



When It's Time to Move Beyond Just 'Local'

Why is local not enough?

Over the last year, REAP's Board of Directors and staff have done some deep thinking about the future we want to shape in Wisconsin. For over two decades, we've been known as the organization championing local foods and a strong local food system.

But a sustainable and just food system relies on more than whether food has been grown nearby. What our region, and state, need is a good food movement, not just a local food movement [see bar at right].

REAP believes we can transform our community, regional economy and the health of our residents through the power of good food - food that is locally-produced and community based, ecologically sustainable, and provides a fair and decent wage for those who produce it. The path to a just and sustainable food future has a number of goals: 1) Food is grown as close to where it's eaten as possible. 2) Food production minimizes the use of harmful chemicals and stewards clean water, soil and air. 3) The people who grow, process, sell and prepare our food make a fair living. 4) Healthful, nourishing food is accessible to all.

We're seeing family farms in Wisconsin struggle to stay viable with their traditional markets drying up. We've lost more than 1,400 family farms in the state

What Is Good Food?

When we talk about Good Food at REAP we don't mean grandma's home cooking, a favorite restaurant, or your family's secret recipe. Good Food encompasses more than just memories of comfort food and appealing flavors. As we move into our new strategic plan and begin to use the term Good Food, we're talking about food that makes the world a better place - for people, communities, and the environment.

We define Good Food as food that is produced, harvested, processed, distributed, sold, and consumed, and re-circulated in a manner that is transparent, is racially and ethnically equitable and socially just, builds up thriving local economies, and promotes a healthy and sustainable natural environment.

In defining Good Food, REAP staff considered how organizations that work in local food systems, social justice, racial equity, and other topics use related terms. We were inspired by the Good Food Purchasing Program, Just Food, PolicyLink, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Center for Social Inclusions, and other sources.

since the beginning of 2018.

Access to food and food security have been spotlighted as public health concerns in our community. Our own Farm to School work has been foundational to increase access for children to fresh fruit and vegetables and the opportunity to develop the habit of eating them (a habit that is forever).

REAP sees the power in connecting these dots. We can build a good food movement that is equitable and just for people, does not degrade our environment, and strengthens our local economy.

How are we trying to make these changes?

Here are the ways we're tackling this big, audacious goal:

We support the next generation of healthy eaters through youth education - this the work we do in classrooms and school gardens, during our summer program and when you see our Farm to School staff in the community. We've made some great progress in the last decade but we've got a lot left to do, like train others to do this work so the impact can stretch beyond just our direct programming.

We educate and connect local and sustainable farmers to buyers - from individuals, like you and me, to wholesale and institutional buyers, like Madison Metropolitan School District

RECOGNIZING INVESTMENTS IN REAP'S WORK

USDA Local Food Promotion Program Grant

We are excited to build off the success of our vegetable processing pilot with the award of a \$90,000 Local Food Promotion Program grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The USDA annually awards LFPP grants to “support the development, coordination and expansion of local and regional food markets, enterprises and producer-to-consumer marketing.”

Wisconsin Partnership Program at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health

The Wisconsin Partnership Program at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health has awarded a four-year, \$400,000 Community Collaboration grant to REAP Food Group and Roots4Change

Cooperative to implement community-ed solutions to health inequity in the Latinx community. *See page 3 for details on the project.*

Evjue Foundation

The charitable arm of *The Capital Times* newspaper has once again put its support behind REAP's work with a \$20,000 grant. These funds will lift up our work to provide fresh food access to low-income families in the Madison area.

Steve Stricker American Family Insurance Foundation

We are honored to be among the 2019 recipients of a \$10,000 grant from the Steve Stricker American Family Insurance Foundation, which supports charities, educational initiatives, and organizations that work to build strong families and healthy kids. This grant will support our

work to build the next generation of healthy eaters through our Farm to School programming.

Zendesk

Our annual Taste of Wisconsin sale helped raise more than \$20,500 for Madison area schools this holiday season. We'd like to recognize Zendesk for underwriting this year's sale, which supports dozens of Wisconsin producers along with our Farm to School program.

International Foodservice Editorial Council

With the goal of recognizing community-based organizations changing lives through food, the International Foodservice Editorial Council chose REAP Food Group as the recipients of its fourth annual Food For Good Award.

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and Madison College, who feed thousands of people every day. This involves getting the right people in the room together, which is a role REAP plays.

We celebrate the future we want to see. It wouldn't be REAP without a few big celebrations of this incredible ecosystem of farmers, chefs and businesses that make delicious food. From Burgers and Brew to our annual Taste of Wisconsin school fundraiser, there are so many great reminders of how amazing the food scene in our community is. We hope you'll join us at one of our food celebrations this year.

What are some new directions we're taking?

As an organization, we take on disparities in good food access that affect children of color and those who grow up in low-in-



come households. But we need to do more.

As an ally to our community partners who live these disparities, we commit to acknowledging and educating our stakeholders on the structural inequalities that both feed and result from this issue. **We commit to elevating the voices of our community partners**, who know best how to address their issues. And we stretch to evolve our own organization, to be the change we want to see.

Creating a good food future goes beyond direct program work to putting the right policies and processes in place to make it easy and affordable to source more of our food from our own sustainable family farms. Over the next three to five years, **REAP will address policy needs and help build the people power to make them happen.**

What's most exciting about this work of building a good food future is that it can bring so many people together around public health, environmental sustainability, economic and workforce development. When a cause benefits many of our residents and a strong coalition of diverse voices is calling for change, then real change can happen.

REAP & ROOTS4CHANGE 4-YEAR COLLABORATION WILL ADVANCE HEALTH, FOOD EQUITY IN DANE COUNTY

The Wisconsin Partnership Program has awarded REAP and Roots4Change Cooperative (R4C) a 4-year, \$400,000 grant for a project that will bridge the gap between the food and health care systems, and address health inequities for Latinx families in Dane County.

The project, “*ROOTed to REAP: Latinx/Indigenous Women Advancing Health and Food Equity in Dane County*,” is one of six projects funded by the Wisconsin Partnership Program at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health through its Community Collaboration Grants program. The grant program is designed to provide training and technical assistance as well as funding to organizations addressing health inequities stemming from the social determinants of health.

This grant will strengthen a collaboration between REAP and R4C, a cooperative led by Latina and Indigenous women, to advance health equity by working with the food and health care systems to address individual and collective health and well-being in a holistic, culturally-aligned way.

The partnership has its roots in our summer food programming. During the previous two summers, we worked with R4C as REAP ambassadors to engage Latinx families at park meal sites.

The work of R4C and REAP is built on a foundational belief that food systems and healthcare systems are inextricably linked and treating them as separate entities has had serious consequences for well-being.

“Our project aims to bring the right



people to the table to ask how this can be changed to improve health outcomes for Latinx families, who have been disproportionately impacted by this history,” said REAP Executive Director Helen Sarakinos.

Our organizations will use our collective strengths to make change happen: R4C brings committed community action, targeted program development, policy change, and cultural centeredness. Equally important, REAP brings food system development, technical and educational support, deep connections to sustainable agriculture, and opportunities to create change inside K-12 schools and related systems. Together, we dream of creating hospitable and thriving ecosystems with our Latinx/Indigenous families.

According to Mariela Quesada Centeno, R4C coordinator and Centro Hispano community-based research fellow, “This partnership will use a community-led process to enhance learning in the Latino community, not of colonized knowledge, but rather of native and traditional wisdom and to shape change in our healthcare and education institutions, in how they incorporate this learning to respond to Latinx populations around health and food equity.”

THANK YOU FOR HELPING US START 2020 STRONG



REAP Food Group would like to extend our gratitude to everyone who donated to our 2019 year-end fundraising campaign.

Thanks to the 165 of you who donated, you helped raise **\$44,250** to support healthy kids, sustainable family farms and a good food future.

We also extend a heartfelt thanks to our Challenge Match leaders, supporters who pledged more than \$18,000 to double the impact of your gifts: **Robin and Vivek Swaminathan, the REAP Board of Directors, Vik and Mandy Patel, and Terese Allen and Jim Block.**

We look forward to the exciting year ahead building a strong, just food system in Southern Wisconsin together with you!

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REAP FOOD GROUP

PRESENTS



BURGERS AND BREW

The only way to kick off summer

SATURDAY JUNE 6

CAPITAL BREWERY

TICKETS ON SALE MARCH 12

REAPFOODGROUP.ORG/BURGERS-BREW

REAP Food Group's mission is to transform communities, economies and lives through the power of good food. You can support our mission by making a donation online at reapfoodgroup.org/give. Every annual donation above \$45 makes you a REAP member.