

Dear Friends and Family,

At Added Value's First Annual Harvest Festival this Fall, Tevon McNair, our Fourth-Year Senior Youth Leader, said that his time with us had "made me me." It could be the greatest honor we have ever received. It was profound to hear this now successful student athlete, who had barely made the grade and failed to make the team his freshman year, attribute his success (graduating on the honor roll and starting as the center on his team) to the guidance of co-founder Michael Hurwitz, and his meaningful relationships with our staff and volunteers.

What came from Tevon a few weeks later was even more enlightening. As we closed our last market of the season, we circled up to reflect on the year. When the moment arrived for Tevon to speak, he shared with us his appreciation for Eugene, a 12-year old who has spent every Saturday with us for the past four years. Upon hearing this, Eugene beamed, and cried. In that simple act Tevon began passing on the gifts he received through working with us over the years to a new generation of leaders. With your support, we have been able to nurture Tevon's growth. With your continued support, we can do the same for Eugene.



Senior Youth Leader Tevon McNair and Added Value Director Ian Marvy addressed attendees of the organization's first Harvest Festival last Saturday. Of his experience at the Red Hook Farm, McNair said, "It's made me me."

Growing Healthy Minds

Our increasing concern about obesity and the epidemic of diet-related illness in our community led us to expand our work with young children and their families to improve the use of healthy foods amongst our neighbors. Working in conjunction with a sister organization, we are piloting a comprehensive Farm-to-Classroom initiative for first graders at Public School 15. Guided by Cristina Chapman and Caroline Loomis, these 70 students spent three hours a week exploring the natural environment, expanding their vocabulary, and honing their math skills, all while nurturing plants. They prepared dishes from fresh, whole foods, discovering at a young age how to enjoy healthy eating. Additionally, we continued to work with the two other local elementary schools, ensuring that 140 students made weekly visit to the Farm. These young students have begun to take their experiences home from school. Almost every Saturday an excited 6 year-old escorts disbelieving family members onto the Farm exclaiming, "See I told you there is a farm in Red Hook!"



Food for all

This year community members visiting the Farm on Saturday mornings were met with a warm hello from Shanti or Denia at the Market and the beautiful sight of corn growing in the field. They could observe a cooking demonstration, make art while sitting on our newly built picnic-tables, or head over to the greenhouse and lend a hand with the daily farm chores. And of course, they could purchase some of the freshest produce available in New York City.

Our Market featured Added Value's salad greens (made famous by our restaurant partners ICI and 360) and over 40 other varieties of produce grown on the Farm by our youth leadership team. We also sold products from regional farmers including fresh milk, yogurt and ice cream, pasture-raised meats and locally grown fruits.

Folks who couldn't make it on Saturdays were able to meet us on Wednesdays, when we set up the Market right outside the Red Hook Senior Center. This wonderful partnership ensures that those unable to walk to the Farm still have access to the healthiest foods available.



Top: PS 15 students harvest salad with Caroline Loomis. Above: Shanti Nagel enjoys a day at market. At Left: Not to be out done, Elizabeth celebrates, with the rest of us during our Harvest Festival

Building a Movement

While expanding our Farm and food-based activities, Added Value is strengthening our core youth leadership programs. This summer fifteen teenagers joined us for our Summer Intensive Learning Program. Over a seven-week period, they explored issues of health and wellness, and learned about economic development and environmental stewardship, while honing their leadership skills and growing food for the community. Their work was supported by our dedicated staff, two college interns, and our senior youth leaders.

Under the stewardship of Phil Shipman, our media literacy and desktop publishing program, Digital Horizons, has flourished. This year, we were again asked to document the Rooted In Community conference. During this three-day national gathering of youth working in food and agriculture, our team of trained young journalists shot photos, conducted interviews and wrote articles. Every evening, they worked late into the night laying out a newspaper, so that attendees could read about the previous day's accomplishments. Our team finished the conference with a Power Point slide show with highlights of the conference including their visit to Capital Hill. After receiving training from community activists and professional political consultants, teens descended to Capital Hill for an afternoon of lobbying. Denia, a third-year youth leader, met with Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton's staff. She spoke with them about the sustainable agriculture and how we could solve the health crisis in our communities by increasing access to locally grown, nutritious foods.

Emboldened by the experience, Denia is hoping to invite the Senator to the Farm in the coming season. After providing a tour, Denia would like to sit the Senator down to a plate of freshly harvested salad and tell her "every community should have a farm like this one and by working together we can make that dream a reality."

Bringing it all Home While we continue to send our staff and teens to trainings and conferences throughout the country, we are also hosting more trainings on the Farm. This year visitors came from Holland and Germany, Kenya and China to learn about our efforts.

Over the summer, we assembled a group of teenagers from the Bronx, undergraduates from Queens College and volunteers to work with our youth on a community food assessment. Over the course of three days we ventured into every store in the neighborhood that sells food. Using a five-page survey we tallied fresh foods, candy, beverages and advertising. The teens' findings were not surprising. Ninety-five percent of all stores surveyed sell alcoholic beverages, 80% sell candy (almost always from the register) and only 40% sell fruits and vegetables. Of the stores surveyed, fewer than 20% of them stocked more than eight types of produce, and the majority of what was available was graded "poor quality" by our team. Armed with new information, our youth developed a map and Power Point presentation that they are using to educate and organize their peers and neighbors to act and make Red Hook a stronger, healthier, more vibrant community.

Together We Are Sowing the Seeds of Change

Over the past five years, Added Value has grown from two unpaid staff to be a team of five. Once we traveled hours to a community garden, now we are building a 21st century Farm right here in Red Hook. We began working exclusively with teenagers but saw the transformative power of urban agriculture. Today we educate children and their families, teachers and program directors. Now, as we look into the future we see more and more people who, like Tevon, are working to improve themselves and their community. We are encountering more young people like Eugene, who want to make a difference but don't quite know how. Together with you, our friends, family, and colleagues, we can teach people the skills they need, we can nurture these hopes and aspirations and we can grow a more just and sustainable world.



Top: Christina preparing a page for the Rooted In Community Newsletter while the team drives to Virginia
Above: Denia, after a day of lobbying in Washington, DC
Left: The Peoples Grocery, from Oakland, CA visits the Farm
Below: counting the sweets sold at our only grocery
Bottom: Ian teaching 1st grader about composting

