

SOUTH BAY FOOD JUSTICE WORKSHOP

March 6, 2020 8:30 am to 1 pm, Santa Clara University

Workshop objectives:

1. Build relationships among groups whose work touches on food justice, food security, and institutional food systems change.
2. Learn about each other's work and develop a shared understanding of needs and opportunities
3. Identify high-priority areas for collaboration and resource sharing in the short (1-2 years) and medium (3-5 years) term.
4. Inspire action for a South Bay food justice coalition.

8:30 – 8:40 am Welcome and Introduction

Chris Bacon, Santa Clara University

8:40 – 9:15 am Situating Food Justice in the South Bay

Maria Catalán, Catalan Family Farm

Carlo Francisco-Catimbang, La Mesa Verde

9:15 – 9:55 am Panel Discussion: Building Regional Collaboratives for Food Justice

Jacky Rivera, La Mesa Verde

Jahi Chappell, Food First

Justin Watkins, San Mateo County Food System Alliance

Lucy Diekmann, UC Cooperative Extension

9:55 – 10:35 am Small Group Breakout Discussions

10:35 – 10:50 am Coffee Break and Poster Session

10:55 – 11:35 am Closing Conversation

Emily Schwing, Veggielution

Andy Ollove, Fresh Approach

11:35 – 11:50 am Lunch

11:50 am – 12:50 pm Keynote Presentation “Beginning to End Hunger: Lessons on Food Security, Transformation, and Solidarity from Brazil”

Jahi Chappell, Food First

1:00 pm Optional tour of Santa Clara University’s Forge Garden

Katharine Rondthaler Kreig, Forge Garden Manager



Executive summary

Fresh Approach, La Mesa Verde, Valle Verde, and Veggielution, recently united with Santa Clara University's Environmental Justice and the Common Good Initiative and University of California Cooperative Extension to organize a Food Justice in the South Bay workshop at SCU on March 6, 2020. The workshop brought together 38 South Bay organizations and university units working in food justice, farming, food security, and institutional food systems for a half-day of learning, dialogue, and exploration of potential partnerships to leverage collective impact. Participants shared their work and learned from food justice leaders in the wider Bay Area.

To ground the concept of food justice in local experiences, a regional farmer and an urban gardener shared their work. Maria Catalán reflected on the strengths and challenges of her experience as a female Latinx immigrant farmer in the *lucha* or struggle to bring healthy food to her family's table, share it with others, care for the land, and provide a space for her children, grandchildren and community members to connect to the land. Carlo Francisco-Catimbang described La Mesa Verde's food justice work, which combines hands-on training in food production with community advocacy to increase access to agricultural land, affordable housing, and affordable healthy food. Both speakers highlighted community-driven collective action to address the challenges facing small-scale rural farmers and food insecure urban residents.

A second panel presented three regional collaborations to change food systems. Jacky Rivera (La Mesa Verde) described the process of organizing a local campaign that led San Jose to adopt Urban Agriculture Incentive Zones or UAIZs. Justin Watkins (San Mateo County Food System Alliance) spoke about a regional food system collaborative that has had successes in local environmental policy and farm-to-school programs, and recently made food justice a focal area. Jahi Chappell (Food First) described key elements of how government and civil society came together in a Brazilian city to develop a community food security strategy that was ultimately scaled up to a national zero hunger campaign. Panelists highlighted the importance of local community-based coalitions organizing regionally to build power, and then using specific state or federal policies as levers to secure rights and increase access to food and land.

After these two panels, participants broke up into small groups to discuss topics ranging from diverse seedlings to institutions and food system change. Themes that emerged from these groups' varied conversations can be arranged into three categories:

Community Engagement

- The importance of cultural relevance and language accessibility for food access work
- The need to get input from the community for food and ag programs

Organizational Alliances

- Improve networking among groups with similar missions (e.g., urban ag, food access)
- Create tools (e.g., listservs, websites, surveys, other) for resource and information sharing

Policy/Systems Works

- Leverage stronger voices in collaborations for policy/structural change
- Strengthen institutional food purchasing programs that address food security, while supporting more sustainable practices and farmers/farmworkers.
- Link housing and food security

Jahi Chappell, author of the recent book *Beginning to End Hunger*, gave the keynote address (hit [this link](#) and start @ min 8:30 to watch it online) Chappell discussed recent research and future prospects for improving food systems, drawing on his study in Belo Horizonte, Brazil. He highlighted significant improvements in basic food security indicators, which were linked to the region's collaborative approach to food security. He also shared lessons for how university researchers can collaborate productively and respectfully with communities.

Several takeaways emerged from the workshop. First, to the best of our knowledge **this was the first coalition-building-oriented food justice workshop held in the South Bay** and there is interest in continuing this collaboration. Second, the panels and keynote remind us that **a grassroots base is fundamental for supporting systemic reform**. Third, **there is ample interest in collaborating to share knowledge and resources** (e.g., seedlings, evaluations guides, etc.) through networked activity that **values the many culturally-rooted practices of diverse residents and professions**.

While our initial goal was to identify priority areas for collaboration and resource sharing in the short (1-2 years) and medium (3-5 years) term, over the past six weeks we've all had to reorient our work and lives in response to COVID-19. This period has highlighted the deep racial and economic inequities in our society, the essential role of farm and food system workers, and the important and innovative work that can be carried out at the regional level. The workshop organizing committee has continued to meet biweekly to share our organizations' emergency response work, learn from collaborators like Second Harvest of Silicon Valley, identify community and our own organizational needs, and combine short term relief with efforts to craft a longer-term response that is rooted equity. We invite you to join us in this conversation and resource sharing.

Event organizers and sponsors

Organizing committee members and organizations

- La Mesa Verde (Jacky Rivera, Fernando Fernandez Levia)
- Fresh Approach (Andy Ollove, Isabel Medina)
- Santa Clara University's Environmental Justice and Common Good Initiative (Chris Bacon, Maria Eugenia Flores Gomez)
- University of California Cooperative Extension (Lucy Diekmann)
- Valley Verde (Raul Lozano, Claudia Damiani)
- Veggielution (Emily Schwing)

Members of the organizing committee invested staff time and creativity to make this workshop happen.

Complementary financial support was also provided by:

- Santa Clara University, Environmental Justice and Common Good Initiative
- University of California Cooperative Extension
- SCU's Center for Food Innovation & Entrepreneurship
- SCU's Department of Environmental Studies and Sciences