecological health were more salient in the public consciousness.

Round the Bend Farm is a Center for Restorative Community, and part of our work is to explore what restorative really means. How do we restore wholeness to fractured systems? What does a personally, socially, and ecologically healthy lifestyle actually look like? These are the questions we ask ourselves every day, and this is what our work is all about.

As a collective, there is so much potential for small moments to create ripples of long-lasting change. I believe humans are intrinsically good, and I think people know in their hearts that there is a problem in the consumer cycle. I am a longtime believer that simple actions can have a big impact. Part of that impact is on how we feel about ourselves and each other, and how we understand our own agency as a force of positive change. This year, we started a jar exchange program. When you purchase an RTB product in a glass jar, you can now return that jar to be reused. When people come up to me with a bag of jars for us to reuse, I can see that they feel proud. This means something to them and it means something to us. They are actively choosing to be part of the solution. We are all part of a community that can restore itself.

This year we expanded our educational gardens with more food, medicinals, and an increased focus on seed saving and cultivation of indigenous plants. Our kitchen crew kept the team and visitors healthy and focused with farm-fresh meals and a natural apothecary. We opened our doors back up to the public for our monthly Open Farm Days, field trips, and events. Our agripreneurs and edupreneurs maintained and


expanded independent, value-based livelihoods, providing unique goods and services to the larger community. And we continued our collaborative food-access project, **Manifest Love**.

**Manifest Love** is a natural progression of our mission and outreach. Through this project, we distributed free weekly food shares for approximately 125 families in New Bedford, with our partners YWCA Southeastern MA, Youth Opportunities Unlimited (Y.O.U.), and NorthStar Learning Centers. From October 1, 2020 through September 30, 2021, **Manifest Love** provided over 45,000 pounds of food to participants. RTB also harvested, packaged, and donated approximately 5,200 lbs of produce, herbs, and seedlings to the Westport Food Pantry, The Daily Table, and Our Sisters' School through **Share the Love**, a subsidiary of **Manifest Love**.

We hope that our work inspires you to *manifest love* wherever you are, and to consider yourself a part of our restorative community.

WITH LOVE & POSITIVITY,  Desa





THIS ANNUAL REPORT IS DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF OUR FRIEND AND BEEKEEPER, LUCY TABIT. LUCY EXEMPLIFIED THE SPIRIT AND PHILOSOPHY OF RESTORATIVE COMMUNITY AND HER LEGACY LIVES ON IN THE FORM OF BUZZING BEES, POLLINATED FLOWERS, AND SWEET HONEY.





## MANIFEST LOVE

In March of 2020, at the start of the pandemic, RTB launched **Manifest Love**, a collaborative endeavor with YWCA Southeastern MA, Youth Opportunities Unlimited (Y.O.U.), and NorthStar Learning Centers. We grew, gleaned, and packaged free weekly food shares, putting healthy local foods on the tables of approximately 125 families in New Bedford, while also providing supportive educational materials.

Due to its success, we continued the project in 2021, beginning again in May. This fiscal year, **Manifest Love** participants received locally-grown vegetables, fruits and herbs; Paradox Acres 100% grass-fed beef; Flying Carrot Farm free-range eggs; RTB-made sauerkraut and pumpkin cookies; Nilsa's Herbal Teas & Botanicals tea blends; Renegades Rising English muffins; Duxbury Saltworks sea salt; Equal Exchange fair-trade and organic coffees, teas, and chocolates; and RTB-made essential oil hand sanitizer, all distributed in reusable, recycled ChicoBags.

RTB relies on our **Manifest Love** partner organizations to offer guidance as well as provide a crucial role in distribution. With their help, we know that our carefully tended, farm-fresh food goes directly into the hands (and bellies!) of New Bedford families. **Manifest Love** is truly a cooperative effort which we are grateful to be a part of.

Each weekly share is accompanied by an educational letter that includes photo identification and nutritional information, along with easy-to-follow (and delicious and nutritious) recipes with links to instructional websites and videos. The YWCA team meticulously translates the educational materials into Spanish and Portuguese for accessibility; NorthStar Learning Centers picks up the weekly shares and drops them off at all of the partner sites, where each individual organization distributes them directly to families; and Y.O.U. provides cooking classes for children whose families receive these shares through their program. Not only did participants receive farm-fresh food from RTB, they also learned new ways of cooking that food. Our partners sometimes provided one-on-one educational services to participants, helping them to better understand how to use the vegetables they received. This is especially important to participants who speak English as a second language and elderly participants who do not use the internet. This is the beauty of collaboration, and a great example of the collective community manifesting love.

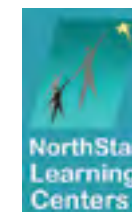
RTB's **Manifest Love** Farmer, Josh Louro, and Distribution Coordinator, Madigan Kay, cared for the vegetables from seed to harvest, and nearly doubled the diversity of vegetables and herbs we offered in the shares this growing season. Because soil health is the foundation of healthy food, the **Manifest Love** team tended the soil with a variety of fertility strategies. In addition to their usual practices of organic weed control, passive irrigation, and organic pest management, they added biochar amendments and created their own mineral-rich foliar sprays out of local plants, with the purpose of maximizing ecological efficiency and fostering a full-circle, closed system approach. They filled 55-gallon drums with locally harvested dandelion, dock, thistle, comfrey, and seaweed; covered the plants with water; and fermented them for about a week. Over the rest of the season, the team siphoned this mineral-rich liquid into backpack sprayers, and used it on crops.

Although it would have been easier to buy industrial amendments, the team chose this method to reduce fossil fuel usage and support the full system of ecological life on the farm.

RTB East and **Manifest Love** received an infrastructure upgrade in the form of a vegetable washing station. Thanks to RTB's Resident Builder & General Contractor Tyler See, with help from Peter Zine, the washing station was built out of wood that was salvaged from a previous building on the property. The washing station allows the team to quickly wash, sort, and pack shares in close proximity to the RTB East fields, where the majority of the **Manifest Love** food is grown.

**MANIFEST LOVE PARTNERS:**

eliminating racism  
empowering women  
**ywca**



“

THE MANIFEST LOVE PROJECT REFLECTS THE CORE VALUES OF RTB IN SO MANY WAYS: WE ARE MODELING THE MANY SYMBIOTIC RELATIONSHIPS THAT WE SEE IN NATURE THROUGH OUR COLLABORATIONS WITH COMMUNITY PARTNERS; WE ARE REDEFINING WEALTH AND VALUING DIVERSITY BY PROVIDING FREE FRESH VEGETABLES TO MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY.”

- MADIGAN KAY



# LIVING LABORATORY

“We are a living laboratory that cultivates, educates, and empowers people of all ages...”

We focus on educating people of all ages, and we mean that: from the little ones all the way through to our elders, there is always something for all of us to learn. Educational offerings allow us to connect and grow with the community. And on a working farm, the potential for hands-on learning and experiential discovery is limitless! The opportunity to teach is our mission in action.

Our entire campus—plants, animals, buildings, people, soil, community, ideas—forms a living laboratory. We understand that even as we create new projects, gardens, buildings, and food systems, we are ourselves a part of the creation. As each individual thrives, so does the whole; as the whole thrives, so does the individual. Embracing this balance is crucial to our vision of a restorative community.

What if waste was considered a resource? What if schools had fewer walls and more fresh air? What if health and happiness were fundamental

to economically viable livelihoods? Our living laboratory provides visitors with the space to explore these questions in more depth, and to envision new realities. We hope that our campus inspires people to reimagine how to live, work, and educate in balance with the natural world.

We are incredibly fortunate to be a place-based institution teaming with a talented, hardworking, and creative crew. This allowed us to welcome the outside community to our living laboratory amidst the pandemic. We hosted thousands of people in 2021 in a variety of ways, including Open Farm Days, field trips, walking tours, camps, and events. The people who visited the farm were able to experience our campus as a welcome respite from screen time. The farm gave visitors a chance to reconnect with their bodies, the soil, and with nature. Our entire campus is WiFi-free and there is very little cell phone service, which we see as a unique advantage.

Part of the philosophy of RTB as a restorative community is that we try to create as little garbage as possible. We love giving old things new life! Everything has another use, and by extending the life of everyday objects, we restore their value again and again. Recycling and upcycling are integral to our renewable energy practices. The courtyard roof is made from 6,000 shingles, hand-cut from old landfill liner. We often construct outbuildings from salvaged wood and other upcycled products. And, on a daily basis, we recycle and upcycle as much as possible.

During the pandemic, many industrial items like glass jars have become harder and harder to find. At the same time, there's been a huge surge in canning. We hope that by valuing items like used jars, we can inspire more people to rethink and recreate the consumer cycle in a more restorative way. Most of our value-added food items like jam, fermented vegetables, or peanut butter are packed in glass mason jars. We started a community-wide jar return program this year, and **every glass jar we fill and sell can now be returned empty to the farm to be reused.** We sanitize these jars and redistribute them to replace the use of plastic. From April through September, we received hundreds of jars that we were able to keep in circulation and out of the landfill!



OUR SISTERS' SCHOOL

For many years we have had a deep and positive relationship with Our Sisters' School (OSS). We are mutually inspired by one another and learn from every encounter. This year, we ran our first four-day summer camp with OSS at RTB. It was a pleasure to have these wonderful young leaders on campus. We also had the opportunity to give technical and ground support for the construction of OSS's greenhouse and urban garden project in New Bedford, led by RTB's Education Manager Nate Sander.

## OPEN FARM DAYS

In April, we reopened our gates to the public for our monthly (and all outdoor) Open Farm Days (OFDs). RTB's Online Education and Market(ing) Manager, Hannah Wylie, was instrumental in organizing OFDs throughout the year. We loved seeing new and old friends enjoy the farm again in person!

We have continued to offer three variations of our popular farm tour at our OFDs: a garden tour, a whole systems farm tour, and a barnyard tour. For many people, Open Farm Day is the only time during the year that they interact with farm animals, use a composting toilet, or see how vegetables grow. We believe that a day on the farm can spark a sense of wonder that generates a lasting impact.

At our Open Farm Days, we sell 100% grass-fed beef burgers, non-GMO, pasture-raised sausage sandwiches, and RTB-made vegan, black bean burgers hot off the grill, all served atop buns made by local bakery Renegades Rising, and alongside an assortment of RTB-made condiments. We also sell a variety of farm-fresh products made by RTB teammates and agripreneurs. Executive Chef & Kitchen Director, Shaun Van Laarhoven, and Food Systems teammate, Laura Killingbeck, made homemade chive pesto, nettle powder, chive powder, spice mix, sauerkraut, kimchi, a variety of jams, granola, peanut butter, and more. Most of our products are packaged in recycled or upcycled materials, and all ingredients are either grown on the farm or are thoughtfully sourced from local and/or organic producers.







## FERMENTED

Apple Cider Vinegar  
Sauerkraut  
Kimchi  
Pickled Turnips  
Pickled Jalapeños  
Thai Chili Garlic Sauce  
Salsa  
Jalapeño Celery Garlic Hot Sauce  
Kombucha  
Dandelion Wine  
Fire Cider  
Sourdough  
Yogurt, Kefir, & Cheese



## CANNED

Cucumber Relish  
Bread & Butter Pickles  
Red Raspberry Jam  
Jalapeño Cucumber Relish  
Blackberry Jam  
Cherry Tomato Jam  
Burnt Cherry Tomato Jam  
Pasta Sauce

Pizza Sauce  
Zesty Zucchini Relish  
Candied Jalapeños  
Mixed Berry Jam  
Blackberry Lavender Jam  
Pear Sauce  
Blackberry Syrup  
Peach Jam

Jalapeño Peach Jam  
Honey Rosemary Blackberry Jam  
Peppery Pear Salsa  
Spicy Peppery Pear Salsa  
Green Grape Jelly  
Red Grape Jelly  
Ketchup  
Pear Butter



PRESERVING THE HARVEST IS SOMETHING WE TAKE VERY SERIOUSLY ON THE FARM. WE TAKE GREAT PRIDE IN THE NUTRIENT-DENSE FOODS THAT LINE OUR PANTRY SHELVES. NOT ONLY ARE THEY BEAUTIFUL TO LOOK AT, BUT WHEN WE EAT THEM ON COLD WINTER DAYS, WE CAN ALMOST FEEL THE LIFE ENERGY OF THE SEASON WHEN THEY WERE MADE. WE FEEL CONNECTED TO EACH TEAMMATE THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THAT HEALTHY GOODNESS; THE PERSON WHO PLANTED THE SEED, NURTURED IT INTO A PLANT, HARVESTED IT, AND ULTIMATELY PROCESSED IT. IT IS ANOTHER WAY THAT WE FEEL CONNECTED TO ONE ANOTHER AND TO THE WONDERFUL NATURAL SETTING AROUND US.

## DEHYDRATED

Venison Jerky  
Onion Powder  
Garlic Powder  
Variety of Herbs & Spices  
Variety of Herbal Teas  
Fruit Roll Ups  
Apples, Pears, & Seasonal Fruits  
Leeks, Beets, & Seasonal Vegetables  
Squash Seeds  
Acorn Flour  
Chive Powder

Nettle Powder  
Vegan Crackers  
"Sun-dried" Tomatoes  
Heirloom Beans  
Corn  
Juniper Berries  
Whole Chiles

Elderberry Syrup  
Spicy Mustard  
Barbeque Sauce  
Salad Dressings & Marinades  
Lard  
Bone Stock  
Vegetable stock  
Butter & Ghee

## REFRIGERATED

Chili Sauce  
Aioli Sauce  
Chive Pesto  
Southeast Asian Chili Garlic Relish  
Spicy Basil Parsley Chimichurri

Fruit & Herb Simple Syrup  
Fresh Juices  
Grain & Nut Milk  
Cow & Goat Milk  
Smoked & Cured Meats





# RTB FARMING PHILOSOPHY

Since our inception in 2013, RTB has continued to grow and develop our relationship with land and our philosophy of land management. As our relationship deepens, our philosophy also changes and expands to encompass new knowledge. We are truly a living laboratory, and no season on the farm looks exactly like the previous one.

At RTB, we farm using a holistic philosophy that is derived from permaculture, biodynamic, and soil remineralization perspectives. We use a non-dogmatic approach to meet the needs of our environment, and utilize an eclectic range of practices including: a variety of organic mulches, on-farm livestock-based compost, vermicompost, post-industry organic sea resources, mineral rock dust amendments, biodynamic preparations, astronomical planting, season extension, reduced irrigation, cover crops, and crop rotation; all in order to grow the most health-sustaining soils and nutrient-dense, bioactive food (and medicine) possible.

## ORGANIC AND BEYOND

The general understanding of the term “organic” is food that is produced without synthetic pesticides, herbicides, chemical fertilizers, or genetic modification. In other words, food which has not been intentionally poisoned. At RTB, we believe this is an essential and important aspect of producing healthy, life-giving food. However, we don’t believe that nourishing agricultural practices can simply be defined by what is being omitted.

The original meaning of the term “organic” agriculture—and the meaning that we subscribe to here at RTB—refers to organic matter and the practice of adding life-based plant and animal materials to the soil. These materials decompose and feed the soil’s microbial web, sequester carbon, nourish healthy soil structure, and increase the soil’s ability to hold onto key nutrients and retain moisture. This is not a process of omission; but rather, a process of actual nourishment.

Official USDA organic certification requires that foods are grown and processed according to federal guidelines addressing factors like soil quality, animal raising practices, pest and weed control, and use of additives. For small farmers, organic certification through the USDA is a significant process and can be prohibitively expensive. It can also restrict farmers from using their own on-site compost and other full-circle soil amendments. Meanwhile, large industrial organic farms may be certified as organic, but because soil practices are minimal, this food can remain mineral and nutritionally deficient.

For these reasons we—and some other small farms—choose not to be certified organic, and instead focus our resources and energy on utilizing the best practices for nourishing our soil. **Healthy soil is what gives us healthy food.** We strive to nourish the soil, plants, and animals that nourish us in return.

We experienced another bounding leap of growth in the RTB Educational Gardens this year. We expanded our orchards and fields; worked with new and exciting crops; saved and planted open-pollinated seeds of heirloom and indigenous varieties; produced a true abundance of vegetables, fruits, and medicinal herbs throughout all four seasons; branched out into annual cut flower production for the first time; and honed in on our perennial and tree crop care.



“

WE STRIVE TO WORK WITH NATURE, NOT AGAINST IT. WE ARE DANCING AND NOT WRESTLING WITH OUR ECOLOGICAL SURROUNDINGS, AND WE ARE CONSTANTLY ADAPTING OURSELVES AND OUR PRACTICES IN LINE WITH OUR VALUES AND A PHILOSOPHY OF RESPECT FOR OUR INTERDEPENDENCE.”

- BENOIT AZAGOH-KOUADIO

We also continued scaling up a long-term project of growing and caring for endangered indigenous bean seeds. We started variety maintenance and selection for a rare (and exceedingly delicious) heirloom winter squash. We began trialing intensive polycultural and intercropping systems, including “Three Sisters” (corn, beans, and squash), which was a traditional crop layout of the Wampanoag (the original, displaced people of Southeastern Massachusetts). Corn provides a trellis for closely planted beans, while squash shades out weeds and deters pests, providing an abundant and nutritious fall harvest. Not only was this a huge growing success and vibrant display, it was a wonderful opportunity for education and a fitting way to honor the sustaining knowledge and tradition of native culture (past and present) on this land.

## LIVESTOCK FARMING

Animals are central to land management at RTB, and each animal participates in many aspects of farm life. Chickens eat weeds and pests, create fertilizer, and produce eggs and meat. They also play an important part in our educational services. Farm dogs protect gardens and livestock from pests and predators, and they also provide snuggles. Every animal is valued for its special presence and its many roles.

Almost all of the animals at RTB complete full life-cycles within a very small range of the farm. Most are born and bred at RTB, and they all have access to pasture and sunshine. All meat is free of steroids, hormones and antibiotics.





# AGRIPRENUERS

Agripreneurs are defined as social entrepreneurs who create business opportunities in food and farming which make a positive difference in local food production, leading to a more restorative community. In establishing food and farming businesses at RTB, agripreneurs have the ability to define success in terms of their values and vision, simultaneously creating a mutually beneficial relationship that gives back to RTB’s educational programming. Agripreneurs support our mission by creating educational infrastructure, allowing RTB educators to teach about their methodologies, and by sometimes becoming the teacher(s) themselves.

## NILSA’S HERBAL TEAS AND BOTANICALS

In 2014, Nilsa Garcia-Rey started volunteering in the garden under the tutelage of RTB’s first agripreneur, Ashley Brister. After a couple of seasons, Nilsa transformed her work into her own independent business. Ever since then, Nilsa has continued to grow, craft, and sell fresh dried herbs. Her product line includes tea blends, herbal gift boxes, tick and insect repellent, herbal oils, salves, and more. She grows all of her plants without chemical fertilizers or pesticides, and packages everything by hand.

“

MANY OF THE PLANTS I GROW ARE EITHER BIENNIAL OR PERENNIAL. SOWING THESE PLANTS FROM SEED IS AN ACT OF HOPE FOR THE FUTURE. EVEN IF I’M NOT HERE, THE PLANTS WILL CONTINUE TO SHARE THEIR GIFTS WITH US.”

- NILSA GARCIA-REY

One of the great advantages of the agripreneur model is its ability to enable entrepreneurs to develop unique, value-based businesses that might otherwise never have begun in the first place. In Nilsa’s case, RTB provided a philosophical backdrop, physical space, and a supportive environment for her to engage with the land and her interests. This led to the development, over time, of a unique small business that now provides affordable and high quality medicinal herbs to a larger community. Meanwhile, RTB is able to use Nilsa’s garden as an educational tool for visitors.

## PARADOX ACRES

Geoff Kinder manages cows and pigs through his agribusiness, Paradox Acres. He sells 100% grass-fed beef and non-GMO, pasture-raised pork to the public at RTB’s Open Farm Days.

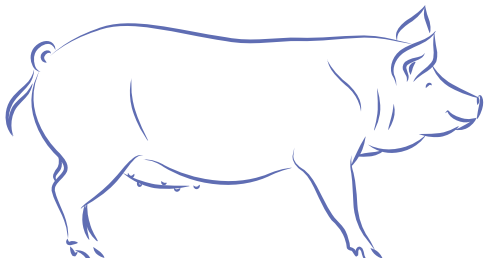
During the growing season, Geoff rotates his cows on pastures throughout the farm and abutting conservation land. As the cows graze, they maintain and fertilize pasture grasses, which promotes soil health. During the winter, Geoff feeds the cows hay that he harvests each year from RTB fields and land within a mile of the farm. Geoff works with conservation organizations to coordinate haying in a way that protects nesting birds and maintains bird habitat.

Geoff’s pigs live outdoors year-round, where they have access to soil, rain, sunshine, shelter, and bedding. Most pigs live in close family units with their littermates. Geoff feeds them a mixture of pasture, non-GMO grain, hay, brew grains from Moby Dick Brewing Co., grass clippings, and food processing discards from the farm. Pigs transform scraps into compost and help till garden beds.

“

THERE ARE SO MANY LAYERS TO UNDERSTANDING ANIMAL SYSTEMS. I’M IN AN INTIMATE RELATIONSHIP WITH LAND AND WATER AND WEATHER AND EVERYTHING.”

- GEOFF KINDER



This year, Geoff received a grant from the National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) that will allow him to build a bedded pack facility for cow manure composting. This grant will fund a fabric-covered structure to house cows during the winter. The bottom of the structure will be layered with wood chips or other bedding material. During the winter, the cows will leave their manure in the bedding. At the end of the season, Geoff will remove this nutrient-rich compost mixture and cure it in winnows on a gravel bed. This facility will allow Paradox Acres to nearly double its current cattle capacity, while simultaneously harnessing the beautiful power of cow manure for high-quality compost.

## GOATBUSTERS

Partners Hannah Wylie and Tyler See are the creators of Goatbusters, a “goatscaping” business. They breed and raise their goats at RTB, and divide them into small working groups that are rotated on pastures within RTB and the local community throughout the growing season. This year, Hannah and Tyler increased their herd size to 41, and rented out three groups for most of the summer.

Goatbusters’ goats serve a unique role in the community by providing natural landscaping services. Individuals and institutions hire Goatbusters to manage their land by browsing on invasive species and other unwanted vegetation without the use of harmful chemicals and heavy machinery. Goats are adept at finding and feeding on a variety of plant species, ensuring a diverse diet and providing the added benefit of depositing natural fertilizer wherever they go.

In the winter, the herd spends more of their time in the barn, where they stay warm and munch on hay. Tyler and Hannah supplement their diet with minerals, organic feed, sprouted grains, and some food processing scraps from the farm. Kidding season begins in late January, when the addition of baby goats brings a burst of life to the late winter months. During kidding season, we often have a long line of visitors at the barn during Open Farm Day, eager for cuddles. Goatbusters’ goats are an important part of RTB’s experiential education component. Hannah and Tyler also provide fresh goat’s milk and cheese to the RTB team, and sell goat meat to the public at RTB’s Open Farm Days.



# EDUPRENEURS

“

RTB HAS BEEN INSTRUMENTAL IN SUPPORTING THE LOGISTICS OF RUNNING A LARGELY OUTDOOR PROGRAM, INCLUDING WELCOMING US INTO THEIR CLASSROOM SPACE FOR OUR WINTER 2021 SESSION WHEN THE PANDEMIC AFFECTED OUR ACCESS TO OUR WINTERTIME CLASSROOM IN A NEARBY TOWN. THIS ALLOWED US TO REMAIN OPEN TO OUR EAGER COMMUNITY, WHILE MANY KIDS WERE LEARNING INDOORS, DISCONNECTED FROM THEIR PEERS.”

- RACHEL MEDEIROS

In addition to agripreneurs, RTB also helps foster edupreneurs: social entrepreneurs who create a non-profit or business opportunity focused on education. They are mission-driven and work to have a positive impact on the community, the planet, and people of all ages.

## ELEMENTS LEARNING COLLABORATIVE

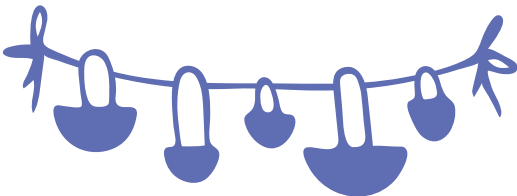
Elements Learning Collaborative (Elements) is a non-profit, nature-based educational organization launched by Co-Founders Cristy O’Brien and Rachel Medeiros in 2018. Elements emerged out of a desire for passion-fueled learning and community connection. Cristy and Rachel offer exceptional outdoor educational programs at RTB, where they use the farm as their literal classroom and living laboratory, even in the rain!

Elements and RTB have a symbiotic relationship- we help feed each other and help each other grow. The natural beauty and ecology of the land and working farm makes for an amazing space for children to learn, play, and flourish. Elements’ students receive enriching experiences from a diverse group of RTB teammates who host regular lessons on their areas

of expertise. The positive relationships that children and their families develop with the extended teaching family is really special and something we believe all schools and communities should have access to.

Elements Nature Program is a school year, drop-off program for children 4-10 years old. Curriculum includes exploration and stewardship of nature, farming, nutritional cooking and eating, literacy, mathematics, physical and human geography, science, social/emotional skills, art, music, movement, yoga, and meditation. This year, students studied anatomy and life cycles by working with chickens from eggs to adulthood; planted and maintained raised vegetable beds; and harvested fresh food from the beds throughout the year.

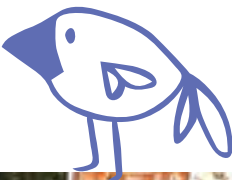
In addition to the drop-off program and summer camp, Elements launched two twelve-week Family Day programs, with the help of RTB’s TerraCorps team. Families with children participated in weekly activities on the farm. Our campus can be an outdoor classroom for people of all ages, and Elements does an amazing job of making this happen. Elements offers their programming on a sliding scale and scholarships are available, which further speaks to our mission of access to all.



“

WHEN MIND AND BODY WELLNESS ALIGN, WE CAN DIVE INTO ALL THE OTHER FUN STUFF LIKE READING, SCIENCE, AND MATH. RTB IS A LIVING LABORATORY, THERE ARE SO MANY EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES TO EXPLORE AND LEARN. WE NURTURE SELF-AWARENESS AND BUILD LEARNING UPON THE CHILD’S PASSION AND CURIOSITY.”

- CRISTY O’BRIEN







LAURA  
KILLINGBECK  
Food Systems

BENOIT AZAGOH-  
KOUADIO  
Garden Manager

MADIGAN  
KAY  
Manifest Love Farmer  
& Distribution  
Coordinator

SHAUN VAN  
LAARHOVEN  
Executive Chef &  
Kitchen Director

HANNAH WYLIE  
Online Education &  
Market(ing) Manager &  
Agriprenuer

TYLER SEE  
Resident Builder  
& General Contractor  
& Agriprenuer

NATE SANDER  
Education Manager

GEOFF KINDER  
Agriprenuer  
& Co-Founder

LAUREL  
BRANCO  
TerraCorps

NILSA  
GARCIA-REY  
Agriprenuer

ABBY SCHWARZHANS  
Kitchen Assistant

HALLIE ESCOLA  
TerraCorps

HEATHER ZINE  
Executive Assistant  
& Human Resources

DESA & NIA  
VAN LAARHOVEN  
Executive Director  
& Co-Founder

JOSH LOURO  
Manifest Love  
Farmer

OUR TEAM



DESA  
VAN LAARHOVEN

DUNCAN & ELLEN  
MCFARLAND

NANCY  
DEMPZE

GLENN  
OLIVEIRA

THE BOARD

“  
EVERYTHING ABOUT MY EXPERIENCE TODAY WAS  
AWESOME. LOVE THIS PLACE- THE PEOPLE, THE  
AMBIANCE, AND THE SELECTION ALL ARE THE BEST.  
IT’S RESTORATIVE JUST BEING THERE.”

- JANE, MEAT-CSA MEMBER

TERRACORPS  
SERVICE PROGRAM

TerraCorps is an AmeriCorps program that focuses on land stewardship, farming, building leadership skills, and youth education. The TerraCorps program “centers on land equity, the strengthening of community land ownership and stewardship practices that support a diversity of interests in land for the benefit of human health and environmental sustainability.” TerraCorps service members receive a federally-funded stipend and mentorship in exchange for supporting us with educational services and farm work.

September 2020 marked the beginning of our first year partnering with TerraCorps, welcoming Sustainable Agriculture & Youth Education teammates Laurel Branco and Beth Cronin. Laurel and Beth worked in the gardens, created educational materials, designed and ran nature-based activities for children, started new projects in mushroom cultivation and a pollinator garden, and helped to establish an RTB recycling and upcycling center. Our second service year with TerraCorps is just beginning, with returning member Laurel, and new member Hallie Escola.





# RTB COMMUNITY: HEALTH IS WEALTH IN ITSELF




Our daily work in the RTB community is a direct reflection of all aspects of our organizational mission. We grow, cultivate, and steward our land resources in order to tap into the abundance yielded by robust ecological relationships. We do so by modeling, listening to, and working with the cycles of nature, and by fostering the biodiversity which is the hallmark of all resilient and healthy functioning natural systems. In this process, we redefine wealth as the sustenance of individuals, community, and cosmos, found in the provenance of mutually caring for our natural resources. Along the way, we educate and empower people of all ages and abilities to understand, support, and reflect these nourishing principles in their own lives and in the world at large.

Farm-to-table meals are central to our community practice and philosophy. Our Executive Chef & Kitchen Director, Shaun Van Laarhoven, works with Abby Schwarzhans, Kitchen Assistant, to coordinate meals and food processing. Teammates take turns cooking and cleaning, and everyone participates in some aspect of food production or processing. We source our ingredients locally and organically whenever possible, and much of our food comes directly from the farm.

We also buy from local food producers or source sustainably grown products in bulk from a co-op. A single meal often represents the work of every single member of the team: someone grew the vegetables, another person milked the goats, someone else made the tomato sauce, another person sharpened the knives, and yet one more teammate coordinated the people and supplies. Every person's job is interwoven to create delicious daily nourishment.

In patriarchal societies, women are socialized to take disproportionate responsibility for unpaid, and many times underappreciated, tasks like housekeeping and food preparation. At RTB, we strive to create a community structure that fairly balances daily tasks between all members. We value food processing and preparation as a form of skilled labor and a cornerstone of restorative community. Everyone who volunteers at RTB is also welcome to partake in farm-fresh meals with our team.

We believe that healthy food makes healthy bodies, and healthy bodies make healthy communities. This is a full circle of engagement with living systems. Participation in farm-to-table meals is also an important educational component for everyone who

lives or works on the farm. A deep understanding of seasonal food variation, processing, and uses is key to our team's ability to teach, advise, and inspire learners of all ages. We also bring this farm-to-table cooking philosophy and practice to our events, including sustainable weddings and Open Farm Days. Food itself is often one of our most inspiring educational tools.

Alongside farm-to-table meals, our team also creates our own herbal supplements and natural medicines. We have an apothecary cabinet in the kitchen which houses over 20 varieties of homemade tinctures. Our Garden Manager, Benoit Azagoh-Kouadio, has led the way for the RTB apothecary by growing a wide variety of medicinal plants and creating many of the herbal remedies we use on a daily basis.

The Southcoast region is now a hot zone for tick-borne illnesses. In late 2020, we saw a significant rise in infections on the farm, and this season we responded with a number of very successful strategies to mitigate our exposure. Mammals such as mice, rabbits, and deer are common vectors for ticks, so we added a farm dog, Mayla, as a vector deterrent

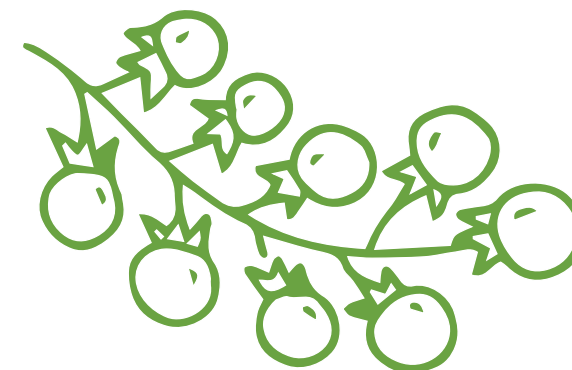
for those animals. In addition, mother-daughter duo Desa and Nia hatched and raised fourteen chickens to run free near the Elements' classroom and pick off ticks in the grass. RTB's Resident Builder & General Contractor, Tyler See, built a mobile chicken tractor for them to roost in. We have all doubled down on our tick prevention protocols, and we now keep an RTB "tick log" to accurately track all known bites that occur on the farm.

Benoit expanded RTB's "Lyme Healing Garden" and added a number of new herbal supplements for the healing of tick-borne illnesses, including Japanese Knotweed, Ashwagandha, Echinacea, Dan Shen (Red Sage), Baikal Skullcap, Sweet Annie, Brahmi (Bacopa), Wood Betony, Motherwort, and Yarrow. He also began encapsulating doses of Astragalus as a prophylactic for Lyme Disease.

This approach to health and wellness- through wholesome food, natural medicine, community spirit, presence in nature, and creative problem solving- forms the foundation of the RTB community, as well as our approach to education and outreach.

“  
FOOD IS A CO-EVOLVING RELATIONSHIP  
BETWEEN PEOPLE AND PLACE.”

- LAURA KILLINGBECK



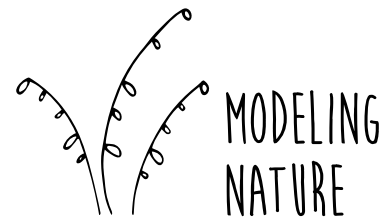


# HARNESSING THE SUN'S ENERGY

Nature is our role model in everything we do. Natural systems are renewable, interconnected, and restore balance to the whole. We strive to design RTB as a living laboratory that models nature and inspires others to do the same.

The entire RTB campus is designed to amplify energy efficiency, including the Learning Center, which forms the hub of our everyday activities. The Learning Center buildings are oriented south to maximize sun exposure and natural lighting; building walls are filled with 12 inches of insulation, which maintains consistent indoor temperatures; and windows are insulated with double or triple panes. Every time we turn on a light, plug in a blender, or use a computer, we know that this energy comes from renewable resources! This includes heating and cooling, with a Mitsubishi Hyper Heat Ductless Mini Split System, which we supplement with fans and a wood stove. Renewable energy also powers our walk-in refrigerator and hot water heat pumps. We have worked hard to source durable, ecologically sustainable, and recycled building materials through local, family-run businesses whenever possible.

The energy efficiency of our infrastructure influences all of our operations and program development. Every time we host an Open Farm Day, run a tour or host a field trip, work with volunteers, or put on a sustainable event, our building infrastructure is featured as a core aspect of our educational mission and programming. As people pass through these buildings, they learn about energy efficiency and feel inspired to evaluate their own options for energy conservation.



Plants, algae, and some bacteria are nature’s original solar alchemists. They convert sunlight into other forms of energy, which continuously regenerates life on earth. We see photovoltaic systems as a way of mimicking the brilliance of these original organisms.

Taking a page from Mother Nature’s book, we have worked over the years to install solar arrays thoughtfully on the farm. Whenever our solar panels produce more energy than we need, RTB gains credits toward future energy use. Our Learning Center photovoltaic system generated 57,894 kilowatt hours this past year, with a carbon offset of 79,940 pounds, equal to planting 1,024 trees.

This year we added 114 solar panels, installed by Cotuit Solar. This should produce approximately 39.855 kilowatts annually, with an equivalent carbon offset of 56,400 lbs. The project includes a battery backup system for our commercial kitchen, which makes the farm more resilient in the event of power outages. This was made possible by our amazing donors and a grant from the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR).

Currently all of the electricity on our 115-acres is renewable, either from our own solar panels or from us “Opting Up” to renewables. We officially joined The Climate Reality Project’s “100% Committed” campaign, which encourages businesses to transition to **100% renewable electricity** by 2030. We take pride in the fact that RTB has already met and exceeded this goal!





OUR LEARNING CENTER  
PHOTOVOLTAIC SYSTEM

CREATED A CARBON OFFSET  
OF 79,940 POUNDS  
EQUAL TO PLANTING  
1,024 TREES





# EMBRACING AN EQUALITY MINDSET



Our team encompasses a spectrum of race, ethnicities, gender identities, and sexual orientations. Everyone who works here is part of our restorative community, each bringing our unique personal backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives to the table. We also recognize that we are all highly influenced and affected by the larger structured inequalities that frame society. No person's perspective is perfect, and we strive to look more deeply and more broadly at how we as individuals and as a community relate to the world around us. We are grateful to the many people from marginalized, intersecting backgrounds that bravely build a vision and practice of equality in the world. We support this work and hope to contribute to this vision.

Our team is encouraged to spend time reflecting and educating ourselves on sexism, racism, classism, heterosexism, and the tangles of inequality and privilege we are a part of. There is a myriad of things that RTB does to strive to be an open-minded, inclusive, loving organism, including, but not limited to, the following: inclusive bathroom signage, supporting teammates in participating in actively

undoing racism and implicit bias through the YWCA's online workshops, weekly book clubs, building a small lending library on transgender allyship, and participation in VISIONS, Inc. PACE (Personal Approach to Change and Equity) diversity training programs. We believe this continuing education helps us to become better educators and community members.

Beginning in June of 2021, RTB employees will receive a paid holiday on June 19th, also known as "Juneteenth". Juneteenth honors our teammates of color, and provides time and space for all of us to consider our relationship with racism. It is a special day as it marks the emancipation of enslaved people in the United States. While many Americans celebrate July 4th as our "Independence Day", many also look to June 19th to celebrate freedom for all. For us, Juneteenth has become a time to celebrate the resilience and incredible culture of the Black community. RTB friend (and local author, artist, and poet) Iva Brito joined us for a special story hour to celebrate our first Juneteenth during an Open Farm Day, where she shared some of her favorite children's books that celebrate Black History.





THANKS TO OUR CONTRIBUTORS

FINANCIAL DONORS

American Family Insurance  
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Jim Bevilacqua & Connie Bacon  
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Thomas Ladue  
Ellen Lathi  
Thomas Loftus & Patricia O’Hearn  
Phillip & Whitney Long  
Tina Maa  
Ed Majewski  
Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR)

Karen Masterson  
Mary McFadden & Dr. Larry Stifler  
Becky & Andrew McFall  
Ellen & Duncan McFarland  
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Jenelle Wotton  
Yawkey Foundation

IN-KIND

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Brix Bounty Farm  
ChicoBag  
Civil & Environmental Consultants  
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Equal Exchange  
Eva’s Garden  
Goatbusters  
Debbie Kinder  
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Erik Kowalski of EDK Studio  
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Noquochoke Orchards  
Sandy Rodgers  
Faye Rogers Baron  
Saltonstall Architects  
Spicy Lime  
Rick & Hana Tabit (In memory of Lucy Tabit)  
Frederick & Amy Thurber  
Barry Van Laarhoven  
Nancy & Hank Van Laarhoven  
Shaun Van Laarhoven  
Anna Whitcomb  
Danny Whitehead  
Shannon Wylie Vincelette



VOLUNTEERS

Our volunteer program really blossomed this year, as more people wanted to participate in meaningful work on the farm, while moving their bodies and being surrounded by like-minded people. Some people came every week, while others showed up regularly for community volunteering events. Our volunteers helped us plant, weed, and harvest; clean recycled jars; care for farm animals; process value-added foods; and prepare medicinal plants. Each task is an opportunity to learn new skills and a way to contribute to the energy of the farm. We love our volunteers!



SUSAN YAO & MOTHER MICHELLE

Amelia Albanese  
Patricia Andrade  
Suzanne Baker  
Morgan Banaszek & David Wellstead  
Cassandra Bell-Berman  
Tayler Berry  
Caroline Bowes  
Emily Breen  
Courtney Casey  
Hana Chouinard  
Merri Cyr  
Josh Feld  
Kristen Flammini  
Emily Goodwin  
Dan Goulart  
Kuno Haimbodi  
Ted & Jackie Halunen  
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Lauren Miller-Donnelly  
Matt Montero  
Ayodele Ouhuru  
Diana Raphael  
Aiden Reynolds  
Sandy Rodgers  
Louisa Rossel  
Ryan Sasseville  
Lita Sawang  
Ariana Sligar  
Jennifer Snyder

Sperry Family (Nikki, Maisy, Sam & Finn)  
Joshua Swaye  
Tennant Family (Cheryl, Jacob, Jenna)

Hank Van Laarhoven  
Laura Ward  
Danny Whitehead  
Metta Winslow  
Susan Yao  
Gabe & Hannah Zine







Every new project requires inspiration, planning, development, maintenance, and adaptation. Each phase is crucial to long-term success. We often find ourselves balancing many different phases of many different projects at once. This keeps life flavorful, and keeps the energy flowing.

Looking ahead to 2022, we see a healthy dose of maintenance and adaptation on the horizon. In the last several years we’ve been busy building physical, community, and ecological infrastructure. All of these buildings, garden beds, animal habitats, community processes, and food systems need to be tended and managed. A big part of maintenance involves assessing and adapting to new changes in other areas of the farm. As a living laboratory, we’re always evolving.

We are continuing the development phase of several major projects, including our long-awaited bathhouse. This project has finally made its way through the permitting process. The proposed bathhouse will include two bathrooms, showers, a bathtub, laundry facilities, and a sauna for deep tissue healing.

Next year, we are welcoming a new yurt to the property. This thirty-foot structure will help provide year-round teaching capacity for Elements, and will also allow RTB to host more people for a variety of educational field trips and experiences.

We will be moving from the planning into the development phase of a new agroforestry (the intersection between agriculture and forestry) system at RTB East. Over the last few months, consultant and educator Meghan Giroux has been helping us design an orchard mixed with annual crops. Meghan is the Director of Interlace Commons, a non-profit promoting agroforestry through educational and research initiatives.

In September 2020, The Bromley Charitable Trust purchased the former Wainer Family Farm, that we now call Everbearing Farm, which lies across the street from RTB East. Over the last year, we have been managing this land and sharing its resources, including a large quantity of raspberries, an abundance of organic herbs, and the use of two amazing greenhouses. Everbearing Farm has already proven to be a huge asset to RTB, and we continue to dream about what it will become.

We are also looking forward to the upcoming acquisition of a food truck. **Manifest Love** was so well received that we naturally wanted to continue to deepen the impact. For many years, RTB’s Executive Chef & Kitchen Director Shaun, a leader of color who has seen firsthand the disparities with food access and education in vulnerable areas, has had a vision for RTB to own and operate a food truck, with the goal of helping spread crucial knowledge and bridge the access gap. RTB is happy to report this dream is on its

way to becoming a reality, thanks to the Yawkey Foundation and the Highland Street Foundation, who both generously contributed to this endeavour.

The **Manifest Love** Food Truck will be a teaching tool first and foremost. It will be a point of sale for local farm goods, a place to educate through cooking demonstrations and workshops about healthy eating and food preparation, and a new, unique way to distribute healthy, nutrient-dense foods. Not only is it important to us to bring nutrient-dense food directly to people who need it most, but we also want to educate people on how to use the food and the importance of food acting as medicine in our bodies. RTB has been approved to accept SNAP/HIP benefits as a mobile market, and we anticipate we can reach a greater number of people through this program with a food truck.

One of the many wonderful things about the **Manifest Love** Food Truck is that it will help the **Manifest Love** project stay versatile and relevant now and into the future. We do not know what other crises may arise from climate change, health pandemics, or other unforeseen realities, and having the **Manifest Love** Food Truck will allow us to always be able to bring food and education directly to the people.

And last (but certainly not least), we will continue to upcycle our energy back into the “inspiration” phase of new ideas and practices...

Thank you for being part of our inspiration and for continuing to support our collective journey in creating love, light and positivity.

LOVE, DESA & THE RTB TEAM



SPECIAL THANKS



To our amazing writing & editing crew, including Laura Killingbeck, Desa Van Laarhoven, Heather Zine, Debbie Kinder, Ariana Sligar, and Benoit Azagoh-Kouadio.

To our pro-bono photographer, Erik Kowalski, for continuing to capture the essence of RTB in his beautiful photographs.

To other photographers who donated their work for our use, including Merri Cyr, Laura Killingbeck, Desa Van Laarhoven, Hannah Wylie, Hallie Escola, and Elements Learning Collaborative.

To the entire RTB team for your perseverance and commitment to our work.

And to all of you, our supporters, for making this beautiful report come alive!



# FINANCIALS

FISCAL YEAR 2021 (OCT 1, 2020- SEPT 30, 2021)



REVENUE:

Programs -		
Education	\$53,089	7.3%
Farming	\$50,741	6.9%
Manifest Love	\$100,495	13.7%
Fundraising and Other	\$526,832	72.1%
TOTAL REVENUE:	\$731,157	

Expenditures in excess of current year revenue were funded using a portion of our historical surplus.

EXPENDITURES:

Programs -		
Education	\$224,900	30.0%
Farming	\$152,078	20.3%
Manifest Love	\$121,090	16.2%
Administration	\$104,691	14.0%
Fundraising	\$14,746	2.0%
Investment in Solar & Other Fixed Assets	\$130,545	17.5%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES:	\$748,050	



## IN MEMORY OF LUCY TABIT

This year we lost one of our agripreneurs, Beekeeper Lucy Tabit. Lucy was so many things to us—warm, loving, nurturing, generous, an incredible listener, a wise mother, and a woman who knew how to laugh. She was a lover of nature and people, and an advocate for the voiceless (especially ones that buzzed!). Lucy was a great soul who cared for her community and was always willing to help out a friend. Lucy’s legacy of friendship, hope, and honey remains in our hearts.

Lucy started raising bees at RTB in 2013 and taught workshops at our Open Farm Days. She maintained six hives at RTB and sold honey through her business, Hana’s Honey. She was generous with her time and knowledge. In the years before she died, Lucy advocated for legislative changes banning the use of neonicotinoids, a class of pesticide that enters plant nectar and can harm honey bees.

Pesticide usage was always an issue for Lucy and her honey bees. Exposure to pesticides is a common cause of honey bee death, and contributes to the large-scale decline of honey bees throughout North America. In the winter, Lucy’s hives suffered from a massive die-off. Lucy suspected that her bees were exposed to pesticides when they fed away from the farm.

During the time that the honey bees were dying, Lucy also struggled with illness. This past winter, Nate emptied and cleaned out the hives to prepare them for a new start next year. He left one hive with viable frames inside, just in case any bees returned on their own in the spring. We were hopeful, but had no expectations.

On June 15, 2021, Lucy passed away. That same morning, Benoit discovered a wild swarm of bees near the farmhouse. They buzzed over the gardens and landed on the cedar grove that circles our compost yard. Within a few hours, they resumed their flight and settled into one of Lucy’s hives. It was as if the bees had heard that one of their great protectors had passed, and were coming home to pay tribute to their “queen bee”.



“WE WILL MISS LUCY DEARLY, BUT KNOW THAT HER SPIRIT IS STILL WITH US, BUZZING THROUGH THE AIR.”  
- DESA VAN LAARHOVEN





**ROUND THE BEND FARM** is located in Southeastern Massachusetts, the traditional homeland of the Wampanoag people. Descendents of the original Wampanoag continue to live throughout the area. We acknowledge and honor the indigenous ancestors who stewarded the land we now walk, farm, and care for.



“

WHEN WE TALK ABOUT LAND, LAND IS PART OF WHO WE ARE. IT'S A MIXTURE OF OUR BLOOD, OUR PAST, OUR CURRENT, AND OUR FUTURE. WE CARRY OUR ANCESTORS IN US, AND THEY'RE AROUND US. AS YOU ALL DO.”

- MARY LYONS (LEECH LAKE BAND OF OJIBWE)

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