

ROUND THE BEND FARM

A CENTER FOR RESTORATIVE COMMUNITY



ANNUAL REPORT FISCAL YEAR 2024

OCTOBER 1, 2023 - SEPTEMBER 30, 2024

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.



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

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 and restoration spring 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.



GRATITUDE

TO OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR LIGHTING OUR WAY

Round the Bend Farm is not your typical non-profit, and our board of directors is likewise unique. Since its inception, our board has sought to epitomize, through action, our unconventional approach. They have openly accepted the challenge to lead in a different way: through collaboration, from a perspective of “power with” rather than “power over.” We are grateful for their guidance and support, and for their celebration of those on the ground each day. Their contributions are restorative and transformative, a true example of a shifting paradigm of leadership toward intentional empowerment and true grassroots change. Our board embodies a breadth and depth of experience and wisdom that we are ever grateful for and constantly learn from. **Bernadette Souza** is the Executive Director of Youth Opportunities Unlimited (Y.O.U.) and a partner of **Manifest Love**. Bernadette brings knowledge of the communities we serve and is a strong, steady voice of the community, building trust and adding perspective to RTB’s programming. Legal expertise is **Nancy Dempze’s** gift, offering a passion for conservation and a unique sensitivity that distinguishes her as a lawyer. In his influential and supportive position as Executive Director of the Carney Family Charitable Foundation, **Glenn Oliveira** provides an informed perspective on ways in which RTB can positively impact our community. **Duncan McFarland** and his amazing wife **Ellen** (our chief non-board supporter) are champions of RTB’s mission, carrying our vision through times of uncertainty and cheering on our every success. Their fiscal contributions are the bedrock upon which we are able to challenge ourselves as an organization and grow. President of the Board, **Desa Van Laarhoven**, contributes a guiding vision informed by years of non-profit leadership and a steadfast dedication to sustainability and social justice. Through their abundance of wisdom, our board truly is the fertilizer to our collective garden.



WORDS OF REFLECTION

DESA VAN LAARHOVEN
& DAUGHTER NIA



Thank you for supporting our work in a myriad of meaningful ways. We are growing healthy and deep roots because of people like you who have joined in our communal efforts, where restoration is the action word for sustainability and social justice; where we restore the soil, help to heal the planet, and strive to foster a loving, diverse community.

An African proverb that has carried me over the past 19 years of working in the non-profit world is:

"IF YOU WANT TO GO FAST
GO ALONE, IF YOU WANT
TO GO FAR GO TOGETHER."

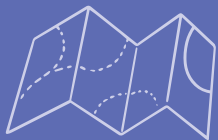
There is absolutely no question that this entire creation here called Round the Bend Farm, a Center for Restorative Community, is the work of us going far – together – further than any one of us could have managed on our own. This is the result of dreams born, and manifested, on the land and in the hearts of so many beautiful people who have contributed to the RTB community through the years, but most especially my team, our agripreneurs and edupreneurs, our **Manifest Love**

partners, our Board of Directors, and our Fairy Godmother and Godfather Ellen and Duncan McFarland, whose support and belief in our vision and work is humbling and instrumental in all we have accomplished.

A lot has happened in FY 2024, from the start of an endowment (please think of us if you are estate planning so that this non-profit can live long after us), to an RTB summer program for tweens and teens, to a new public supply well and irrigation well for our 8-acre fruit tree orchard.



It has been an amazing journey over these past 10 years, and through our Education, Farming, and **Manifest Love** programs we have accomplished the following:



Acquired 3 properties through the amazing Bromley Charitable Trust, growing from 39 to 115 acres

Built a commercial kitchen, classroom, offices, yurt, 7 greenhouses, 6 tiny houses, a bathhouse, and a wetu



Installed 5 solar arrays and planted a 500+ tree agroforestry orchard



Provided important educational support and donated over 140,000 lbs of food, valued at \$644,115.00, through our **Manifest Love** program the past 5 years



Hit the road (literally) with our **Manifest Love** Food Truck

Created an Endowment Fund to support RTB well into the future



Reached over 21,000 people through educational experiences at the farm in the past 4 years!

A Chinese philosopher, Confucius, once said,

"IF YOUR PLAN IS FOR ONE YEAR, PLANT RICE. IF YOUR PLAN IS FOR 10 YEARS, PLANT TREES. IF YOUR PLAN IS FOR 100 YEARS, EDUCATE CHILDREN."

Well we haven't planted rice, but we have planted potatoes, carrots, tomatoes, old mother owl beans, and oh so many turnips — basically if we can grow it in this climate, it is very likely that our team has planted it!

As an educational non-profit, we are living our mission and planning for the future (100+ years) by educating our babies. We are so lucky to have our teammates, **Manifest Love** partners, Elements Learning Collaborative edupreneurs, and so many others helping us educate the next generation. This next generation runs around the farm, kindly correcting their parents when they misidentify a plant – or maybe that's just my beautiful, smart baby girl! I love it... I love our kids, which includes all of the Elements' kids, the campers, and all of the students growing up on the farm. This is all for them! One of the biggest reasons that we wanted this dream of RTB to become a reality was so we can provide a better world for all of our babies, and all future generations.

Thank you for standing shoulder to shoulder with us to strive for a more love-filled and restorative community — we appreciate you and all you do to contribute to our work!

With heartfelt gratitude and love,
Desa Van Laarhoven
Co-Founder & Executive Director

♡
Desa





A LIVING LABORATORY THAT **EDUCATES** PEOPLE OF ALL AGES

Educating people of all ages is central to RTB's mission and is at the heart of what we do. The farm is a living laboratory, where the potential for experiential, hands-on learning is limitless. We provide a wide array of educational offerings, including farm tours, field trips, service-learning opportunities, workshops, professional development, retreats, sustainable events, and Open Farm Days. Each of these impactful experiences allows us to connect and share with the local community in meaningful ways.

Each year at the farm, we take time to reflect upon the work that we've done and the ways that we've connected with others. We continually try to build upon successes, nurture longstanding partnerships whilst deepening our educational impact, and discover additional ways to invite more folks into the RTB community. Although everyone on our team is an educator in some way, as education is the thread that connects us all to our mission, our everyday educators are Education Manager, Peter Zine, and Education Assistant, Michaelah Nunes. The team collaborated with approximately 23 local schools and organizations, leading nearly 1,000 students on the farm for service learning and field trips this past fiscal year. We also successfully piloted two educational programs at the farm that will be returning next summer.

In July, RTB hosted Brown University's Environmental Leadership Lab (BELL) for two, three-day (overnight) "retreats." While at the farm, forty BELL students learned about and participated in our work and farm ecology – mulching fruit trees, taking nature walks, working on their environmental action plan projects, eating farm to table

meals prepared by Chef Shaun, and sleeping in tents in the Wetu field. Hosting this group on the farm for days at a time provided them the rare opportunity to feel the rhythm and flow of RTB and our beautiful, natural ecosystem. This opportunity had a profound impact on many of the students, and we hope it helps to shape their future in thinking about living a more restorative and socially-just life.

In August, we ran our first annual, week-long farm camp with kids aged 12-17 years old. The wonderful participants were immersed in various aspects of life on the farm – feeding and watering the chickens and other livestock; inspecting bee hives; cultivating gardens; moving goats to new pastures; packing bags of produce for our **Manifest Love** program; preparing a farm to table lunch for the team with Chef Shaun; connecting with our agripreneurs (weaving corn husks with Elizabeth Perry; working with Nilsa Garcia-Rey in the herb garden, learning the ins and outs of managing pigs with Joshua Swaye); and more. In short, we all had a blast! We're excited to offer more summer programs, and to continue to find additional ways to grow our community in the year ahead.



MANIFEST LOVE FARM-TO-PLATE IMPACT:

THIS YEAR, OUR *MANIFEST LOVE* FOOD ACCESS PROGRAM & *MANIFEST LOVE* FOOD TRUCK PROVIDED OVER 14,000 CONNECTIONS TO THE COMMUNITY.



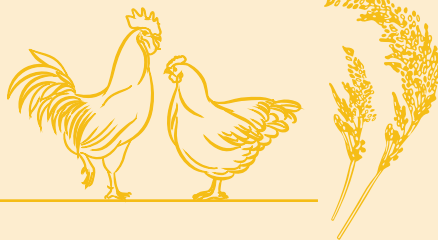
6,800

**LEARNERS/VISITORS
CAME TO RTB IN 2024:**



1,873 through
Educational
Opportunities
(field trips, service
learning, farm tours)

1,998 with
our Open
Farm Days



235 experienced
Professional
Development &
Work Retreats

894 attended
Sustainable
Weddings & Events



1,800 took part in
Elements Learning
Collaborative
Programs





CLIMATE CHANGE COLLABORATION

At the end of 2023, RTB was invited to collaborate with the Town of Dartmouth (Town) on their Municipality Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Grant. This state-level grant provides cities and towns with funds to plan and implement measures that build resilience to the continuous effects of climate change. This project speaks to the Town's desire to protect its coast and ecosystems, as well as build resiliency in the face of climate change in an area that is bound to experience increased coastal hazards, sea surface temperature changes, coastal flooding and hurricane force winds, and flooding associated with high rainfall events.

Along with RTB, the Town collaborated with Comprehensive Environmental Inc. and the Lloyd Center for the Environment, with a large component of this project focusing on "Nature-Based Solutions" and how community members can participate in these solutions themselves. RTB supported the Town by employing and demonstrating our own Nature-Based Solutions through ongoing community engagement and education. Our involvement also included the creation of an informational packet documenting the project's progress; metrics collection; QR codes implementation; and different social media arcs to highlight each collaborating organization's contributions to the project. This experience allowed RTB to walk our talk surrounding sustainability, environmental protection, and climate change fallout.



RTB FARMING:

FROM SEED TO PLANT & EVERYTHING IN-BETWEEN

Since our inception, RTB has been a restorative farm that doesn't utilize synthetic pesticides or chemical fertilizers to raise our crops. We use minimal machinery, only what we must, to pick and care for what we grow. Nature has been our teacher; what works for her works for us.

WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

THE METHOD

Under the direct management of Garden Manager Benoit Azagoh-Kouadio, RTB uses holistic farming methods derived from permaculture, biodynamic, and soil remineralization perspectives. When RTB says permaculture, we mean a way of interacting with the land that seeks to regenerate rather than extract; to nurture biodiversity through agricultural practices that restore the soil and ecosystem. Taking the biodynamic perspective means we only use natural, organic materials in our farming - never synthetic chemicals that can leach into groundwater or poison and degrade our soil, which ultimately impacts the food that is grown in it. With soil remineralization, we're looking to revitalize the earth we plant in by: limiting fields to one crop per season; making sure our planting beds' soil networks have plenty of time to rest and repair in between seasons; using naturally-derived rock minerals and animal-based amendments; and through our farm-made animal and plant-based compost used as natural fertilizers. These methods provide macro and micronutrient cycling and increase beneficial soil microbial activity, adding to its overall health. RTB has never used synthetic chemicals for fertility or weed management.



**MODELING
NATURE**



**VALUING
DIVERSITY**





THE SEED

Our farmers start the vast majority of our plant material from seed. We also engage in seed saving, keeping a certain amount of seeds from this year's crop to use next year. As a Center for Restorative Community, we support local initiatives to maintain regionally important heirloom crops and breeding projects to create new varieties which are better adapted to our region.

Here at the farm, we are thoughtful about what we plant; we think about the entire lifespan of our perennial and annual crops to decide which are the most beneficial - to both humans and the environment. We invest in a diverse range of perennials, like cane fruit berries, asparagus, medicinal and culinary herbs, and multi-use tree crops. At the same time, we are selective about which annuals we choose to plant, emphasizing those crops and varieties that are naturally adaptive and resilient in our prevailing agricultural conditions, ones that do not need to be sprayed with ecologically detrimental synthetic pesticides and fertilizers. This includes those plants within our integrated agroforestry alley cropping system. Directed by seasonality, we grow and plant primarily what can be naturally cultivated during each season and what is in demand from our communities. For efficiency, economy, and ecological consideration, the extent of our seasonal extension cropping is limited to several unheated fieldhouses. We purposely opted for this so we can be intentionally sustainable with our practices.

THE UPKEEP

Believe it or not, how you upkeep, or cultivate, your growing beds affects your soil and what you grow. In addition to natural compost applications, our approach to soil management and upkeep includes routine use of green manure cover cropping strategies which adds organic matter, builds structure and fertility, and reduces erosion. For this, we also focus on both low-till and no-till ground preparation. Through our agroforestry work, we are integrating perennial crops within our soil management approach, and crops which help to increase both soil stability through their root structures and provide substantial, long-term increases in soil organic-matter content. This sustainably allows us to upkeep our soil without wearing it out.

In our cultivation practices, we use exclusively mechanical techniques for weed suppression. This means that for the vast majority of crops, we use hand-tool-based strategies. Occasionally, in larger row crop areas, we use small, tractor-based cultivation. But the majority of work on this farm is done by hand! Our farmers work hard for every plant that grows, and for this we are filled with gratitude. For weed suppression in our fruit tree orchard and other perennial plantings, we make extensive use of locally-procured wood chip mulches - a direct by-product of local arborists - which, in addition to weed occlusion, provides an ongoing source of organic matter, nutrient release, moisture retention, and soil microbial and mycorrhizal inoculation.

HARNESSING THE SUN TO POWER THE FARM:

Since our installation of rooftop solar panels in 2017 on our learning center, and the addition of another array on our barn in 2021, RTB has generated approximately 430,200 kWh of energy*, meaning we have saved 687,401 pounds of carbon dioxide from being released into the atmosphere. Sequestering that amount of carbon would require about 5,200 trees! We could have planted a forest - oh wait, we are doing that too (a little bit) with our beautiful, 8-acre fruit tree orchard.

ANOTHER PERSPECTIVE TO PUT THIS INTO CONTEXT: WITH 430,200 KWH OF ENERGY, YOU CAN RUN A REFRIGERATOR FOR 261 YEARS!*

**Data was obtained from RTB's Enphase dashboard*



PEST MANAGEMENT

In managing insect pests in our crops, RTB makes the choice to rely on a combination of nature-based approaches. The first of these is plant-health-based strategies inspired by the research of John Kempf of Advancing Ecological Agriculture. By first targeting optimal plant health (through soil health), we are able to reduce the likelihood of attracting insect pressure and damage. To support plant health, we emphasize diversity in our plantings. This encourages overall crop resilience and creates a thriving agroecosystem that interacts with fauna to attract and reinforce sources of natural, ecological pest control.

In our cultural practices, we choose varieties and crops that are specifically bred to be more resilient, adaptive, and resistant to pest attack, to further limit the need for outright interventions. We also make use of exclusion netting and row cover as baseline, mechanical strategies to limit pest damage. In rare cases, and only as an absolute last resort, will we consider utilizing naturally-derived, OMRI (Organic Materials Review Institute) approved spray applications, being careful about the timing of these applications to avoid any overlap with daily pollinator activity.

We also do not and will not use any synthetic commercial pesticides or sprays for mosquitos or ticks on our properties. For example, Elements Learning Collaborative, our sister non-profit and edupreneur at our main property, uses a simple and effective garlic oil repellent spray for the environs of their school, while rotating a flock of chickens who feed on a variety of insects, including ticks. We provide all of our farmers and volunteers with a robustly effective essential-oil based tick repellent spray from YaYa Organics, and diligently practice strategies to reduce both tick and mosquito breeding habitat conditions.

One of our real concerns is the prospect of local farmers who do not share these same ecological values, choosing to use pesticide sprays that will adversely affect the local microecology, our own agroecological systems, and the health of our farmers through cross-spray drift.

RTB is not only committed to using the highest standard of ecologically concerned agricultural methods on our properties, it is in fact a part of our mission to model nature.

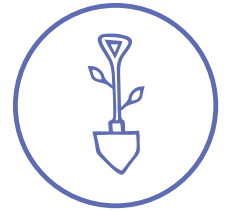


To be 100% clear, RTB does not and will not use synthetic chemical pesticides. They are harmful both short- and long-term to surrounding soil, ecology, and people.

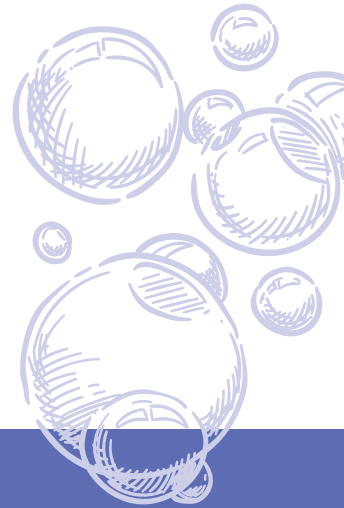


SPREADING RESTORATIVE WEALTH...

At RTB, we view “wealth” as more than our monetary and material possessions. While those things have inherent value, we like to look at “restorative wealth” as a culmination of all aspects of our lives that money can’t buy: good health and quality of life; deepening connections to self, community and nature; loving your work; being a part of something bigger than your individual self; time to experiment, learn and be; and the presence of a robust gift-sharing economy. We seek to create an environment at RTB where these characteristics of a wealthy life are available to our land-based community: our farm team, our agripreneurs and edupreneurs, and our extended family. Through tiny house living and treating food as medicine, we demonstrate that conscious living is wealth in itself, and we share this wealth with the surrounding community as well.



**REDEFINING
WEALTH**



FOR OUR TEAM...

After a few years of planning and building, we now have a state of the art bathhouse to serve our little community of teammates. With a serious affordable housing crisis in our area, a number of our teammates live right here on the farm in our tiny house community. The bathhouse (which has two showers, one bathtub, two composting toilets, a full-service laundry area, and a sauna) helps create a healthier ecosystem for those teammates, and all of our teammates really, redefining wealth for our team. Many jobs on the farm are taxing to the body and mind, and we see this as an important step in taking care of our bodies, taking care of our health... After all, a healthy team contributes to a healthy organization (and a healthy world!). While the bathhouse is a place that RTB teammates can utilize, it will also be integral for our future programming.

We had teammates elbow-deep in work on the bathhouse, from construction to decoration. RTB's Resident Builder (and General Contractor) Tyler See put so much time and effort into making the bathhouse what it is today. Tyler carried the long project through from start to finish and dedicated countless hours through all four seasons to bring this project home. We are ecstatic at its completion, and grateful to all of the hands and hearts that were able to touch this project and carry it out to fruition with us.

AND BEYOND RTB...

RTB's mission of sustainability and restoration (and redefining wealth) extends not only to our land, our plants, our team and our surroundings, but also to farmers in the community who work the land, and the many leaders and healers that are caring for our communities. We offer our space to non-profit community leaders and their cohorts on a sliding scale, in a way that fully supports them, allowing them to feel loved, appreciated, seen, and heard. We want these guests to feel nourished and taken care of because the work that they are doing in our communities can be exhausting. Our goal: to sustain their physical health by feeding them nutrient-dense food from the local food system, while nourishing their mental and emotional health by giving them a peaceful, grounding environment to utilize for team-building activities, communication workshops, and other organizational exercises. We encourage them to share in our mission by providing tours of the farm that get them interacting with the land and learning about sustainability. This is one small way for us to spread restorative wealth to our larger community!



WE SUPPORTED AND SUBSIDIZED
THE FOLLOWING EVENTS THIS
FISCAL YEAR:

Iva Brito's Soul Calling Women
& Men of Color Retreats

New Bedford School District's Food
Service Professional Development

SouthCoast Artists Meeting

SouthCoast Planning Committee
Arts & Culture Meeting

Jacquie Wilson's Women's Retreat

YWCA Staff Retreat
(a *Manifest Love* Partner)





“

THIS PAST OCTOBER MY CLASS VISITED YOUR FARM FOR A TOUR AND DID HANDS-ON WORK PICKING POTATOES, AND I ABSOLUTELY LOVED THE EXPERIENCE! AS AN ASPIRING ENVIRONMENTALIST, I WAS DEEPLY IMPRESSED BY YOUR VALUES AND FARMING PRACTICES, AS WELL AS RESPECT FOR NATIVE LAND. ONE THING THAT STUCK OUT TO ME WERE THE ON-FARM TINY HOMES, AS THEY SHOWED A REAL COMMITMENT TO ETHICAL LIVING.”

JULIA PERREAULT, VOLUNTEER FROM ST. MARY ACADEMY, BAY VIEW

USING OUR PURCHASING POWER IN ALIGNMENT WITH OUR MISSION

RTB walks our talk by supporting local farms and businesses which align with our mission. Buying from, and supporting, local businesses generates approximately 70% more local economy activity than big box retail! Through our everyday expenditures, we think about who we can support and how to embody our mission through action by being more sustainable and recirculating funds in our local economy. This extends to all of our purchases. To take a step backward, before we even decide to make a purchase, we ask ourselves if we need to make a purchase at all?

We try to apply the “5 R’s” of zero-waste living into our decision-making: Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Repurpose, Recycle. We are always trying to minimize our negative impacts on the environment.

One exception to local purchasing power that we intentionally make at the farm is when it comes to seed purchases. There are multiple organizations across the country doing really amazing work in this field. And we do support them, even though they are not “local” to us.



THE TEAM



**TOP ROW,
LEFT TO RIGHT:**

Glenn Oliveira
Board Member

Bernadette Souza
Board Member

Duncan McFarland
Board Member

Shaun Van Laarhoven
Executive Chef
& Kitchen Director

Ellen McFarland
Fairy Godmother

Benoit Azagoh-Kouadio
Garden Manager

Josh Louro
Manifest Love Farmer

Dane Mainella
Gardener/Field Worker

Madigan Kay
Manifest Love Farmer &
Distribution Coordinator

Hailey Hebert
Gardener/Field Worker

Tyler See
Resident Builder
& Agripeneur

Hannah Wylie
Online Education
& Market(ing) Manager
& Agripeneur

BOTTOM ROW:

Farm dog Mayla & Nia

Desa Van Laarhoven
Co-Founder & Executive
Director

Nancy Dempze
Board Member

Peter Zine
Education Manager

Maxx Fidalgo
Executive Assistant
& Event Coordinator

Michaelah Nunes
Education Assistant

Heather Zine
Office Administrator & HR

Leah Yaker
Manifest Love Farmer*

**Not pictured*





MANIFEST LOVE

The **Manifest Love** program started in March '20 to grow, source, and distribute food to community members (with educational support) during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic and state shutdown. **Manifest Love** is a group of women-led non-profit organizations in SouthCoast Massachusetts, including RTB, NorthStar Learning Centers, Sacred Birthing Village, the YWCA of Southeastern MA, and Youth Opportunities Unlimited. With the pandemic exacerbating the inequities in our food system, the partners concluded that addressing food insecurity would make an immediate and meaningful impact on the community.

This fiscal year, **Manifest Love** donated over 48,000 lbs of food, valued at \$212,045! With the help of our team, partners, and collaborators, the **Manifest Love** program has grown and expanded since its inception: new partnerships have developed; we created a **Manifest Love** cookbook (currently being translated into Spanish & Portuguese); the program now has a mobile component in the form of the **Manifest Love** Food Truck (which officially hit the road this summer); and thanks to a grant collaboration with Coastal Foodshed in 2024, each **Manifest Love** weekly share (150+ per week) includes an additional \$30-40 of value-added products every single week. Each of these help support the mission of the program: to feed deserving families with nutritious food and to provide education around this food, including its nutritional value and how to prepare the foods participants receive.



“

I WAS THRILLED TO SEE THAT THE ROUND THE BEND/**MANIFEST LOVE** FOOD TRUCK WAS USING REUSABLE DISHES AND UTENSILS AND CLOTH NAPKINS YESTERDAY AT AHA! NIGHT. I GREATLY APPRECIATE THE DEDICATION IT TAKES - I IMAGINE SOMEONE HAD TO WASH ALL OF IT TODAY. IT WAS VERY INSPIRING. I LOOKED IN THE CLOSEST TRASH CAN AND DIDN'T SEE ANY REUSABLE ITEMS AND THERE WAS VERY LITTLE TRASH.”

**MARISSA PEREZ-DORMITZER,
WASTE REDUCTION MANAGER, GREATER
NEW BEDFORD REGIONAL REFUSE
MANAGEMENT DISTRICT**

BEEP BEEP.... MANIFEST LOVE FOOD TRUCK INAUGURAL EVENT

After two years in the making, RTB proudly presented the **Manifest Love** Food Truck at the 2024 AHA! (Art, History, Architecture) June Pride Night in New Bedford! The food truck was seen by 500+ people that came out for Pride downtown, and served 100+ people hot, farm-fresh food, including personal pizzas with sausage & chorizo from RTB agripreneur Paradox Acres, smoked chicken from Copicut Farms in Dartmouth, mozzarella cheese from Narragansett Creamery in Providence, and caramelized onions from Skinny Dip Farm in Little Compton. We also served farm-made strawberry lemonade, crafted with our own (preserved) abundance of strawberries from the summer. We strive to walk our talk even when we are “on the road”, staying on course with our mission, by sourcing at least 75% of all food on a plate locally (within 60-miles of the farm), and by reducing our waste by using reusable plates, utensils, cups, and cloth napkins. We even collect all food waste we create and what is leftover on the plates to compost back at the farm. During large events, an additional RTB teammate attends and “tables” the event, helping to answer questions about our work and thanking folks for bringing back our reusables.

The food truck made other appearances during AHA! Night in downtown New Bedford; hosted free, food-prep workshops with our **Manifest Love** partners for their program participants; and even catered a private event. As we gain momentum and capacity with our food truck, we'll use it as a tool to offer more workshops and attend more public events in our **Manifest Love** communities. Any funds that come in through the **Manifest Love** Food Truck go right back into supporting and running the **Manifest Love** program, including maintaining the food truck itself. That gives the food truck a self-sustaining edge, so we can always get food and education out to the ones who need it the most!



OUR PARTNERS



NORTH
STAR
LEARNING CENTERS, INC.



eliminating racism
empowering women
ywca



Manifest Love

COLLABORATION:

This past year, we strengthened our allyship with a sister community non-profit, Coastal Foodshed. Coastal Foodshed is a New Bedford based food hub that helps create and support supply chains between local consumers and local growers. We were fortunate that Coastal Foodshed included our **Manifest Love** program in the USDA's Local Food Purchase Assistance Plus (LFPA+) Grant, which in essence expanded our offerings to our amazing 150+ families we serve each week. With this grant, Coastal Foodshed, our food access collaborator, provided RTB with an additional \$179K worth of local food items (sourced within a 200-mile radius) to go with our **Manifest Love** shares for the 2024 season. That shakes out to about an extra \$30-40 of food per share per week for the entire program! We believe that it takes a community to address social justice needs, like food insecurity, and pairing up with other non-profit organizations is an essential part of addressing those needs.



LOCAL FARMS & PRODUCERS SUPPORTED BY THE COASTAL FOODSHED LFPA+ GRANT

Arruda's Dairy (milk) - Tiverton, RI
Brennan's Local (chicken) - Plymouth
Bright Oasis Farm (mushrooms) - Westborough
Buzzards Bay Bee Company (honey) - Marion
Copicut Farm (chorizo, chicken) - Dartmouth
Ferrell Farm (beef) - Tiverton, RI
Flying Carrot Farm (eggs, chicken) - Dartmouth
Four Town Farm (corn) - Seekonk
Freedom Food Farm (flour) - Raynham
Ground Up (pasta) - Holyoke
Hixville Honey (honey) - Dartmouth
Jordan Farm (beef) - Dartmouth
Mi Tierra (Tortillas) - Springfield
Mount Hope Farm (beef & pork) - Bristol, RI
Narragansett Creamery (cheese & yogurt) - Providence, RI
Old Stone Orchard (apples) - Dartmouth
Pell Family Farm (strawberries) - Somers, CT
Pete's Farm (apples) - Little Compton, RI
Quissett Hill Farm (maple syrup, honey) - Mendon
Real Pickles (kraut, fermented veg) - Greenfield
Revival Farm (salami, bacon, soppressata) - Plympton
Rock N' Hill Farm (beef) - Berkley
Sunny Side Apiary (honey) - Wareham
Ward's Berry Farm (fruit, applesauce, popcorn) - Sharon
Westport Dairy (yogurt) - Westport
Winters Farm (kielbasa, hot dogs, beef) - Rehoboth
Wyandotte Farm (pork) - Mattapoisett
Young Family Farm (corn) - Little Compton, RI



MANIFESTING YOUR LOVE BY PAYING IT FORWARD

DID YOU KNOW?

There's a beautiful sentiment that is spoken about by our **Manifest Love** participants and communities. When a participant receives something in their share that they don't end up using, they are inspired to find a home for that food! When food is fresh, folks know that there's an invisible clock ticking down the seconds to when the food won't be as good to eat. Whether they have too many tomatoes from last week's share, or their kids aren't too keen on zucchini, when our participants have extra food, they find someone to 'gift it' to so the food does not go to waste.

This concept is one that many home-garden growers are familiar with. Let's say your neighbor grew too many cucumbers to eat, or your backyard kale crop came in strong this year and you know the Portuguese folks that live in the apartment above you love kale in their boiled dinners... Many folks automatically bring their neighbor some of this "abundance". At RTB, we believe that the human spirit is compelled to share with their community, to waste not and want not, and to value what is grown with someone's own two hands. Our **Manifest Love** participants understand that value, and are so grateful for the opportunity and abundance that they want to "do the food justice" and make sure it nourishes someone, even if it's not them. They have taken well to the duty of finding homes for anything they can't use from their farm-fresh shares. They want to give and share the abundance, just like RTB and our partners do, and we love that about the program. In their own way, our participants are continuing ways to **Manifest Love!**



THE SEEDS WE SOW: RTB'S FIRST FARMRAISER

While it's common enough to see RTB hosting a variety of events for others, it's not often that we put an event on for ourselves. This past April marked the first time in RTB "ourstory" that the farm hosted an official fundraiser for us.

We hosted The Seeds We Sow: RTB's First Farmraiser to raise funds to support our three main programs: Education (including field trips & experiential learning), Farming, and our partnered, food donation & education program, *Manifest Love*. Sponsors, donors, and guests actively invested in our local community and equitable food access and education for all. Guests showed up in droves, even in the pouring rain, to support our work and took farm tours while it poured buckets! The farmraiser included a cocktail hour with local & organic hors d'oeuvres and beverages crafted by teammates Shaun Van Laarhoven and Hannah Wylie. Farm supporter Warren Dahlin serenaded our guests on the harpsichord, while a silent auction of items donated from our community and supporters was ongoing for the duration of the event. A sit-down, farm-to-table, local & organic dinner followed, with dessert made by our *Manifest Love* Farmer & Distribution Coordinator, Maddie Kay. A fire pit with live music by J Terry was accompanied by a s'mores bar with fixings made by RTB.

In the end, **RTB was able to raise over \$37,000** to support our programming into our next fiscal year - all while having a blast! Our gratitude is boundless for the folks that gave their time and money, who sponsored this event, who donated items for our silent auction, and to the **nearly 200 people** who purchased tickets and joined us in the rain! And a special thanks to our RTB team: every teammate came out of the gardens, fields, and offices to pitch in for this special event.



“

THAT ENTIRE EVENT WAS AMAZING! YOU GUYS ARE DOING SOMETHING SO BEAUTIFUL AND ADMIRABLE. HONESTLY, I LEFT FEELING SO INSPIRED... TO DO EVEN BETTER FOR OUR MOTHER EARTH, MAKE EVEN BETTER CHOICES WHEN IT COMES TO COOKING & EATING... THE QUALITY, FRESHNESS AND JUST THE REAL INGREDIENTS ACROSS THE BOARD IN EVERYTHING WAS PERFECTION!”

SYLVIA MENARD, PLYMOUTH
CHARRED OAK TAVERN

AGRIPRENEURS & EDUPRENEURS



As part of our Center for Restorative Community, RTB embraces farmers, growers, and educators who are making positive differences in our local food, farming, and education sectors. We call these social entrepreneurs “agripreneurs” or “edupreneurs,” and we couldn’t do our work in the same way if they weren’t here. Agripreneurs and edupreneurs don’t pay a traditional, monetary fee for using RTB’s resources; instead, RTB asks for compensation through education and maintaining our farm spaces. Within this framework, RTB acts as a support system, providing the farm and infrastructure as resources and a more stable footing to an intentionally diverse collaboration of visionary social entrepreneurs. The freedom and collaboration inherent in this model encourages creativity and ingenuity, and we see these outcomes having ripples beyond our farm, enabling us to reach beyond our borders and positively impact our community.

Through our agripreneurs and edupreneurs, a wonderful educational infrastructure blossoms, allowing these teammates to teach about their sustainable methodologies to our community members. In addition, agripreneurs help maintain the farm land, either by their seasonal growing or animal husbandry, thus creating a symbiotic relationship between them and RTB, where we invite them to use the land and in return, they care for it in restorative ways (without chemical use) that model nature and protect the earth and its inhabitants! RTB knows it takes a village, and we can’t do it alone - we wouldn’t want to, either! Our agripreneurs and edupreneurs step up to the plate, allowing us to fulfill our mission to educate and support our communities, and care for the land we steward.



WHETHER OUR AGRIPRENEURS AND EDUPRENEURS ARE DOING A WORKSHOP ON COMPOSTING, EDUCATING THE YOUNG MINDS OF OUR FUTURE, GOATSCAPING THE FARM FENCE LINES, OR TENDING TO THEIR HERB AND POLLINATOR GARDENS, EACH OF THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS HAVE POSITIVE AND LASTING IMPACTS ON RTB.

Our agripreneurs and edupreneurs have accomplished so much during their time on the farm. Here are a few highlights from this past year:



Elements Learning Collaborative

Co-Founders & Co-Directors, Cristy O'Brien and Rachel Medeiros, have expanded their holistic education programming to include summer sessions and year-round sessions for middle-school aged, homeschooled children, in addition to their year-round, nature-based learning day school.

Elizabeth James-Perry did a corn husk braiding and weaving workshop with RTB's first annual summer camp group. Elizabeth provided all materials, from the frames and warp threads to the naturally dyed corn husks, and instructed our campers while weaving together stories from her Aquinnah-Wampanoag culture and marine biology and artist backgrounds.

Nilsa Garcia-Rey of **Nilsa's Herbal Teas & Botanicals** was awarded the TIE Award from SEMAP, which encourages local growers to trial new equipment, implement innovative farm systems, and find solutions to problems faced in their agricultural sphere. Nilsa's application of funds included utilizing shade cloth, storage bins, and shelving for an expansion of her dried flowers and herbs.

Paradox Acres, owned by Geoff Kinder, is now operating the MDAR and NRCS approved state of the art composting facility and covered, bedded pack structure on RTB East, made from manure from his own cattle herd. In addition, he is taking in local food waste from a nearby college, instead of them sending it to the landfill!



RTB teammates & agripreneurs, Hannah Wylie and Tyler See, own and run a herd of 30 goats, collectively known as Goatbusters. Goatbusters' goats rotationally browse the property, munching away on pasture, brambles and invasive species (like green briar, bittersweet, and rose), helping us manage these invasives in a natural, symbiotic way. During the growing season, they also provide this service to local landowners.



Last but surely not least, Joshua Swaye of Swaye Family Farm had a successful litter of piglets born this year from one of his sows on RTB proper, and has expanded his duck-keeping with a hatched clutch from his Mascovies along with a rescued farm duck!



WHAT'S IN YOUR WATER?

Water is one of our most precious resources. It plays a vital role in all of our lives. We (literally!) couldn't live without it. Here at the farm, we do not take clean water for granted; we strive to use it for its highest good, and we value and protect it to the best of our ability.

PUBLIC SUPPLY WELL

To fully support our commercial kitchen and the community that uses and relies on it, RTB installed a well on our main property in 2021, then applied to the state to become a public water supplier. In November of 2023, our well was finalized and officially online!

This well is so important to us - not just because it's serving our commercial kitchen, but also because the water that comes from it is clean and pure. RTB doesn't have to use chemicals or filters to ensure our well water is drinkable—it's that clean! Having this amazing water source is a privilege we take seriously. And it is reassuring to know that we are not wasting this precious resource by flushing it down the toilet, since we use (waterless) composting toilets throughout the farm.

As a farm and a non-profit that works with food, animals, and people, water is one of our keystone needs. It touches food, bodies, the soil, and plants, and its purity is a priority. While RTB tests our well water every month for bacteria and impurities, we are also careful about protecting our well and the area surrounding it. Since we own the 120-ft radius around the well, we are able to make sure there aren't any activities or sources of contamination that can have a detrimental effect on our water quality.

We know, however, that we are all connected and therefore the water in our aquifer is affected by others' actions. According to MassDEP's Source Water Assessment and Protection (SWAP) Report for the Town of Dartmouth, fertilizer and pesticide storage or use in agriculture are, respectively, medium and high threats to water quality. Of course, RTB is not the only farm in Dartmouth and other farms and farmers may be using synthetic fertilizers and pesticides. There is a real risk of chemicals getting in storm runoff from leaking or spilling, or being spread by over-application or improper handling. As we learned from our



work with the Town of Dartmouth's MVP project, coastal and flash-flooding caused by heavy rains can spread contaminants to previously uncontaminated sites. We recognize this as a serious threat to our water quality.

WE MAKE THIS PROMISE: RTB WILL CONTINUE TO MONITOR OUR PRISTINE WATER AND TO EDUCATE AND ENCOURAGE OUR AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITY TO FIND ALTERNATIVE WAYS TO FARM THAT DON'T INCLUDE THE HARMFUL CHEMICALS IN SYNTHETIC PESTICIDES, HERBICIDES, AND FERTILIZERS.

As this year's Elements student play said (with a cluster of elementary-aged children surrounding a stone in the ground in a grove of trees right here on the farm): "Touch the ground... we are all connected." From the air to the water, from the earth to its people, we and all our actions are connected to the world around us. And we love that even the children - our future - know it too!



IRRIGATION WELL

As part of our growing agroforestry project (located at our RTB East location next door to our main property), Benoit applied for a Food Security & Infrastructure Grant (FSIG) and RTB was awarded \$84,000.00 to install a new well there. We are so excited to finally be able to improve our water systems on RTB East, where two of our biggest farming and community projects - our **Manifest Love** program and agroforestry project - grow the majority of our food and house our tree nursery and alley cropping fields.

Work on RTB East's well started in December of 2023 and was finalized this past June. The well has an electric pump (instead of a gasoline generator) and includes underground trench systems for frost-free water during the cold seasons. This provides a water source for RTB East, allowing our farmers to water the arboretum of our agroforestry project and other crops, such as our **Manifest Love** fields, with greater ease and access. Irrigation is so important to include now, when the trees in the agroforestry project are still young. Plentiful water access will make them more resilient by decreasing their stress as they develop, which means we won't have to use chemicals to ensure our trees grow strong and bear fruit! The well is a game-changer for our farmers and adds capacity to our farming and **Manifest Love** programs. We welcome this addition to our sustainable farming systems with open arms and taps!

THANK YOU TO OUR CONTRIBUTORS

Scan to make
a donation



Financial

American Online Giving Foundation	City of New Bedford Mass Cultural Council	Ana Furtado	Lisa Leite
Beth Andrews	Civil & Environmental Consultants	Laura & Will Gardner	Phillip & Whitney Long
Anonymous	Lynn Coish	Joseph George	Bette Low
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Charred Oak Tavern		Sarah Little	Nicky Peets
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Saltonstall Architects	David Strauss	Shaun Van Laarhoven	Aysia Wood
Blanca Santiago	Frank Suatoni, Jr	Vanguard Charitable DAF	Yawkey Foundation I & II
Margaret Sapia	Kevin Sullivan of American National Insurance	John Vasconcellos & Bill Barr	YWCA Southeastern Massachusetts
Teah & Chris Savard	Joshua Swaye	Carrie Vicino	Diane Zine
Katherine Schleich-Medeiros	Joney Swift	Vintage Haven	Heather & Peter Zine

In-Kind

M & M Adams	Drew Lederman Photography	Jim's Organic Coffee	Salon En Vogue
Amelia's	Edible Southeastern Massachusetts	Johnny's Luncheonette	Salt & Sole
Arruda's Dairy Farm	EDK Studios	Johnny's Selected Seeds	Servedwell Hospitality
Liza Ashley	Equal Exchange	Jim Kersten	Shara Porter Designs
B-Sharp Entertainment	Farm & Coast Market	Little Moss	Soul Lab Reiki
Blisscapes Landscape Design & Nursery	Fedco Seeds	Littlebrook Farm	Sperry Tents
Boutique Fitness	Grace Fidalgo	Damon May	Joshua Swaye
Buzzards Bay Brewing	First Citizens Federal Credit Union	Moby Dick Brewing Co.	Joney Swift
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Cast Seaside Bites & Bar	Ashley Gallagher	Paradox Acres	Barry Van Laarhoven
Paul Chamberlain	Nilsa Garcia-Rey/Nilsa's Herbal Teas & Botanicals	Diane Parent	Nancy Van Laarhoven
ChicoBag	Marcelle Gauvin	Patagonia Boston	Shaun Van Laarhoven
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Decas Cranberry Products, Inc.	Ice Cream Barn	Power & Grace Yoga	Harmony Winters Jewelry
Double Bar Music		Quintessential Gardens	Wright's Creamery
Dove's Foot Pottery		REI Coop	YAYA Organics
		Mike Richard	Yozakura Sushi

RTB'S ENDOWMENT FUND!

RTB is a small non-profit doing big sustainability and social justice work! Now that we have surpassed a decade old, we have finally created an endowment fund, with the hope that our organization continues well into the future, supporting multiple generations with education, food, and sustainable practices. One of the biggest ways we're able to do so is through donations from everyday folks. As each generation passes through life and cedes to the next, so too do our donors. In light of this, RTB looks to another way to make a sustainable donation difference: The Rule of 20.

The Rule of 20 is simple to use: multiply your annual donation by 20, and reserve that amount as a planned gift to RTB in your estate planning. Your options for making a planned gift include a bequest in your will, a distribution from your trust, an IRA/retirement account designation, or proceeds from a life insurance policy. Please consider expanding your support of RTB using the Rule of 20!

SUPPORT RTB INTO
THE FUTURE!

THE RULE OF 20:

Your Annual
Donation
 $\times 20 =$



Bequest in
your will

Distribution
from your trust

IRA/retirement
account
designation

Proceeds
from life
insurance
policy

Volunteers

Mary Andrade
Suzanne Baker
Tamalin Baumgarten
Perry Bishop
Jim Bride
Tess Briden
Shalynn Brooks
Emma Carroll
Noah Clayton
Jillian Fernandes
Ciara Garrafa
Mary, Ava, Mason & Jaxson
Giambarresi

Ethan Goulart
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Julia Keefe
Evangeline Le Blanc
Patrick McBride
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Dr. Naomi Rappaport &
Kevin Brown
Marianna Rezendes
Sandy Rodgers
Marc Rousseau

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Kerry Saltonstall
Teah Savard
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Aspen Waldron
Suellen Walsh
Susan Wathen
Danny Whitehead, MD
Metta Winslow
Gabriel Zine
Hannah Zine

FINANCIALS

FISCAL YEAR 2024 (OCT 1, 2023 - SEPT 30, 2024)



REVENUE

PROGRAMS:

Education	\$140,353	12%
Farming	\$153,475	13.2%
<i>Manifest Love</i>	\$8,955	0.8%

FUNDRAISING AND OTHER:

\$860,487 74.0%

TOTAL REVENUE: \$1,163,270

EXPENDITURES

PROGRAMS:

Education	\$326,449	31.2%
Farming	\$348,201	33.2%
<i>Manifest Love</i>	\$216,353	20.7%

ADMINISTRATION:

\$137,062 13.1%

FUNDRAISING:

\$18,094 1.7%

INVESTMENT IN LONG-TERM ASSETS:

\$1,500 0.1%

TOTAL EXPENDITURES: \$1,047,659

LOOKING AHEAD



With 2025 fast approaching, we look forward to new and innovative ways we can cultivate, educate, and empower people of all ages! It is difficult to pin down all that we are doing to share with you, and (of course) our focus is always on our Education, Farming, and **Manifest Love** programs, but in addition to those we are particularly excited about...

HOSTING A SECOND WAMPANOAG EXPERIENCE POWWOW

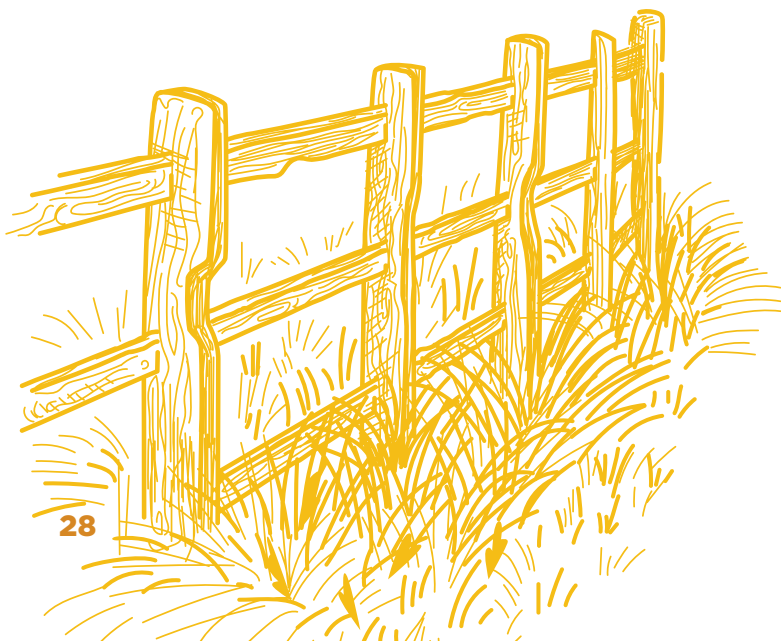
(OCTOBER 5, 2024)



RTB is ecstatic to have worked with a Native Planning Committee (NPC) in FY 2024 to host a second Wampanoag Experience Powwow right at the start of our new fiscal year (FY 2025). The NPC consisted of Mashpee Wampanoag members Annawon Weeden, Gertrude 'Kitty' Hendricks, and Eleanor 'Toodie' Coombs. The NPC allowed us to respectfully dive into a day of cultural exchange between Native and non-Native communities.

The powwow highlighted Native skills & practices, history, food, and arts & crafts. Like in 2022, this beautiful event included Native song and dance (with a return of the Wampanoag singers and dancers), crafts, Native vendors, food, storytelling, drumming, and demonstrations of skills and cultural Wampanoag practices. The amazing crew from Sly Fox Den in Rhode Island was here selling authentic, Indigenous cuisine.

This program was supported in part by a grant from the Massachusetts, New Bedford, and Dartmouth Cultural Councils.



EVERBEARING FARM SOLAR

To complement our solar arrays at RTB Proper, Cotuit Solar will be installing a solar array on the rooftop of our barn at our Everbearing Farm location, an important step in RTB's sustainable energy goals. This project is funded in part by the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP), a grant program offered by the USDA's Rural Development Department. RTB teammate Maxx Fidalgo applied for this grant, which can cover up to 60% of a project's cost.

In conjunction with this solar array, we also applied for "Agricultural Net-Metering" which was successfully obtained. This means that, because we are an agricultural organization, RTB can keep 100% of the electrical worth of our array instead of having it capped at 30%. This is a huge help for a non-profit organization to be able to retain at that level. Every kilowatt-hour and cent counts in the non-profit sector, especially on a farm that prioritizes clean energy and sustainable systems!

ELECTRIC VEHICLE (EV) CHARGER ON RTB PROPER

We are excited to install an EV charger directly to the north of our office building. Installing this EV charging station, equipped for most models of electric or hybrid plug-in vehicles, will allow teammates and community members to take a step toward cleaner energy. Having a safe, accessible place to charge their vehicle will (hopefully) empower folks to start using their electric or plug-in hybrid vehicles more, or to invest in one when purchasing their next vehicle.

Maxx applied for this grant through the Massachusetts Electric Vehicle Incentive Program (MassEVIP), which covers up to 60% of an electric vehicle charging station installation. MassEVIP is a rolling grant offered through the Department of Environmental Protection. All charging stations built under the grant must be ADA accessible, which is great because it mirrors our mission of valuing diversity.



SPECIAL THANKS



TO OUR AMAZING WRITING, EDITING AND DESIGN CREW:

Maxx, Heather, and Desa, along with Ariana Sligar and Pixels & Pulp teammates Megan Keogh & Chelsea Cumings.

TO THE PHOTOGRAPHERS WHO DONATED THEIR WORK:

Erik Kowalski, Drew Lederman, and Leia Onofrey, along with Desa and Hannah. Thank you for capturing the essence of RTB in your beautiful photographs.

TO THE ENTIRE RTB TEAM:

With a special kudos to Maddie and Michaelah for their achievements this year! Maddie graduated from the Leadership SouthCoast program, and was also invited to join RTB's Root Management Council. Michaelah graduated from UMass Dartmouth with a Master's of Art in Teaching with a concentration in Special Education.

AND TO ALL OF YOU, OUR SUPPORTERS, FOR MAKING THIS BEAUTIFUL REPORT COME ALIVE!

A LIVING LABORATORY THAT CULTIVATES, EDUCATES, AND EMPOWERS PEOPLE OF ALL AGES

To make a donation:



Round the Bend Farm is located in Southeastern Massachusetts, the traditional homeland of the Wampanoag people. Descendants 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.

92 Allens Neck Road
South Dartmouth, MA 02748

508.938.5127

ROUNDTHEBENDFARM.ORG



Wetu was built at RTB
in 2022 by Mashpee
Wampanoag
Annawon Weeden

