2017
Annual Report

Food Empowerment Project

INTRODUCTION

Dear Friends,

This year marked Food Empowerment Project (F.E.P.)'s 10-year anniversary, proving that our message is continuing to grow, and it showed us that our work is more imperative than ever in this political climate where vulnerable beings are even more threatened.

In 2007 I started Food Empowerment Project with the goal of bringing together individuals who believed in working toward a form of justice that included both human and non-human animals. Part of that goal was to also create an organization that would provide tools to help people truly eat with their ethics as well as include components allowing them to use their power to help change the world.

Over the past year we have seen our work receive recognition by elected officials in the City of San José, where we first started!

In honor of our 10-year anniversary, we updated our veganmexicanfood.com website, and now it's not only gorgeous, but the delicious recipes have increased, too!

Getting our Shame on Safeway campaign onto the streets to inform their customers of the company's harmful practice of using long-term property deeds to prevent other grocery stores from opening in the same location in communities impacted by Safeway's departure was a great way to step up and educate even more people about their reprehensible policy.

We also continued our work on access to healthy foods in Vallejo by conducting focus groups to determine what barriers people experienced accessing healthy foods and what some solutions might be. Our Vallejo Healthy Food Fest, where we served delicious vegan food reflecting the cultures of the community, included a mouth-watering adobo dish (a Filipinx favorite), and we saw hundreds of people lined up as soon as the doors opened! The music and performers were also brilliant as always.

We are very excited about what is in store for us in the future as we work to expand our team and create a more just and sustainable world for everyone. See our back page for ideas on what you can do!

Cover Photo: In Her Image Photography

In solidarity,

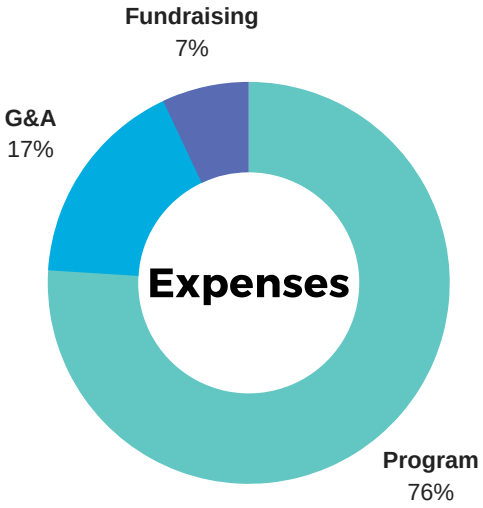
lauren Ornelas
Founder/Executive Director
Food Empowerment Project

YEAR IN REVIEW

Food Empowerment Project Year: January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2017

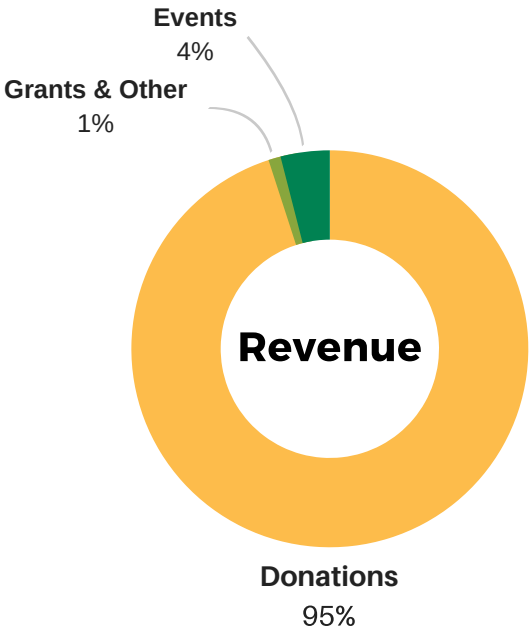
Expenses

Program	$122,444
General & Administrative	$26,448
Fundraising	$11,643
Total Expenses	$160,535



Revenue

Donations	$272,919
Events	$9,585
Grants & Other	$3,792
Total Revenue & Gains	$286,296



Excess revenue & support over expenses: $125,761

HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2017

SAFEWAY CAMPAIGN:

Our campaign against Safeway is intended to reverse the company's outrageous policy of putting restricted deeds on their former properties. The deeds block other grocery stores from opening, which limits access to fresh and healthy foods in communities of color and low-income communities. Our Safeway petition has garnered more than 30,000 signatures and volunteers mobilized protests in Los Angeles, Vallejo, San José, Rohnert Park, San Francisco, Seattle, Baltimore, and Washington, DC.

50-MILE RULE CAMPAIGN:

F.E.P. has been working to change California's unfair 50-mile regulation requiring farm workers and their families to move at least 50 miles away from migrant camps at the end of each growing season. This regulation repeatedly uproots farm-worker children and denies their right to an education. F.E.P. founder lauren Ornelas spoke on a panel of experts regarding the 50-mile regulation and delivered a legal petition to the California Department of Housing and Community Development. Our efforts have received attention in the *Los Angeles Times*, *Santa Cruz Sentinel*, and California Health Report.

SCHOOL SUPPLY DRIVE:

Thanks to many generous donations (including from a local assemblymember), we were able to stuff 461 backpacks full of school supplies in 2017. We then distributed those backpacks to the children of more than 300 farm workers, who were wrapped around the block ready to receive these important educational tools. We hold the annual school supply drive to show farm workers we are grateful for the work they do. This isn't charity; it's giving something back to the people who make it possible for us to put food on our tables.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2017

VALLEJO OUTREACH:

F.E.P. met with Vallejo Mayor Bob Sampayan to discuss how to better provide access to healthy foods in his vibrant and diverse city. To support this effort, we completed six focus groups where we met with local residents, ate delicious vegan food, and talked about their needs for fresh and healthy foods. We are now translating and analyzing the data, which may be used to influence public health policy. Currently, the Solano County Health Department is using our Vallejo report on access to healthy foods for their Healthy Stores for a Healthy Community initiative. We also coordinated a meeting with two members of the Mandela Foods Cooperative, Vallejo's People's Garden, our community organizer, and Mayor Sampayan about bringing worker-owned cooperatives to the community.

VALLEJO HEALTHY FOOD FEST:

Nearly 400 people attended our all-vegan Vallejo Healthy Food Fest. The event represented Vallejo's rich cultural diversity via food such as vegan "chicken" adobo (a Filipino favorite), beans, Mexican rice, corn tortillas, and kale and cabbage greens. The *Times-Herald* and *Benicia Herald* highlighted the event, and Vallejo's mayor thanked us with a certificate for our work on improving access to healthy foods in the Vallejo community.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2017

WILDFIRE RELIEF FUNDRAISER:

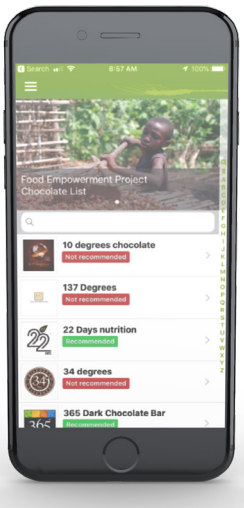
After fires devastated the region, F.E.P. organized a fundraiser for impacted farm workers in Sonoma County. The farm workers, many of whom still speak their indigenous language that is not Spanish (and as a result don't always get the help they need), were given supplies to get started again after they lost their homes and belongings.

VEGAN MEXICAN FOOD:

We updated VeganMexicanFood.com just in time for its 10th birthday and Mexican Independence Day. In addition to boasting more than 30 vegan Mexican food recipes, the refreshed site includes information on ethical eating and food colonization and is fully translated into Spanish (like our main website). The recipes and educational content provide a wonderful chance to explore and engage with veganism through Chicanx and Mexican culture.

CHOCOLATE APP:

More than 10,000 people have downloaded our chocolate app (called Chocolate List) in an effort to avoid purchases that contribute to the worst forms of child labor, including slavery. We also updated our coffee and wine lists to showcase companies that prioritize the ethical treatment of both animals and workers.



HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2017

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS:

We connected with supporters coast to coast, tabling at the Sonoma County VegFest and speaking at the San Francisco VegFest, the Portland VegFest, the Animal Law Conference in Portland, the Farm Sanctuary Hoe Down in New York, and the Refuge Conference at Wesleyan University in Connecticut. lauren even traveled to Melbourne, Australia, to speak on F.E.P.'s holistic approach to food justice at the Edgar's Mission Farm Sanctuary Evening of Kindness.

CHAPTER EFFORTS:

Our all-volunteer Washington chapter organized an amazing summertime yard sale with the proceeds going to F.E.P. and VINE Sanctuary in Vermont. The volunteers also served vegan hot dogs and sweets to introduce non-vegans to delicious vegan foods. In addition, the chapter hosted the Appetite for Justice Benefit Dinner for F.E.P. at the Northwest African American Museum in Seattle, WA.

RECOGNITION:

F.E.P. was nominated for Favorite App (for the Chocolate List) and Favorite Nonprofit in this year's *VegNews* Veggie Awards. In addition, the city of San José, California's third largest city and the location of F.E.P.'s founding, awarded F.E.P. with a prestigious commendation during a city council meeting. The proclamation recognized our efforts to promote "a more sustainable world by educating the community on issues, such as access to healthy foods for low-income families, working conditions for farm workers, and depletion of natural resources."

OUR TOP 10 EATING TIPS

Here are some tips to help you utilize the power of your food choices:

1. GO VEGAN
For the animals, the environment, humanity, and your health.

2. SHOP WITH CARE
Minimize your support of corporations that violate human and animal rights.

3. CHOOSE ORGANIC
Agricultural chemicals hurt workers, the environment, and your health! Strive to buy organic whenever possible.

4. ONLY EAT ETHICAL CHOCOLATE
Before buying, check our chocolate list either online or by using our free chocolate app (iOS and Android), as this allows you to eat with your ethics when it comes to chocolate no matter where you are. With more than 700 companies listed (and more added every month), you are sure to find vegan chocolate not sourced from the worst forms of child and slave labor.

5. SPEAK UP!
Use your voice when you shop. Fill out comment cards, send email comments, or speak to store managers about available food options.

Photo Credit: In Her Image Photography

6. BRING YOUR OWN
Use reusable bags, straws, silverware, and containers when you shop and eat out. Avoid plastic and bring your own bags when you buy groceries and produce (reuse!).

7. BUY LOCAL
Support the farmers' market in your community.

8. SIGN UP
Sign up for our e-newsletter to stay up to date on all our important work.

9. SPREAD THE WORD
Share what you learn with others!

10. THINK OUTSIDE THE BOTTLE
Avoid buying water in plastic bottles. There is another way to help create a more just and sustainable food system: You can donate, too! Your contributions ensure all of our vital work continues, including vegan education and outreach and assessments on access to healthy foods in communities of color.

Get involved because your food choices CAN change the world!
Our supporters are the foundation of all we are able to accomplish.