Dear Friends,

Thank you so much for your interest in Food Empowerment Project’s (F.E.P.) annual report for 2018! Supporters like you enable our work connecting the various systems of oppression and exposing how they impact human and non-human animals. We have also continued to create tools to help people eat their ethics and work toward substantial changes in the food industry. You may be interested to hear that 83% of our budget went toward our programs this year.

As we continue to grow, we’ve been able to expand our work, and in 2018, we turned veganmexicanfood.com into a gorgeous recipe booklet that covers colonization and its impact on the Americas while also including why veganism is a symbol of life for the animals, the planet, and ourselves.

We did it! After our several-years-long campaign to get the State of California to change the 50-mile regulation, which prevented the children of farm workers from completing the school year, the regulation has ended.

In 2018, we also launched our End Animal Cruelty One Glass at a Time and our Fight for the Ocean efforts. The next few pages will update you with more pertinent details. I’m certain you will find what follows to be informative and inspiring!

Thank you for your support and belief in our work.

In solidarity,

lauren Ornelas
Founder/Executive Director
Food Empowerment Project

YEAR IN REVIEW
January 1, 2018, to December 31, 2018

Excess revenue & support over expenses: $150,981.53*

*Note: As a small non-profit organization, it’s crucial for us to maintain financial stability and to ensure that our work can continue to thrive in the years ahead; therefore, we allocate money for the upcoming year’s budget and beyond.
INTRODUCTION

HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2018

VEGANISM

VALLEJO HEALTHY FOOD FEST

Our Vallejo Healthy Food Fest (VHFF) on October 21st was as tasty and fun-filled as we had hoped. Approximately 350 people attended and there was so much delicious vegan food. VHFF creates a space where the people of Vallejo can gather to celebrate healthy eating, dine on culturally appropriate vegan foods, and enjoy artists from their local community. For many attendees, this is their first vegan event, and they are delighted to learn about vegan versions of their favorite foods. Vegan Filipinx restaurant Nick’s Kitchen hosted a successful food demonstration. Chef Chew made an incredible spread that fed everyone delicious vegan favorites, such as his mac and cheese, and local restaurants provided their vegan foods for attendees to sample, including vegan cheese pizza. Our local vegan chefs were a hit, people engaged with our new Safeway “phone booth,” and many were interested in worker-owned cooperatives. We were excited to hear how many people have changed their eating habits since we began having these events.

VEGAN MEXICAN FOOD

We are delighted that our Vegan Mexican Food (bit.ly/vmf-booklet-eng) booklet is complete and is available in both English and Spanish in print and online. We debuted the booklet at this year’s Vallejo Healthy Food Fest, where many told us about their excitement regarding trying out the recipes for themselves. The booklet includes 16 delicious recipes including entrees, salsas, sides, drinks, and desserts. In addition to recipes, the booklet is packed with information about veganism and community health, farm worker justice, how colonization has impacted Latinx and Indigenous eating practices, animal suffering in the food system, and much more. The booklet is gorgeous, and all the food looks so tasty. Many people are also ordering the booklets through our website. We are so excited to have this new tool to help others cook delicious vegan Mexican foods, either as part of their culture or to see how vegan friendly Mexican food is.

ANTI-DAIRY CAMPAIGN

To celebrate our 11th year, we launched phase one of our latest effort to increase awareness about how animals are raised and killed for food: Help End Animal Cruelty One Glass at a Time (bit.ly/anti-dairy). Headquartered in so-called “happy cow” dairy country, we’re uniquely positioned to literally stand with the cows and educate passing commuters about the cruelty inherent in the dairy system. Every month, we continue to stand beside the cows and hand out leaflets to commuters. We help them understand the cruelty of the dairy system, and we are a regular presence to provide a counter to the strong pro-dairy presence in the area. In November, we even handed out Follow Your Heart vegan cheese to an incredibly enthusiastic public. We were so happy that people were interested in trying vegan cheese. This year we also sent a letter to the governor of North Carolina urging him to veto a bill that basically would allow the word “milk” to only be used to sell milk from animals.

FIGHT FOR THE OCEAN

Our Fight for the Ocean Day (bit.ly/ffto2018) clean-up on August 30 and subsequent weekend (in honor of Dr. Sylvia Earle’s birthday) was a big success. We had vegans and non-vegans alike out cleaning beaches, lakes, and rivers. It was exciting and inspiring to see so many people gathered in support of sea creatures and their home. We hope to do it again so we can help others make the connection between veganism and conservationism, reminding advocates of both that there is always more we can and should do to protect our ocean. We have also been pushing our new “Don’t get them caught in the net” message on social media as our Fight for the Ocean effort continues. We have noticed that many people get upset when animals such as whales and sea turtles get caught in nets (understandably so), but many don’t see the root of the problem: eating sea creatures. So, we are trying to help them make that connection.
HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2018

FARM WORKER RIGHTS

50-MILE REGULATION CAMPAIGN

F.E.P. coordinated the coalition that defeated the 50-mile regulation. After eight years of working together with a coalition (lawyers, farm worker justice advocates, and a human rights group) to change the regulation, which impacted the education of the children of farm workers, we led a successful fight against the California Department of Housing and Community Development. The regulation required farmworkers to leave state-subsidized housing and move at least 50 miles away at the end of the harvest, depriving thousands of farm workers’ children from receiving consistent access to education. The governor signed the changes to the 50-mile regulation into the budget at the end of July 2018. We are thrilled about what this means for the education of farm workers’ children.

SCHOOL SUPPLY DRIVE

The 2018 F.E.P. school supply drive for the children of farm workers was our most successful ever, we collected 568 backpacks this year—over one hundred more than last year—and stuffed them full of supplies donated by our wonderful supporters. Thousands of school supplies went to the children of farm workers to show that we see them and we care about them. If you haven’t seen it yet, head over to our website to view the photos, view the heartwarming video, see the excited children picking out their backpacks, and see how our distribution day turned out.

CHOCOLATE

This year, the bunny Chavez became our official mascot for F.E.P.-recommended chocolate (bit.ly/FEP-Choc). We love that our long-eared friend Emmeline knew that naming our bunny mascot after Cesar Chavez (co-founder of United Farm Workers and a vegan) was the perfect choice. Look for Chavez on labels in vegan stores. Our chocolate app (bit.ly/FEP-Choc) was also updated. We added a new category, removed an unnecessary category, and made it possible to post directly from the app to social media. Unfortunately, due to the findings in a recent Sheffield report and a new U.S. Department of Labor report, we also had to make changes to our chocolate list. The report put out by researchers at the University of Sheffield on labor practices in the cocoa industry demonstrated that unjust labor practices on cocoa farms remain deeply problematic and more widespread than previously thought. This is not shocking given what we know about the chocolate industry, but it is disheartening. You can read more about the reports and additional changes to our list in Lauren’s November 2018 blog Appetite for Justice (bit.ly/AFJ-FEP). We are working diligently to keep the list updated and to reflect new information as it becomes available.
HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2018

ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOOD

SHAME ON SAFEWAY (S.O.S.) CAMPAIGN

We are still actively campaigning against Safeway’s practice of putting restrictive deeds on properties, thereby making it more difficult for communities of color and low-income communities to access healthy foods. On December 10th, we held S.O.S. protests around the country to coincide with International Human Rights Day. We had events in Santa Rosa, CA; Bellingham, WA; Seattle, WA; Washington, DC; Hilo, HI; Vallejo, CA; San José, CA; and Houston, TX. We also delivered a letter to the CEO of Albertsons (owner of Safeway), signed by more than 20 organizations asking Albertsons to change their restrictive deed policy that hurts community access to healthy foods. Thanks to everyone who has signed and spread the word about our campaign; our petition now has more than 34,000 signatures.

BRINGING WORKER-OWNED COOPERATIVES TO VALLEJO

As part of our ongoing work to improve access to healthy foods in Vallejo, CA, F.E.P. organized three community meetings to introduce community members to worker-owned cooperatives, and, as always, the vegan food was a hit. Righting the injustice of a lack of access to healthy foods requires a multifaceted approach. Worker-owned cooperatives are one way to ensure communities of color and low-income communities have access to healthy, nutritious food where the money stays in the community. We were thrilled to have Mandela Grocery Cooperative in Oakland working with us to meet people in Vallejo and inspire them to start a cooperative too.
WA CHAPTER EFFORTS, AWARDS & RECOGNITION

WA CHAPTER:

Our all-volunteer crew in Washington State was successful in encouraging El Centro de la Raza in Seattle to go from having a vegetarian tamale cooking class to an all-vegan one. If this wasn’t exciting enough, not only are they wanting to do another, but the all-vegan class broke their attendance records.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION:

Recognition: Lauren receives Animal Rights Hall of Fame Award

We are thrilled that our founder, Lauren Ornelas, was inducted into the Animal Rights Hall of Fame at the 2018 Animal Rights National Conference, making her the first woman of color to receive this award. After 30 years of fighting for animals, this recognition of Lauren’s fearless and unflagging commitment to animals’ lives was long overdue. Check out the great LiveKindly (bit.ly/2U5iql8) article about this highly-deserved award, and join us in congratulating her on this recognition of her immense contributions to animal rights.

San José Declares July 2018 “Promote F.E.P.” Month

At their City Council meeting, the City of San José also issued a Proclamation to F.E.P. thanking us for the work we do and designating the month of July 2018 to promote our work. We are proud and honored to receive recognition from the City of San José for our annual School Supply Drive for the children of farm workers.
Throughout the year, we connected with supporters coast to coast!

**TABLING & SPEAKING EVENTS:**

- Animal Law Review 10-year anniversary at UC-Berkeley (Berkeley, CA)
- VegFest Los Angeles (California)
- Oakland VegFest (California)
- Maine VegFest (Portland, ME)
- Philly Vegan Pop Flea Market (Philadelphia, PA)
- Animal Rights National Conference 2018 (Los Angeles, CA)
- Atlantic City Vegan Food Festival (New Jersey)
- Spokane VegFest (Washington)
- San José Veggie Fest 2018 (California)
- Petaluma Progressive Festival (California)
- Salt Lake City VegFest (Utah)
- Portland VegFest (Oregon)
- Atlanta VegFest (Georgia)
- 7th Annual Animal Law Symposium (Portland, OR)
- NYC Vegan Drinks Benefit (New York City, NY)
- F.E.P. Washington Chapter’s Yard Sale Fundraiser (Seattle, WA)
- Our Promise kick-off event (Sacramento, CA)
- Rise for Climate, Jobs & Justice March California (San Francisco, CA)
- We the Future Social Justice Conference (Santa Rosa, CA)
- 2018 Inaugural Duke University Food & Faith Convening (Durham, North Carolina)
F.E.P.’s work was featured this year in the following articles and interviews.

The Unexpected Challenges of Living in a Food Desert
American Public Media’s Marketplace interviews lauren Ornelas on F.E.P.’s work in Santa Clara County and some of the challenges of living in areas of “food deserts.”
Date: January 2018 | Source: Marketplace (bit.ly/2YX36IS)

How to Combat ‘Food Deserts’ and ‘Food Swamps’
lauren Ornelas is interviewed in the Healthline article on how to combat “food deserts.”
Date: January 2018 | Source: Healthline (bit.ly/2U0sNV7)

6 women who are making history in veganism (Spanish)
lauren was named by Spanish-language outlet Enfemenino as one of six women making history for veganism.
Date: April 2018 | Source: Enfemenino (bit.ly/2UBP6pu)

‘50-mile rule’: Migrant farmworker housing policy changed to allow children to stay in school year-round
The legislation was sponsored by F.E.P. as well as the nonprofit Center for Farmworker Families, based in Watsonville.
Date: July 2018 | Source: The Mercury News (bayareane.ws/2D22qZm)

Keep up with all the latest F.E.P. news on our social media platforms!
/foodempowermentproject 🐦 @foodispower 📸 @foodempowermentproject 🎥 bit.ly/FEPYouTube