

ROUND THE BEND FARM

A CENTER FOR RESTORATIVE COMMUNITY



ANNUAL REPORT FISCAL YEAR 2023
OCTOBER 1, 2022 - SEPTEMBER 30, 2023



PICTURED ON THE FRONT COVER

are shiitake mushrooms, a recent, delicious morsel included in the RTB menu. We grew and harvested approximately 120 lbs of shiitakes this year. As a living laboratory, we work to broaden our scope by starting small pilot projects like this, where we utilized felled trees from our yurt construction site to try growing edible mushrooms. The mushrooms that we eat are the reproductive fruiting body of this amazing organism's "mycelium", an unseen connective web of tissue that runs through wood and soil. They make for more than just good eating: mycelium is an unsung hero of ecosystems! While they digest matter and create healthy forests and soils, some also act as an underground mycorrhizal network. This mycelium cohabitates with plant roots, connecting individual plants to one another and aiding in the transfer of water, nitrogen, carbon and other minerals. Recent studies indicate that these connection lines are used by trees to communicate to their offspring and other trees about danger such as an insect invasion, disease, and drought. As we endeavor in our new fruit tree orchard and perennial plantings, we aspire to cultivate and support this same rich and nourishing tapestry of underground mycelium, reminding us of how interconnected all of our projects are with the wisdom of the ecosystems that surround us.



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.



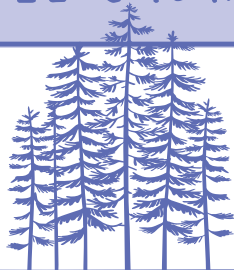
REDEFINING WEALTH

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.

CELEBRATING A DECADE OF

SUSTAINABLE GROWTH & RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

2007



92 Allens Neck Road is purchased by the Barclays & the Baldwins and named Round the Bend Farm (RTB).

2013

With the help of the Marion Institute and funders Ellen & Duncan McFarland, RTB takes its first steps toward becoming a non-profit organization and a Center for Restorative Community is born!

2017

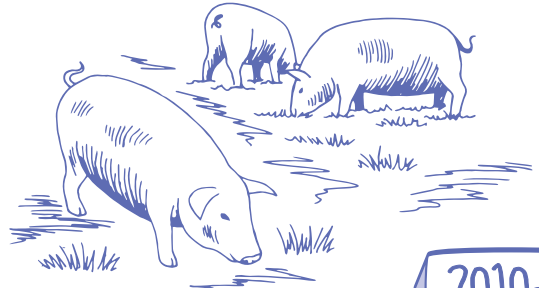
RTB adds 55 acres at 30 Allens Neck Road (RTB East).

RTB'S LEARNING CENTER IS COMPLETE.



2022

Mashpee Wampanoag community leader, Annawon Weeden, constructs a wetu and hosts a powwow at RTB.



2010-12

The vision of RTB is honed and the farmland is tended by Co-Founders Desa VanLaarhoven and Geoff Kinder (and friends).

2015

RTB BECOMES AN INDEPENDENT NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION.



2020

Manifest Love is born with our partner organizations, YWCA of Southeastern MA, Youth Opportunities Unlimited and NorthStar Learning Centers!

RTB adds an additional 21 acres at 444 Barney's Joy Road (Everbearing Farm).

2023

YURT IS COMPLETE.





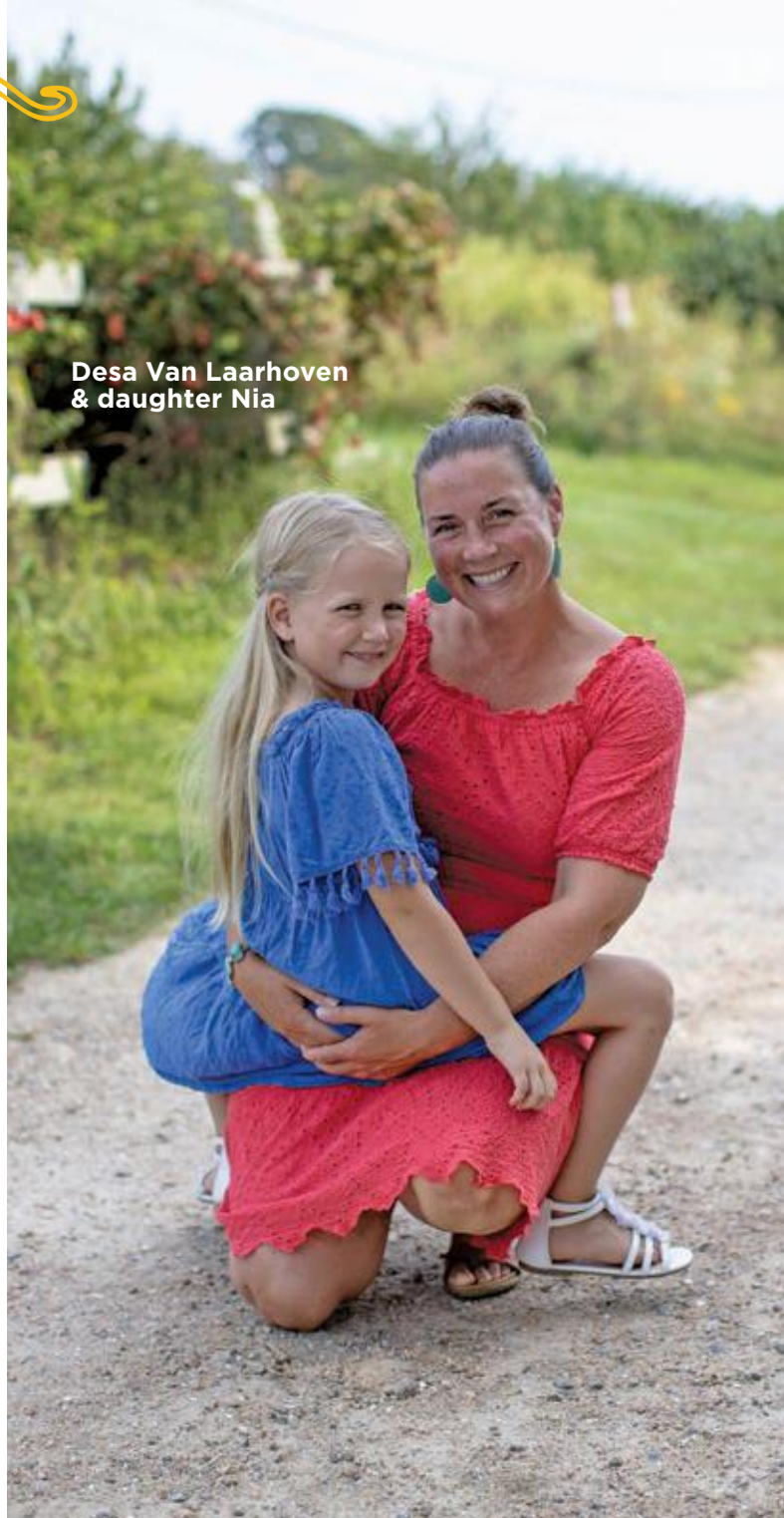
WORDS OF REFLECTION

The passage of time is incredible, beautiful, and can be bittersweet. Round the Bend Farm, a Center for Restorative Community, officially turned 10 this year and while, just like raising a child, the days can be long, the years go by in a flash. We have grown in so many ways throughout these years and have learned so much. We are not the same as we once were; we have grown in numbers (in all the ways), in our hearts, and with our impact. I remember when we were just envisioning the Learning Center in 2015 and Duncan McFarland, our steadfast supporter, said, “I just know it in this case, ‘if we build it, they will come’.” And, wow, was he spot on!

This year was our busiest one yet, bar none. We barely had a weekend off as an organization since April! In addition to hosting loads of field trips, retreats, and sustainable events (including weddings), we welcomed the arrival of our **Manifest Love** Food Truck, constructed and moved into our yurt, gave away over 30,000 lbs of food through the 4th season of our **Manifest Love** program, and planted over 250 fruit trees as part of our growing orchard and agroforestry project. That said, every year (like clockwork) some unique propositions pop up!! These included a performance produced by Samuel Harps based on real-life, local legend, Paul Cuffe, and being approached by international media company, Netflix, to be a filming location for its series, *The Perfect Couple*.

Though the funds from the two-week Netflix project were a wonderful way to support our non-profit, and any media attention would increase awareness about the farm, we wanted to go a step further. From the moment we entered discussions with Netflix representatives, we were looking for ways to apply our mission to their use of the farm. This included: limiting vehicle idling, encouraging Netflix’s caterers to buy from local farms and producers, collecting the kitchen and plate waste to compost, and presenting our diverse farm and community members as “extras” to be considered for the project. We are dedicated to our mission around sustainability and social justice, and look to apply these ethos to any and all situations. Although the filming didn’t happen due to extenuating circumstances, Netflix representatives did honor their word and fully compensated RTB for our space and time.

Desa Van Laarhoven & daughter Nia



WELCOME ABOARD BERNADETTE SOUZA

The magnificent Bernadette Souza, Executive Director of Youth Opportunities Unlimited (Y.O.U.) in New Bedford (also a **Manifest Love** partner), has joined our Board of Directors. Her passion, love, and extensive knowledge of the communities she and RTB serve enable her to bring a new perspective to the board that better manifests the needs of our communities.

Netflix was a fun thing to think about, but even more thrilling was officially welcoming two new (yet very familiar!) faces to our team: Bernadette Souza and Peter Zine. We are delighted that Peter Zine has become our Education Manager. I first met Peter at the inaugural Bioneers by the Bay; Connecting for Change Conference in 2005 that I managed in my former life. We served together on the Southeastern Environmental Education Alliance (SEEAL) board for years, and he has been a supporter of our work at RTB from the beginning. Peter's background in education includes a graduate degree in Ecological Teaching and Learning and fifteen years teaching in both public and independent schools. His passion for ecological education and his homesteading experiences lend themselves perfectly to increasing our educational impact in the region.

Over the past 10 years, RTB has flourished, and yet it has not been without its challenges. I would be remiss in this moment if I didn't pay homage to Geoff Kinder, my former partner of 18 years, and the father of our incredible daughter, Nia. Geoff helped to build RTB with his bare hands and his out-of-the-box thinking. As Co-Founder, he supported me in my dreams of educating folks and walking our talk in the realms of sustainability and social justice. We made a great team for many years, until we didn't. Separating is never an easy thing, and it certainly is even more challenging when you have built a dream together, such as Round the Bend Farm. Although it can be messy and complicated, Geoff is still forging a path here at RTB East as an agripreneur with his LLC, Paradox Acres, and he's currently building a state-of-the-art composting facility in hopes of creating more healthy, nutritious, and vibrant soil. His beautiful cows and sows still tend to the properties, and his garlic seed continues to prosper at RTB and beyond.



Peter Zine & his family
Hannah, Gabe,
Heather and farm
dog Scout

RTB has grown physically in acreage, grown in its capacity and work, grown internally with its teammates, and grown with its meaningful new programs. The heart of the organization, however, has stayed constant. We are a living laboratory that cultivates, educates, and empowers people of all ages. We are devoted to the global paradigm shift toward hope and abundance. And to this day, we continue to **value diversity, model nature, and redefine wealth.** That is RTB's mission, and while time may pass and the organization may look different, this is our guiding star.

I invite you to peruse the pages of our annual report and celebrate with us the work that you helped us create. To those who have been there every step of the way for the past decade, we send our deep gratitude and love! And to those that are just joining us, step on up, we need you, this world needs you!!

WITH HEARTFELT GRATITUDE AND LOVE,

Desa Van Laarhoven,
Co-Founder and Executive Director

♡
Desa



OVER A DECADE AGO, ROUND THE BEND FARM, A CENTER FOR RESTORATIVE COMMUNITY, WAS BORN.

The transformation into an educational non-profit didn't happen overnight, or with one person alone. As they say, it takes a village, or in this case, a whole community! The seed of all of our work was planted with a mission to **value diversity, model nature, and redefine wealth**. To this day, we continue to go back to these three tenets to guide us in everything we do.

2013

THEN & NOW

2023

UNDER THE FISCAL SPONSORSHIP
OF NON-PROFIT MARION INSTITUTE

RTB IS AN INDEPENDENT
NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION

39 ACRES (RTB PROPER)

115 ACRES (RTB PROPER, RTB EAST,
EVERBEARING FARM)

1 FARMHOUSE & **1** BARN

2 FARMHOUSES, **2** BARNs,
A LEARNING CENTER, YURT, & WETU

1 GREENHOUSE & **3** TINY HOUSES

6 GREENHOUSES & **6** TINY HOUSES

3 PAID TEAMMATES
& **3** AGRIpreneurs

14 PAID TEAMMATES, **7** AGRIpreneurs
& **2** EDUpreneurs

1 SOLAR ARRAY

5 SOLAR ARRAYS

500+ TREES PLANTED

RTB HITS THE ROAD
(MANIFEST LOVE FOOD TRUCK)

OVER **5,000** LEARNERS
VISITING THE FARM





Duncan & Ellen McFarland

OUR LIVING LABORATORY CONTINUES TO BLOSSOM...



MANIFEST LOVE



Manifest Love



Manifest Love is a group of women-led non-profit organizations in SouthCoast Massachusetts that banded together amid the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, including RTB, the YWCA of Southeastern MA, Youth Opportunities Unlimited (Y.O.U.), NorthStar Learning Centers, and Sacred Birthing Village (our newest partner!). Each year since its inception, **Manifest Love** serves nutritious, much-needed satchels of food to approximately 125 local families every week from May through December. We are nearing the completion of our fourth season, and while each year something a little different gets added, the goal remains the same: to get fresh, local, healthy, whole foods and nutritional education to deserving communities.

Manifest Love is truly a communal effort. RTB acts as the food grower and education content creator. We donated approximately 30,000 pounds of food this fiscal year! For food that we don't have the capacity to grow, RTB supports the local agricultural economy by buying from neighboring growers and farmers. (We aim to not compete with our local farmers!) This includes a variety of items, from eggs to cheese and meat to berries! This year's additions included RTB-made chive and garlic scape pesto, eggs from Flying Carrot Farm, and blueberries from Berry Hill Farm. To stay culturally and regionally relevant, we send surveys to participants and rely on our partners to determine what their communities are looking for in food,



DID YOU KNOW?

RTB sends food shares off in reusable ChicoBags, now emblazoned with the new Manifest Love logo!

Participants can either keep the bag to reuse for their own shopping, or return it to one of our organizational partners for laundering and reuse by RTB. RTB now sells these bags on our online shop and all proceeds go directly back to fund the Manifest Love program.

which we then try to grow. Because education is near and dear to our hearts (and is a central part of our mission), we take the responsibility of being education content creators seriously. Each weekly share is accompanied by an educational flier with pertinent information on the week's share, and all participants receive access to our cookbook for food identification, nutrition information, and recipes to try.

This collaboration is dependent upon all of the organizations working in harmony. There are so many moving parts and without our partners' knowledge and deep connection to their clients, it would be nearly impossible to make this program what

it is. The YWCA of Southeastern MA, led by Executive Director Gail Fortes, translates our educational content, and is currently working on translating our **Manifest Love** cookbook into Portuguese and Spanish for ease of use by participants. Run by RTB's newest board member, Bernadette Souza, Y.O.U. has an amazing garden and has created a kitchen where young participants can cook the recipes together before they bring home their food shares. NorthStar Learning Centers, led by Executive Director Maria Rosario, has headed up the charge of delivering 125 shares weekly to the organizations for distribution. We are so grateful for these organizations and their leaders!

Updates to our **Manifest Love** cookbook (which is available in print or online) allow RTB to stay culturally and regionally relevant, reaching out into the communities we serve and procuring (and paying) community members to contribute recipes. RTB strives to represent the multicultural region we live and grow in, and to reflect the communities we serve. We want our cookbook to have a practical use for all participants. Most recently, Cape Verdean and Hispanic recipes have been added to the cookbook, along with the increasing variety of food that RTB grows. As our **Manifest Love** Farmer & Distribution Coordinator, Maddie, says, "It's a living document that grows and changes – like we do!"

MANIFEST LOVE 2023 NEW DEVELOPMENTS



SACRED BIRTHING VILLAGE - OUR NEWEST PARTNER!

The women who lead Sacred Birthing Village (SBV) are steadfast and committed to building sisterhood and standing with and supporting pregnant women in the SouthCoast community through childbirth, their most sacred journey. SBV embraces a vision of a healthy community of mothers, fathers, and babies. Sacred Birthing Village uses the analogy of the Underground Railroad often used by their partner organization, Birthing Project USA, to close the disparity gap to give (passengers) BIPOC and other mothers, fathers, partners, and families a safe, healthy, and successful passage through pregnancy and childbirth. The destination is to deliver and nurture a healthy baby. Sister Friends act as the conductors on the underground railroad to help facilitate new life. "We are our sisters' keepers!" is a motto that best represents SBV.



MANIFEST LOVE LOGO

Since the **Manifest Love** program is an investment in our community, when we were looking to design a logo we reached out to the community for input. Farmers wanted to see plants or food incorporated into the design to reflect what we offer; the kitchen crew wanted to see hands that represent those that actually pick and prepare the foods; and since **Manifest Love** represents the love that is put into growing, harvesting, and distributing this food, the logo needed to include a heart! With many hands and hearts collaborating, and help from local artists Amelia Albanese and Carrie Vicino, we created our first logo this year!

MANIFEST LOVE FOOD TRUCK

In the spring of 2023, the **Manifest Love** Food Truck was delivered all the way from New Jersey! The **Manifest Love** Food Truck would not have been possible without the generous financial support of Ellen & Duncan McFarland, Yawkey Foundation, and Highland Street Foundation. And, of course, thank you to all of the other hands and hearts that made this dream come to life!

Every specification on the truck was thought out and carefully researched by Executive Chef & Kitchen Director, Shaun, with support from Desa in conception and fundraising; Office Administrator & HR, Heather, in research, grants, and permitting; and Online Education & Market(ing) Manager, Hannah, in signs and designs. Today, the final touches on the truck are underway, with hopes of hitting the road in 2024 or a touch before!

The **Manifest Love** Food Truck is an investment and resource for the entire community, not just for our farm. Adding a mobile component to the **Manifest Love** program will help it stay versatile and adapt to community needs, now and into the future. We believe it will be a valuable educational resource to empower members of the entire community. Fresh food can be



directly delivered from RTB (and other local farms) to the communities who need it most, supplying healthy prepared meals, selling local farm goods, accepting SNAP/HIP benefits, and providing cooking demonstrations and workshops about healthy eating and food preparation. We would also like to share the food truck with our partner organizations in New Bedford, allowing them to collaborate with us for educational and fundraising opportunities.

SHARING OUR RESOURCES

RTB's mission of sustainability and restoration extends not only to *our* land, plants, team, and surroundings, but also to all farmers in the community who work the land, and the healers and leaders 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 visitors to feel **nourished** and taken care of because the work that they are doing in our communities can be exhausting. Our goals: 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 the **(redefining) wealth** to our larger community!

Paul Cuffe: In Search of a New Land (performance in our classroom) ↘



WE SUPPORTED AND OFFERED SUBSIDIZED EVENTS TO THE FOLLOWING ORGANIZATIONS:

- Elements Learning Collaborative
- Groundworks SouthCoast
- Iva Brito Consulting
- Jacque Wilson & Associates LLC
- Marion Institute
- NorthStar Learning Centers
- Old Rochester Regional School District
- Samuel Harps & Shades Repertory Theater
- The Garden Club of America: Buzzards Bay & Little Compton Flower Clubs
- The SouthCoast LGBTQ+ Network
- YWCA of Southeastern MA

“

I WANT TO GIVE ANOTHER SHOUT-OUT TO YOU... AND YOUR ENTIRE CREW... FOR MAKING US FEEL SO WELCOMED AND INSPIRED. IT MADE THE EVENT EVEN MORE SPECIAL, BECAUSE OF YOUR KINDNESS AND GENERAL 'GOODNESS OF HEART'... TRULY A MEMORABLE EXPERIENCE FOR ALL OF US. LOOKING FORWARD TO HOPEFULLY SEEING YOU ALL AGAIN IN THE (NEAR) FUTURE.”

- SAMUEL HARPS,
PLAYWRIGHT (PAUL CUFFE)

AGRIPRENEURS



NEW TO THE FARM

JOSHUA SWAYE

Joshua Swaye (Swaye) is a long-time friend of RTB, having volunteered for years with Paradox Acres. After purchasing a passel of pigs from Paradox Acres, Swaye added a flock of chickens to his parcel. In exchange for the space, Swaye's pigs help create fertile soil with their waste and movement, consume kitchen food scraps, and are the subject of workshops on the benefit of swine in agricultural environments. To protect his flock, Swaye brought in two Muscovy ducks, which discourage hawks and provide eggs of their own. His agricultural endeavors demonstrate the cooperation and symbiosis between different animals on the farm, and between animals and farmers!



...FREE-RANGING CHICKENS IS THE BEST. I FIND FORAGING GREATLY DIVERSIFIES THEIR DIET AND LEADS TO ROBUST HEALTH AND DELICIOUS EGGS. I USUALLY GET A DOUBLE YOLK A WEEK."

- JOSHUA SWAYE



ELIZABETH JAMES-PERRY

Elizabeth James-Perry is an Aquinnah Wampanoag artist, and ethnobotanist with a marine science background. She created a garden at the Aquinnah Tribal Reservation, provided plant knowledge for the Westport Historical Society Garden and Concord Museums, and planted for the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston and Franklin Park. Her installations feature companion plantings like the Three Sisters (growing corn, beans, and squash together) and Native pollinator gardens edged in the quahog shells she employs to make wampum jewelry. At home and at Amherst College, Elizabeth has gained hands-on experience starting from seed. Her goal at RTB is to demonstrate traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) of the land and Native horticulture. Being involved with our inclusive, diverse farming community feels good to Elizabeth, and she is cultivating plants for natural dyes, Indigenous food plants like groundnuts, milkweed, and butterfly weed as fiber sources for traditional Wampanoag weaving and textile practices, and as a food source for monarch butterflies. Elizabeth also enjoys giving traditional Native cooking demonstrations.





Joshua Swaye,
Geoff Kinder
& daughter Nia

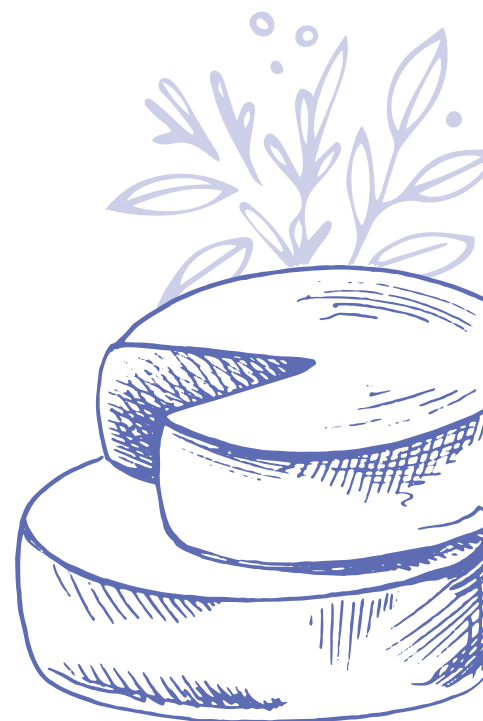
DURING THE GROWING SEASON, THE HERD PROVIDES GOATSCAPING SERVICES TO LOCAL LANDOWNERS WHO NEED HELP MANAGING INVASIVE VEGETATION.



GOATBUSTERS

Hannah Wylie and Tyler See raise a small, mixed breed herd of around 30 goats on the farm. During the growing season, the herd provides goatscaping services to local landowners who need help managing invasive vegetation. Goatbusters provides the same service on the farm, where they maintain fence lines and forest edges, and manage overgrowth and invasive species. The herd eats all they can browse until winter, when they are housed in the barn and fed local hay. In addition to goatscaping, Hannah and Tyler also donate fresh goat's milk and cheese to the RTB team, and offer their pasture-raised goat meat for sale to the public on Open Farm Days.

Goatbusters invested in a used livestock trailer this year, which allows them to get the goats more easily from job to job. They had several clients this year, and are particularly excited about those that embrace the long-term strategy of goatscaping and pursue their services for multiple seasons. They also added a new Alpine buck to the herd and expect some cute goat kids come spring. Hannah and Tyler thrive working together as a married couple, and now their toddler, Sebastian, tags along most days on the job. He is the first to get his hands dirty goatbusting, showing great initiative, enthusiasm, and camaraderie towards the team.





NILSA'S HERBAL TEAS AND BOTANICALS

Nilsa Garcia-Rey grows an array of herbal healing plants at RTB, and dries them on racks in a shaded greenhouse. She crafts them into tea blends, herbal tinctures, herbal oils, salves, and more. She grows all of her plants without chemical fertilizers or pesticides, dries them herself, and packages everything by hand in sustainable materials. Nilsa is quick to share both her plants and her plant healing knowledge. Through the seasons, Nilsa maintains the herbal garden plot on RTB, keeping the plants healthy and happy, and leaving us with a constant, bountiful source of natural healing remedies. Even when Nilsa is not working in the herb garden on RTB Proper, the garden and all of her work remains and is used as an educational stop on RTB's farm tours. This year, she expanded her crops as part of the agroforestry project at RTB East in the form of alley cropping. This additional land has enabled her to grow more herbs that she can sell in larger quantities. Like many of our agripreneurs, Nilsa sells her wares every month at Open Farm Day. You can also find her on Etsy (etsy.com/shop/NilsasHerbalTeas).

PARADOX ACRES

Geoff Kinder is a co-founder of RTB as a farm, an independent, full-focused tenant farmer, and RTB agripreneur. He raises cows and pigs on pasture through his business, Paradox Acres, LLC, operating on land from RTB, MA Audubon, DNRT, and multiple private landowners. Paradox Acres provides valuable and sustainable ecological land management services, and nutritious food, utilizing carbon-sequestering practices through rotational grazing. Geoff works with local conservation organizations to coordinate haying and grazing to protect nesting birds and maintain bird habitat. Paradox Acres has been awarded a \$420,000.00 grant from NRCS to construct a covered, bedded pack-structure for cattle, with an accompanying composting facility. This year, Geoff completed the facility's construction.

During the winter, the 60-head herd will inhabit the bedded pack structure, with wood chips and straw (carbon) layered on top of concrete as the bedding. Through the season, the cows will be fed hay from Paradox Acres, and their manure will be captured in the bedding. By the start of the grazing season, the goal is to have three to four feet of material to remove and put into windrows to compost. The completed compost will then be applied to land and gardens to "beef up" the soil! Geoff is working with NRCS to make the healthiest soil possible, and is utilizing multiple NRCS practices in the whole barn system – from the gutters, ensuring water stays clean, to the bedding. With this facility, officially registered with MA Department of Agriculture (MDAR), Geoff will be able to grow his business while providing integral fertility to his (and the local community's) soil, while utilizing local inputs and the power of microbial activity.





THE TEAM

TOP ROW: Hailey Hebert, Gardener/Field Worker; Leah Yaker, *Manifest Love* Farmer; Benoit Azagoh-Kouadio, Garden Manager; Heather (and Hannah) Zine, Office Administrator & HR; Dane Mainella, Gardener/Field Worker; Shaun Van Laarhoven, Executive Chef & Kitchen Director; Hannah Wylie (and Bash), Online Education & Market(ing) Manager & Agripreneur; Tyler See, Resident Builder & Agripreneur

BOTTOM ROW: Madigan (Maddie) Kay, *Manifest Love* Farmer & Distribution Coordinator; Peter (and Gabe) Zine, Education Manager; Desa (and Nia) Van Laarhoven, Executive Director; Josh (and Bodhi) Louro, *Manifest Love* Farmer; Maxx Fidalgo, Executive Assistant; and farm dog, Mayla



EDUPRENEURS



CRISTY O'BRIEN AND
RACHEL MEDEIROS

CO-FOUNDERS & CO-DIRECTORS

Elements Learning Collaborative (Elements) is a non-profit organization that provides children ages 4-10 with outdoor education, including a school-year drop-off program, summer camp, and Family Day programs. This year Elements expanded their Family Day program to include an infants' group for children ages 0-4, jumpstarting education with these wonderful, developing minds. They also expanded their summer camps to allow for an older children's group (10-13 years of age), called Adventure Camp, where campers participated in hands-on activities, like woodshop and wilderness skills, exploring the environment around them and investigating ways in which they fit into that ecosystem.

Elements provides a variety of families with a solid education, and approximately 43% of attending students live in New Bedford. Elements teachers and students use the farm as their living laboratory, classroom, and textbook. In return, a new generation of intelligent minds is learning the importance and significance of sustainability as a social value. Curricula include common school subjects, such as literacy, mathematics, physical and human geography, science, art, and music, as well as exploration and stewardship of nature, farming, nutritional cooking and eating, movement, yoga, and meditation.

VISIT ELEMENTSLEARNING.ORG TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THEIR MISSION, PROGRAMS, AND SCHOLARSHIPS.





THE YURT

In early 2023, RTB completed work on a beautiful yurt. The 30-foot-wide structure is 10 feet tall, has a wood-burning stove for cold-weather heating, and is hooked up to a solar battery, providing light and fire-alarm power. There's even a hot plate on the stove for boiling water and treat making, both wonderful activities that can be used as learning tools (or just to stay cozy and warm!).

Throughout the year, RTB's yurt and the green space around it provide a classroom for our independent, sister non-profit and edupreneur, Elements Learning Collaborative (Elements). Having the yurt means that Elements has relocated from our Learning Center classroom, opening that space up to events during cold-weather seasons. The raised deck it's built on supports outside activities, and its close proximity to RTB Proper's gardens and roaming chickens opens up a wealth of learning opportunities.

When Elements isn't using the yurt, RTB uses it for events. The yurt provides a quiet, calming, secluded space for people to come together in a setting more intimate than our Learning Center classroom. The yurt has since been used as a child-care area during weddings, a meditation room for retreats, and a classroom for breakout sessions and workshops. RTB is excited to continue exploring ways this wonderful structure can be used to support our community.



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.



**THIS YEAR,
THE FARM SAW**
5,294
**LEARNERS OF
ALL AGES!**

1,962
**Field Trips &
Service Learning**

437
**Personal &
Professional
Development
& Retreats**

152
**Elements Learning
Collaborative
programs**

1,221
**Open Farm
Days**

1,522
**Sustainable
Weddings &
Events**



RTB EAST

Our RTB East property, acquired in 2017, is an additional 55 acres located next door to our original 39 acres. It has become a central hub of our farm programming, and is home to our agroforestry project, our *Manifest Love* gardens and greenhouses, and a brand-new composting facility run by Geoff Kinder of Paradox Acres.



AGROFORESTRY PROJECT

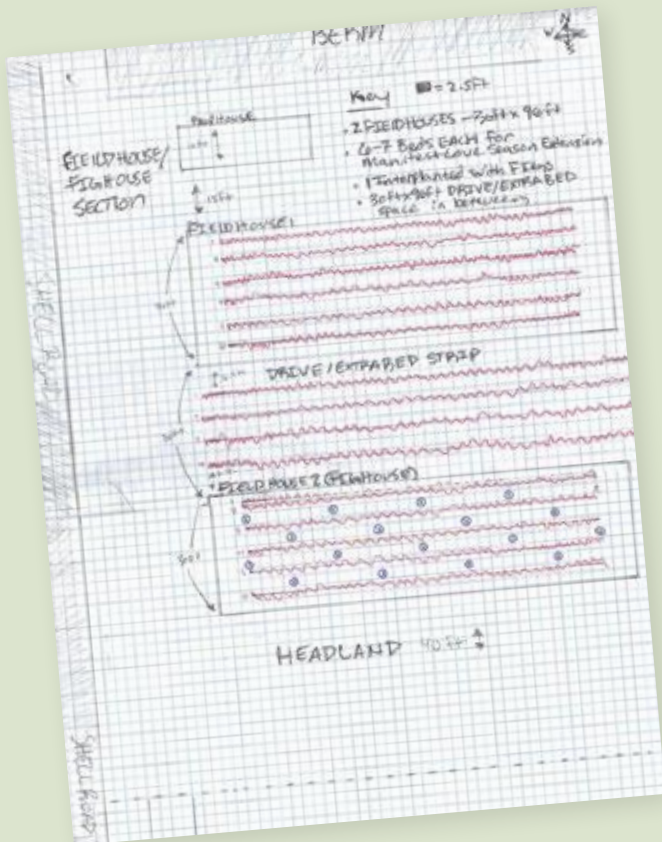
In response to community demands for fresh (and non-pesticide sprayed) fruits, RTB worked together with Meghan Giroux, Founder & Executive Director of Interlace Commons, to design and implement an orchard and windbreak system with the following vision: a windbreak of edible and medicinal trees and shrubs with fruit trees forming the rows, and annual and perennial food growing in the alleys, across 10 acres of land.

Our windbreak has been established and contains a multitude of plants for food and medicine, including: mulberry, poplar, linden, alder, hawthorne, plum, apricot, elderberry, and witch hazel. In our alleys, over 250 fruit trees have been put into the ground. Apples, pears, kiwis, paw paws, gooseberries, and figs are just some of the tree and shrub types found in the arboretum. All of the new trees have been mulched, staked for support, and pruned for optimal health.

Annual vegetable production adds versatility to this evolving system, allowing farmers to grow different crops each year. How do our farmers choose what to grow? We base it on the needs of the communities we serve!

“With these evolving and static pieces,” *Manifest Love* Farmer Josh Louro says, “we’re mimicking systems in ecology and plugging in human desires, too.” This allows RTB to stay true to our mission of **modeling nature and redefining wealth**, giving away thousands of pounds of nutritious, chemical-free food to our *Manifest Love* participants. In the future, an important goal is to be able to share out what RTB is doing with other farms and communities as a peer-to-peer learning space, so that others may learn to adapt their growing practices in a world threatened by climate change.

RTB was granted over \$32,000.00 through the Natural Resources Conservation Service’s (NRCS) EQIP program to assist in our agroforestry project. These funds were used for a 2,880 square foot greenhouse, with a second greenhouse on our horizon. These greenhouses will be an asset in getting a jump start to the next growing season, allowing RTB to grow additional food for our programs, particularly *Manifest Love*. They will also allow us to start alley cropping as part of the agroforestry project before our hedgerow and windbreak plants are full grown. RTB was also awarded \$84,000.00 from the Commonwealth of MA’s Food Security Infrastructure Grant (FSIG) program to install a new well on the property. These are huge steps our teammates have been taking to ensure the success of these wonderful projects.



RTB is currently in year two of this multigenerational plan. Year two has focused on getting these food plants established on the land. “We want to ensure the trees and plants establish themselves in the most healthy way so we know they’re off to a good start,” Garden Manager, Benoit, says.



2015 (TOP PHOTO)

This photo was taken before RTB acquired RTB East, when they were preparing their fields for growing corn. Monocropping (growing one type of plant in the same place year after year) had previously become a popular growing practice for a variety of reasons, including increasing yields and profits. However, it does have some downfalls including soil degradation, biodiversity loss, and high chemical use.



VERSUS

2023 (BOTTOM PHOTO)

This photo was taken just a few months ago, approximately six years after we purchased the land. It demonstrates one of the many ways that we value diversity, growing a variety of crops in a complex agro-ecological system, supporting microbial communities and overall soil health. We model restorative practices that work with nature, build soil, and cultivate bountiful and nutritious food.



THE GREENHOUSE

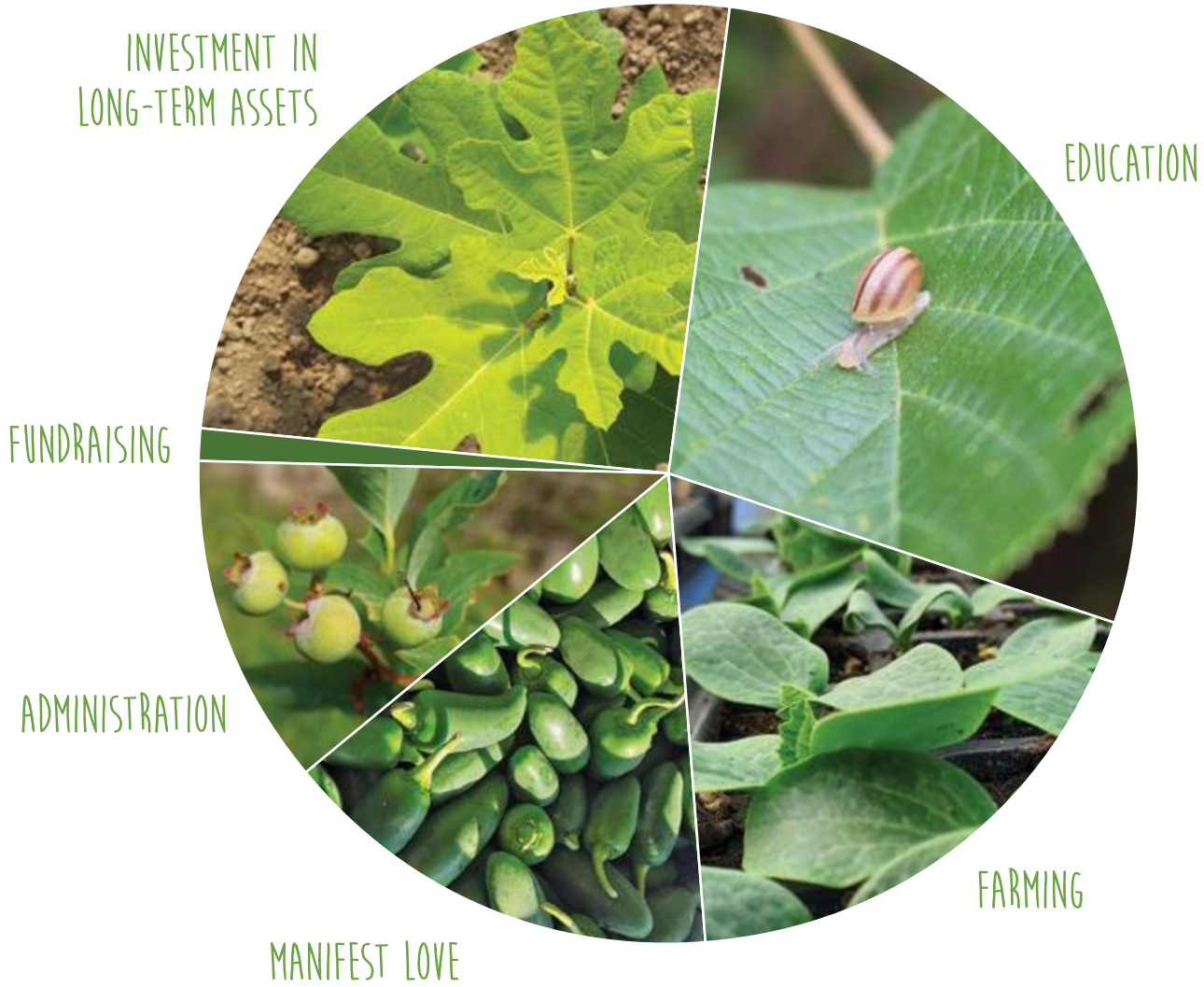


Due to the greenhouse's great size, a team was needed to erect it, and what better team did RTB have than our own? On a cool Friday morning at 6AM sharp, RTB teammates began work to "skin" the new greenhouse. Three hours later, crops that had already been put into the ground were happy to have a roof over their heads!



FINANCIALS

FISCAL YEAR 2023 (OCT 1, 2022 - SEPT 30, 2023)



REVENUE

PROGRAMS:		
Education	\$192,478	18.3%
Farming	\$59,754	5.7%
Manifest Love	\$101,703	9.7%
FUNDRAISING AND OTHER:	\$695,761	66.3%
TOTAL REVENUE:	\$1,049,696	

EXPENDITURES

PROGRAMS:		
Education	\$347,447	28.2%
Farming	\$229,608	18.7%
Manifest Love	\$185,162	15.1%
ADMINISTRATION:	\$141,791	11.5%
FUNDRAISING:	\$12,651	1.0%
INVESTMENT IN LONG-TERM ASSETS:	\$314,025	25.5%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES:	\$1,230,684	

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

THANK YOU TO OUR CONTRIBUTORS

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Barry Van Laarhoven of Civil
Environmental Consultants

Desa Van Laarhoven

Nancy & Hank Van Laarhoven

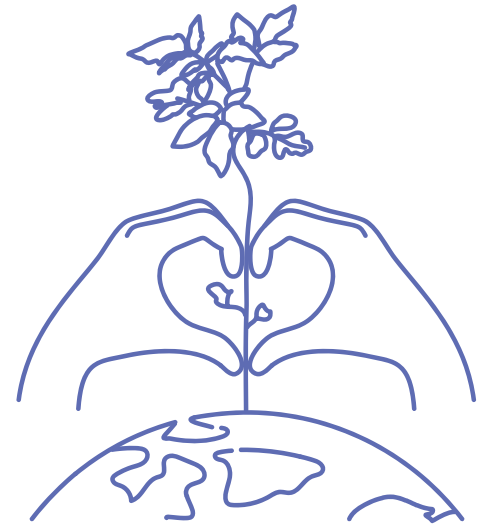
Shaun Van Laarhoven

Carrie Vicino

Anna Whitcomb & Sam Knight

Michael Richard

Quintessential Gardens



VOLUNTEERS

Amelia Albanese

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Skeye Ruozi

Kerry Saltonstall

Lita Sawang

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Ariana Sligar

Joshua Teft

Danny Whitehead, MD

Jasina Yu

Diane Zine



LOOKING AHEAD

With 2024 fast approaching, we are particularly excited for the completion of our bathhouse, our well installation at RTB East, and getting the Manifest Love Food Truck (literally) on the road!

THE BATHHOUSE

The structure for the bathhouse has been raised amid the tiny houses on “Tiny House Lane” (where many teammates who work on the farm also live seasonally). Inside the bathhouse, composting toilets, showers, laundry facilities, and a sauna will be open to teammates on the farm. By adding independent, shared hygiene facilities for our on-site teammates, RTB provides an economical solution to the current housing crisis faced by not only Massachusetts, but the country as a whole. It is another one of the ways we strive to **redefine wealth** here at the farm.



THE RTB EAST WELL

As part of our growing agroforestry project, RTB’s Garden Manager, Benoit, applied for a Food Security & Infrastructure Grant (FSIG) and RTB was awarded \$84,000.00 to install a new well at our RTB East property. A grand total of \$26.3 million was awarded to 165 projects to help strengthen Massachusetts’ food systems, and RTB was one of those inspiring projects. The well will have an electric pump (instead of a gasoline generator) and include underground trench systems for frost-free water during the cold seasons. This will provide a new water source for RTB East, allowing our farmers to water the arboretum (and other crops) 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! Well construction will start this winter and (hopefully) by the summer of 2024 we will be up and ‘pumping.’

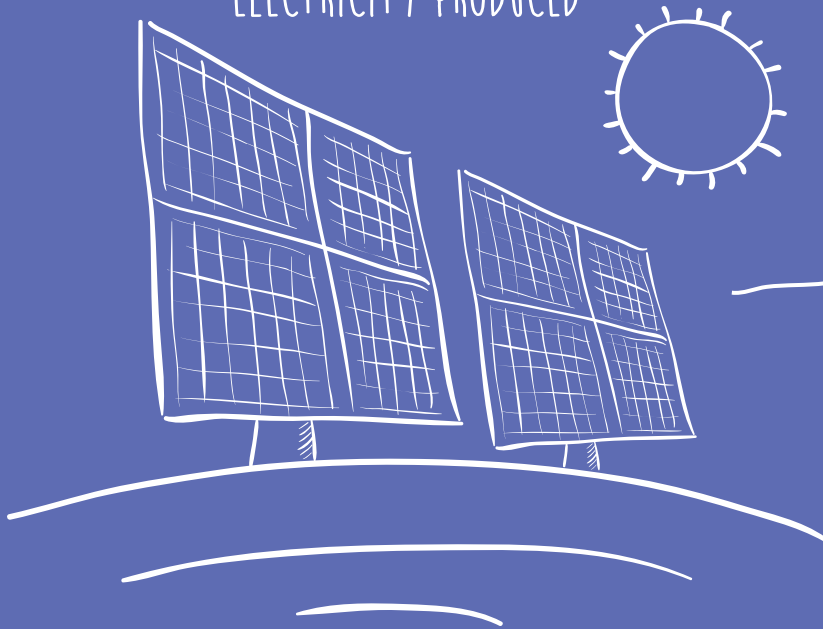




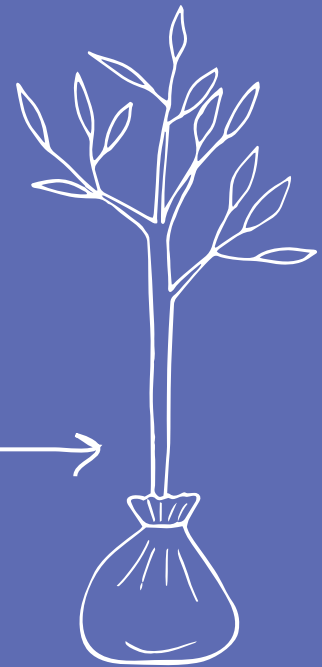
MANIFEST LOVE FOOD TRUCK

Last, but certainly not least, we look forward to getting our new, food-accessible **Manifest Love** Food Truck on the road... be sure to catch us on the street and say hi!

96,793 KWH OF
ELECTRICITY PRODUCED



EQUAL TO



PLANTING 1,189 TREES

RTB produced approximately 96,793 kWh of electricity between our two solar systems - a feat that would have caused a regular system to emit approximately 140,000 lbs of carbon into the atmosphere. Using solar was like planting the 1,189 trees it would have taken to absorb that amount of carbon!

TEAM ACCOLADES

With a team as varied and distinguished as RTB's, there are bound to be many accomplishments that teammates achieve each and every year. It is, after all, our teammates that make this organization exactly what it is, full of love and positive action. And while there have been accomplishments by all of our teammates through all of the years, we would like to recognize and celebrate the things that our teammates have done this fiscal year that are worthy of extra attention.

BENOIT AZAGOH-KOUADIO

SPEAKER AT BOSTON COLLEGE, APRIL 2023

In April of 2023, Benoit returned to his alma mater, Boston College (class of '09), where he was a guest lecturer for the Sociology Department's course, "Planet in Peril: History and Future of Human Impacts on the Planet." Benoit's lecture consisted of a presentation, where he spoke about the foundational philosophy, biology, practices, and importance of sustainability in agriculture. As a testament to his abundance of knowledge and desire to share, Benoit has been invited back to Boston College to lecture in their Environmental Science Department course called "Agroecology," where he will utilize his knowledge and involvement in our current agroforestry project.

MAXX FIDALGO

**BOARD MEMBER, GIRLS ON THE RUN, RI/
BRISTOL COUNTY, MA**

**PARTICIPANT, YWCA LEADERSHIP PROGRAM,
2022 COHORT**

In 2023, Maxx joined the local Girls On The Run (GOTR) organization, a non-profit dedicated to the support of girls and young women from all backgrounds, as a board member. A volunteer for years with the Rhode Island based organization that also serves Bristol County, this opportunity presented itself after he attended the YWCA Board Leadership Program he learned about from teammate Shaun. A trans man and the sole man on the board, Maxx joined with the hope of strengthening the group's support of Bristol County and of bringing a different perspective and the kind of diversity he wished he had seen growing up.

DESA VAN LAARHOVEN

**FUN 107'S 30 SUCCESSFUL SOUTHCOAST
WOMEN WORTH KNOWING- 2023 EDITION**

**AHA! NEW BEDFORD'S GREATER NEW
BEDFORD MOTHER EARTH 2023**

As part of Women's History Month, local radio station Fun 107 nominated 30 women, among them, Desa, doing great things in the SouthCoast, "in an effort to honor the accomplishments, strength, and perseverance of women everywhere".

For Earth Day each year, AHA! nominates community members for their dedicated work focusing on the local environment, recognizing those who have shown and executed "exceptional stewardship of our human and natural resources." In 2023, RTB's own Executive Director was awarded this great honor, being named Mother Earth. In an act that truly solidified this choice, Desa invited all students from sister non-profit Elements Learning Collaborative (including her daughter Nia) to attend the celebration with her on stage!

SHAUN VAN LAARHOVEN

**SOUTHCOAST COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
CHANGEMAKER, 2023: RACIAL EQUITY**

For the SouthCoast Community Foundation's (SCF's) Fiscal Year 2022 Annual Report, Shaun was named a Changemaker, championing the priority of racial equity. SCF's Leadership Equity Fund supported the board leadership program Shaun attended, led by **Manifest Love** partner, the YWCA. Shaun wanted to "be the best that I could be if I was going to serve on a board" and immediately accepted a board position with Youth Opportunities Unlimited. It is his dedication to this, and to the representation of people of color and their voices in our SouthCoast community, that makes our wonderful teammate shine.





ROOT MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

In 2022, the Root Management Council (the Council) was created for a dedicated leadership group to convene and help facilitate decision-making processes within our organization. Established of her own volition by RTB's Executive Director, the Council is based on Desa's desire to share executive power with RTB managers who can contribute their views and expertise, and have a voice in the direction RTB goes as an organization. All Council members are employees or consultants that have been with RTB for at least three years in a year-round, management-level position. In addition to Desa, the Council teammates include Benoit, Shaun, Hannah, Tyler, and Heather. Their tenure and management experience allows this seasoned group to generate ideas and brainstorm about the organization, future projects, and policy measures. The Council helps support the Executive Director with the responsibility of making sure RTB's many processes continue to align with our mission in the fairest, most-informed, and equitable ways possible. They uphold a spirit of open-mindedness and open-heartedness, with an emphasis on diversified perspectives and experiences.

SPECIAL THANKS

TO OUR AMAZING WRITING AND EDITING CREW:

Maxx Fidalgo, Desa Van Laarhoven, Heather Zine, and Ariana Sligar

TO THE PHOTOGRAPHERS WHO DONATED THEIR WORK:

Erik Kowalski, Sean Flannely of Dartmouth Week, and teammates Maxx, Hannah, Desa, and Joshua Swaye. Thank you for capturing the essence of RTB in your beautiful photographs.

TO THE ENTIRE RTB TEAM AND OUR BOARD MEMBERS:

Nancy Dempze, Duncan McFarland, Glenn Oliveira, Bernadette Souza, and Desa Van Laarhoven. Thank you for your perseverance and commitment to our work.

TO OUR PAST TEAMMATES:

Denise Corrieri, Laura Killingbeck, Laura McManamy, and Nate Sander. Thank you for your teamwork at RTB. Your efforts are appreciated and we wish you well on your endeavors!

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



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



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.

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