



2020 YEAR IN REVIEW



FOODISPOWER.ORG

INTRODUCTION

Dear Friends,

As we reflect on 2020, it's easy to feel discouraged. Yes, it was an extremely difficult year, from the devastating wildfires near our office in California and the reprehensible assaults on people of color across the country to the relentless global pandemic that touched all our lives. But it was also a year of tremendous hope for us at Food Empowerment Project (F.E.P.) because it highlighted the ways in which we are uniquely prepared to make a difference, and those who believe in our mission continued to come through, making a huge impact in the work we're able to do.

We are proud to present this review of what we accomplished in 2020, all of which was made possible because of compassionate supporters like you. You will see in the following pages how your belief in F.E.P.'s adaptability and resilience helped us achieve successes in our four main areas of work: veganism, farm worker rights, access to healthy foods, and chocolate. Some of the highpoints of the year include a reimagined three-day Vallejo Healthy Food Fest; collecting 665 backpacks filled with school supplies for the children of farm workers; a virtual Fight for the Ocean Day, for which we developed a list of seven actions people can take for marine life while sheltering in place; and our Chocolate List surpassing 1,000 companies. Oh, and we hired a new executive director!

You may be interested to know that in 2020, 76.1% of our budget went toward F.E.P.'s programs. Those programs covered our work helping animals, supporting Black and Brown communities, protecting the environment, and advocating for the most marginalized individuals. We also launched an updated version of the F.E.P. booklet and a video to help people understand the need for our work and to spread awareness of the challenges you care about. Throughout 2020, we fought the good fight in creating a more just and sustainable world for everyone.

It was a challenging yet inspiring year for us, and we are so grateful for your support. You give us hope.

With much appreciation,



Sharanya

Sharanya Krishna Prasad
Executive Director

*Photo Credit:
In Her Image
Photography*



Lauren

lauren Ornelas
Founder/President

P.S. We also produced a short video highlighting just a few of the things we accomplished in 2020. You'll find it at: bit.ly/2020achievements.

2020 YEAR IN REVIEW

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

EXPENSES

PROGRAMS

\$260,651

G&A

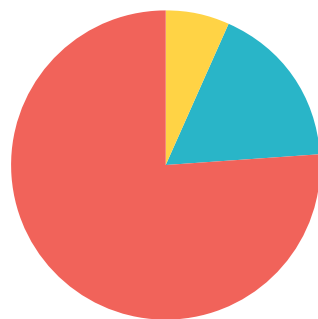
\$58,920

FUNDRAISING

\$22,986

TOTAL

\$342,557



REVENUE

DONATIONS

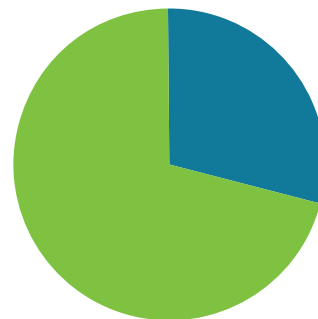
\$414,828

GRANTS

\$170,000

TOTAL

\$584,828



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.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2020

VEGANISM

VALLEJO HEALTHY FOOD FEST

As a vegan nonprofit, F.E.P. understands that asking people to go vegan is only appropriate when they have equal access to healthy foods—and know how to prepare them. That's one reason we have been organizing a free vegan food fest in Vallejo, California, since 2016. In the fall of 2020, F.E.P. hosted its fifth-annual Vallejo Healthy Food Fest (VHFF), an opportunity to share the message that healthy food is not only delicious but should be accessible to everyone in Vallejo. Of course, in past years we've hosted this event indoors, but in the midst of a pandemic, we had to think outside the lunch box, so we created a very special event! For three consecutive Saturdays—September 26, October 3, and October 10—we offered the VHFF to everyone with Internet access.

The event featured cultural performances, music, and inspiring guest speakers as in previous years, but this time it was available far beyond Vallejo. Attendees learned how to prepare such vegan dishes as Chiles en Nogadas from Chef Evangelina, Filipino "Beef" Steak (Bistek) from Vegan Cooking Mom, and Southern-style Collard Greens and Three-Cheese Mac and Cheese from Chef Chew. All three days' events are available online with English and Spanish subtitles!



The feedback we received from attendees was truly inspiring! Here are just a few examples:



“Thank you for offering this spectacular way to connect food and culture, the most creative Vegan event I've ever experienced! Brava!!”
—Norma W.

“Great job pulling this together! I'm looking forward to being able to go back and create the amazing recipe! Excellent inspiration!”
—Scott G.

“Thank you so much! Vallejo is lucky to have F.E.P. in this community!”
—Dariece W.

VEGAN FILIPINO FOOD & VEGAN LAO FOOD

F.E.P.'s latest recipe booklet—Vegan Filipino Food (VFF)—was printed in English and Tagalog in 2020! Featuring 17 delicious vegan recipes familiar to Filipinx folks, the VFF booklet is a complement to our veganfilipinofood.com website and was inspired by our commitment to provide plant-based resources that reflect the ethnic and cultural diversity of our community.

The booklet and website were both prompted by two Pinay members of F.E.P. in an effort to share the familiar flavors of their homeland while also encouraging their kababayans (fellow Filipino/a/x) to expand their circle of compassion and justice to include non-human animals.

In addition to recipes, this beautifully illustrated booklet includes a 10-page introduction covering what veganism is, eating on a budget, the humane myth, three principal reasons people choose to go vegan (for the animals, for the environment, and for their health), and more. The VFF booklet can also be found online at <https://foodispower.org/our-vegan-filipino-food-booklet-is-here/>

Inspired by our board member Sharon Daraphonhdeth, who is Lao, we also used our social media and monthly newsletter to call on vegan Lao cooks and chefs to submit recipes for our Vegan Lao Food website that will join VFF and Vegan Mexican Food in helping you eat your ethics while celebrating the foods you grew up with. Lao folks answered the call, and we'll have more news on this soon!



FIGHT FOR THE OCEAN

Another of F.E.P.'s popular annual events is our Fight for the Ocean effort, which we created to help make a difference for our ocean and for those who call it home. Held every year on August 30 (in honor of Dr. Sylvia Earle's birthday), Fight for the Ocean has traditionally involved volunteers around the world getting out and picking up litter from beaches and around lakes, ponds, rivers, and streams.

With most people under lockdown during 2020, however, F.E.P. got creative and posted a list on our website of seven actions participants could take at home, from organizing a virtual documentary screening to downloading a very special coloring page created just for F.E.P. by Caiti Rose, a shark-loving vegan artist who is correcting people's misconceptions about ocean life through her website, [Sharktopia.org](https://sharktopia.org). It is all an effort to help others see the connection between their love of “seafood” and the destruction of the ocean. We also launched a new page on our website in 2020—<https://fightfortheocean.com/>—which covers more details on our Fight for the Ocean effort, including those seven actions people can take!

FARM WORKER RIGHTS

SCHOOL SUPPLY DRIVE

After visiting farm workers the year before and seeing how much the kids appreciate—and need—pencils, pens, notebook paper, and other school supplies, F.E.P. founder Lauren Ornelas launched our annual School Supply Drive for the children of farm workers in 2013. That first year, we handed out 30 backpacks to farm worker families, and the drive has grown every year. In 2020, the pandemic meant that we had to rethink how we'd accomplish the drive (since so many of the steps are usually handled in person). Thanks to your generosity and flexibility, not only was it a success, but we surpassed our goal for the year and delivered 665 backpacks to the children of farm workers!

We do not see the School Supply Drive as an act of charity but as an attempt to right yet another injustice taking place against farm workers. They work tirelessly to plant, grow, and harvest the food we all eat, and by providing their children with school supplies, we give these parents and grandparents one less thing to worry about. They know that a good education is one of the keys to a better life, and we are thrilled to be able to provide their kids some of the tools they need to succeed!



ESSENTIAL WORKERS

The pandemic was a challenging time for everyone, but especially hard hit were produce workers, many of whom were not supplied with the personal protective equipment (PPE) that they need to stay safe. In response, F.E.P. contacted the farm worker organizations that we work with on the School Supply Drive to determine what farm workers needed during the COVID-19 crisis. They told us that in addition to face masks (which many employers were not providing), farm workers needed food and additional school supplies for their children, since students were doing schoolwork at home and didn't have the supplies most schools furnish. The result of this was our Essential Supplies for Essential Workers effort, in which we put out a call for donations. Thanks to an outpouring of support—more than \$10,000 in donations—we were able to provide PPE, food, and school supplies to farm worker families in California's Central Valley and Sonoma County. In a heartwarming video with recipients speaking Chat'ño (their native language), some of the farm workers thanked F.E.P. for providing food with dignity to those who are working amid a pandemic.

Like the school supplies, we provided these supplies not as an act of charity but as a way to give back to these vitally important workers. Farm workers have been, and always will be, essential. Showing up for them is a basic act of justice. Our longstanding commitment to farm worker justice results in a deep trust in the community, which enables us to serve undocumented workers and their families who might otherwise fear for their safety when receiving assistance like this to meet their most basic needs. Thank you for answering their call for critically needed food and supplies.

CHOCOLATE

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Chocolate—that delicious treat with a bittersweet history—continues to be one of the most talked-about areas of F.E.P.'s work. Sadly, the majority of the world's cocoa, the key ingredient of chocolate products, is grown and harvested using horrifying labor practices. It's become a controversial issue: even some so-called “ethical” food companies have been found using cocoa sourced from areas where the worst forms of child labor, including slavery, take place.

F.E.P. has been raising awareness about child labor and slavery in the chocolate industry since we were founded in 2007. Throughout 2020, we were the go-to resource in articles and interviews regarding vegan chocolate—and how to enjoy it ethically. Speaking of resources, our Chocolate List topped 1,000 companies in 2020, and we continue to add more every month.

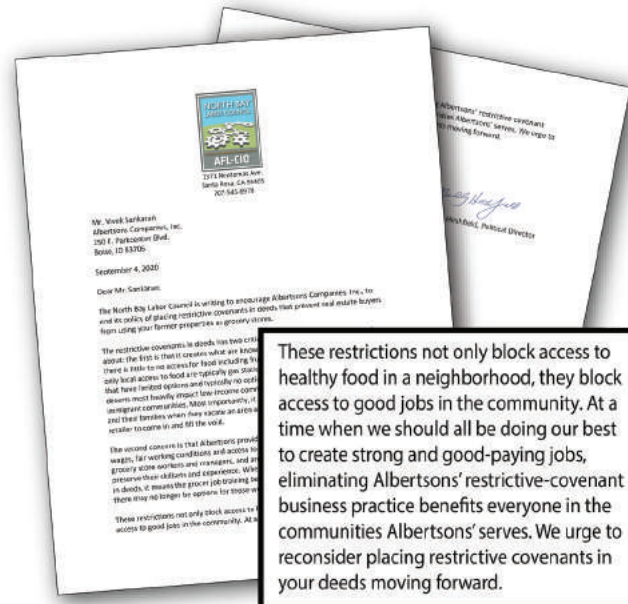
And we hosted our first-ever Fright Night: The Scary Side of Chocolate, a virtual “Choctober fun(d)raiser” for Halloween that featured speakers, a cooking demo, trivia, and chocolate prizes.

ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOOD

SHAME ON SAFEWAY CAMPAIGN

Our Shame on Safeway (S.O.S.) campaign is intended to shine some daylight on one of the grocery store company's most repugnant practices: placing restrictive covenants on properties they vacate. This is an unethical legal clause that prevents new grocery stores from opening in locations previously occupied by Safeway (a banner store under Albertsons, Co.), thus blocking access to healthy foods and putting an even greater burden on Black and Brown individuals and low-income communities.

In 2020, the S.O.S. campaign got the endorsement of an influential labor council: the North Bay Labor Council, AFL-CIO. “At a time when we should all be doing our best to create strong and good-paying jobs, eliminating Albertsons' restrictive-covenant business practice benefits everyone in the communities Albertsons serves,” says Jack Buckhorn, executive director of the North Bay Labor Council, which works to eliminate oppression for all people, regardless of race, color, gender, religion, age, sexual orientation, immigration status, or national origin.

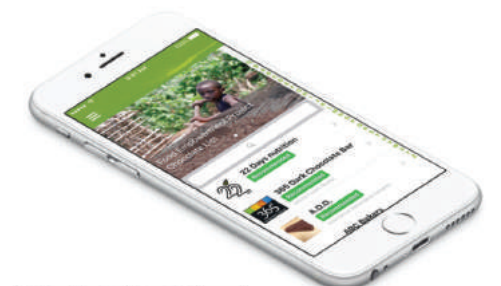


These restrictions not only block access to healthy food in a neighborhood, they block access to good jobs in the community. At a time when we should all be doing our best to create strong and good-paying jobs, eliminating Albertsons' restrictive-covenant business practice benefits everyone in the communities Albertsons serves. We urge to reconsider placing restrictive covenants in your deeds moving forward.

PITTSBURG, CALIFORNIA

F.E.P. understands that not everyone is treated equally when it comes to access to healthy foods. That's one reason we are invited to conduct assessments of food availability among Black, Brown, and Indigenous communities. As you may know, we've surveyed Vallejo and Santa Clara County (both in California), and we conducted focus groups in San José and Vallejo asking how local residents wanted to improve their access to healthy foods and what barriers they experienced.

In 2020, Growing Healthy People for Pittsburg, a group in Pittsburg, California, asked us to survey the availability of produce as well as vegan foods such as plant-based milks in their community. Our work there is still in the planning stages, but we look forward to sharing more news soon!



ACTIVITIES, EVENTS, AND SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS IN 2020

Our actions were limited due to the pandemic, but we still connected with supporters coast to coast!

Vegan Action's Vegan72 VegFest (Richmond, VA)*	Farmworkers and the COVID-19 Crisis: A Conversation with lauren Ornelas (Factory Farming Awareness Coalition)
Conscious Eating Conference (Berkeley, CA)*	Workers Rights, Human Health, the Environment, and Climate Change (Animals and Public Policy course, New York University, NY)
La Raza (University of California Davis School of Law, Davis, CA)*	Food Justice: Breaking Interconnected Systems of Oppression (Raven Corp, Lewis & Clark, Portland, OR)
Food Justice: Intersections within Civil Rights Animal Rights. (New York City Bar Association webinar, New York, NY)	Food Justice: How Your Food Choices Can Change The World (Cornell, Ithaca, NY)
Food Justice Presentation (Food Activism Course, University of California Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA)	Food Empowerment Project Presentation (Kellogg's Corporation)
Struggles Bound Up Together: Making Animal Rights Activism Intersectional (Youth Summit, JVS & Jewish Veg)	*In-person event
Nutrition for a Better Society: Focus Lecture on Food Access and Food Justice Issues (Plant Based Prevention Disease)	
Panel: How Do We Face Post-Pandemic Challenges in Chronic Disease Prevention, Especially for the Most Vulnerable and the Food Insecure? (Plant Based Prevention Disease)	
Vegan Food Justice Presentation and Q&A (Emory University, Atlanta, GA)	
Food Empowerment Project Presentation (Iona College, New Rochelle, NY)	
Invisible Vegan Panel Discussion (Organized by Acterra)	
From Advocating for Access to Healthy Foods in California to Fighting Slavery in Chocolate Supply Chain (Middlebury Institute of International Studies, Monterey, CA)	
Food Empowerment Project Presentation (Animal Legal Defense Fund Tennessee Chapter, TN)	
Virtual Retreat on Grassroots Organizing (Farmed Animal Funders Panel)	
Decolonize Your Diet (SF World VegFest)	
2020 World Food Day Food Justice Panel: What Would a Just and Sustainable Food System Look Like? (Organized by Afro-Vegan Society)	
Vegan Doesn't Always Mean Cruelty-Free: An Interview With lauren Ornelas of Food Empowerment Project (Animal People Forum)	

PODCASTS:



SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYTICS:

Our online social media presence grew by **6% on Facebook**, **10% on Twitter**, and **33% on Instagram** in 2020 when compared to the previous year.

MEDIA

F.E.P.'s work was featured this year in the following articles and interviews.

(Note: This is just a sampling of our media presence in 2020.

Please see our website for a more comprehensive list.)

Despite wage disparities, local grocers can improve rural food access

Date: January 7, 2020 | Source: Oroville Mercury-Register (bit.ly/3hfkUd6)



2020 Climate Diet Summit

Date: April 14, 2020 | Source: Climate Diet Solution (bit.ly/3BTuLNx)

Veganism, Farm Worker Rights and Food Justice. Interview with lauren Ornelas

Date: May 19, 2020 | Source: Vegan Rainbow Project (bit.ly/3A0TPBt)



The real price of our delicious chocolate? Rampant deforestation and child labor

Date: June 4, 2020 | Source: The Rising (bit.ly/2X2rddb)

If the Dairy Industry Was a Country, It Would Be One of the World's Biggest Emitters, Report Finds

Date: June 16, 2020 | Source: Green Matters (bit.ly/3C1QrXT)



After Save A Lot's Closing, Potential For Food Desert Grows In New Albany

Date: June 28, 2020 | Source: WFPL Radio (bit.ly/2X85VKU)

Kangaroos: The Risks of the World's Largest Wildlife Trade

Date: August 22, 2020 | Source: Our Daily Planet (bit.ly/3E3CFFJ)



Farmworker bills aim to protect against COVID-19 but may not go far enough

Date: September 25, 2020 | Source: San Jose Spotlight (bit.ly/2X0Ml2W)

The Redskins and 18 More Offensive Logos That Came Under Fire

Date: October 16, 2020 | Source: MSN (bit.ly/3E3Dezl)



Kangaroos, an Australian icon, are being butchered to feed the pet food industry

Date: November 21, 2020 | Source: Salon (bit.ly/3A1qFlI)



San Jose legislator pushes to protect farmworkers during COVID-19 crisis

Date: April 2, 2020 | Source: San Jose Spotlight (bit.ly/3DVlflw)



Watch: The 9 Best Vegan TED Talks

Date: May 19, 2020 | Source: LiveKindly (bit.ly/3ng2hcz)

Advocating for Food Justice During a Pandemic: Lauren Ornelas Speaks Out

Date: June 3, 2020 | Source: Sentient Media (bit.ly/3lcHTGC)



Addressing Environmental Racism & Oppression In Our Food Choices

Date: June 12, 2020 | Source: Healthy Planet (bit.ly/3yWnDy4)

Aunt Jemima and Uncle Ben are going away. Are these mascots next?

Date: June 19, 2020 | Source: CNN (cnn.it/3AbdChC)



elemental+ Is Accelerating the Pandemic

Date: July 31, 2020 | Source: Elemental (bit.ly/3l8ALLp)

Why black Americans are more likely to be vegan

Date: September 11, 2020 | Source: BBC (bbc.in/3hi3axC)



Dollar Stores Aren't the Answer To Alleviating Food Insecurity, So What Is?

Date: October 15, 2020 | Source: Well + Good (bit.ly/3BUZXvM)

13 Latinx Movers and Shakers to Follow on Instagram

Date: November 9, 2020 | Source: Hip Latina (bit.ly/3hl4Q9s)



21 Food Organizations to Watch in 2021

Date: December 22, 2020 | Source: Food Tank (bit.ly/3lbvyTi)



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HELP US IN THE FIGHT TO BRING FOOD JUSTICE TO ALL

By recognizing and making informed food choices, we can prevent injustices against people, the environment, and animals. Your support will help Food Empowerment Project get one step closer to a more just and sustainable world.

DONATE TODAY



www.foodispower.org/give

We appreciate your support of our programs.
We are a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit, and all donations are tax deductible.

Keep up with all the latest F.E.P. news on our social media platforms!

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