2024 IMPACT REPORT

rooted
Growing Community. Together.

517 East Badger Road, Madison, WI 53713
rootedwi.org

Rooted's Impact

Rooted holds inclusive, accessible community events at our neighborhood sites.

Rooted provides our communities with fresh, locally grown produce.

Rooted offers urban agriculture education to students of all ages.

Rooted expands land access, especially for HMoob and other BIPOC growers.

> Rooted is one of the few places where we can experience the commons. Common ground where people of all walks of life: socioeconomic, racial, ethnic all can come together and participate in caring for this land, and by extension supporting each other. The commons is the heart of our democracy, it's where people of diverse backgrounds come together and create something that is revitalizing, sustaining, and nurturing, it creates our collective well-being. We need more spaces like it.
>
> -Jeffery Lewis, Community Gardener and Volunteer

Dear Friends,

We're excited to share Rooted's 2024 Impact Report—and to celebrate the ways your support has nourished our work across food, land, and learning. Our impact is personal. This year, we're sharing stories of the individuals who make up our community: neighbors, students, gardeners, CSA members, volunteers, and partners who believe in equitable and accessible food for all. These are the stories that define our reach and demonstrate the true meaning of community.

As new Co-Executive Directors, we approached this year as a time of reflection, growth, and realignment. We see Rooted as an ecosystem—interconnected, evolving, and rooted in the needs of our community. Thanks to your generosity, we've made big strides: from expanding land access, especially for HMoob and other BIPOC growers, to growing and distributing over 65,000 pounds of fresh, locally grown produce to nearby neighborhood centers.

In 2024, we focused on maximizing impact with a lean team and limited resources. With just 14 full-time staff and more than 5,000 community members engaged across our programs, every dollar mattered. Our staff stretched resources with creativity and heart—and we're proud to share that nearly 80% of our expenses went directly to programming.

One of the most joyful highlights of the year was watching Badger Rock Middle School students from our office windows exploring the giant mulch pile, finding bugs, making salad with freshly grown greens, and tapping maple trees in the sunshine. These moments speak to the safe, welcoming spaces we aim to cultivate—places where young people feel a sense of wonder, belonging, and possibility.

Looking ahead, 2025 brings big challenges: federal funding cuts and rising operational costs mean we'll be relying more than ever on local support to keep this work going. But we remain hopeful—because of you.

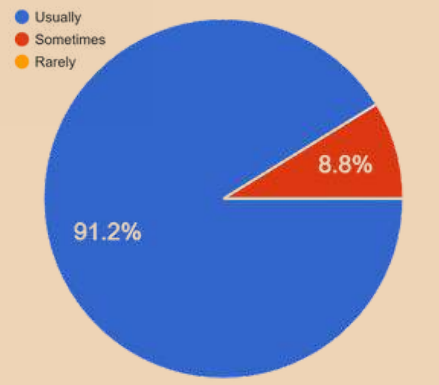
With gratitude,

Hedi L. Rudd

Hedi Rudd
Co-Executive Director

VJ Hughes

Ginny Hughes
Co-Executive Director



91% of middle school students reported feeling emotionally safe in Rooted garden classes.

Community in our Roots

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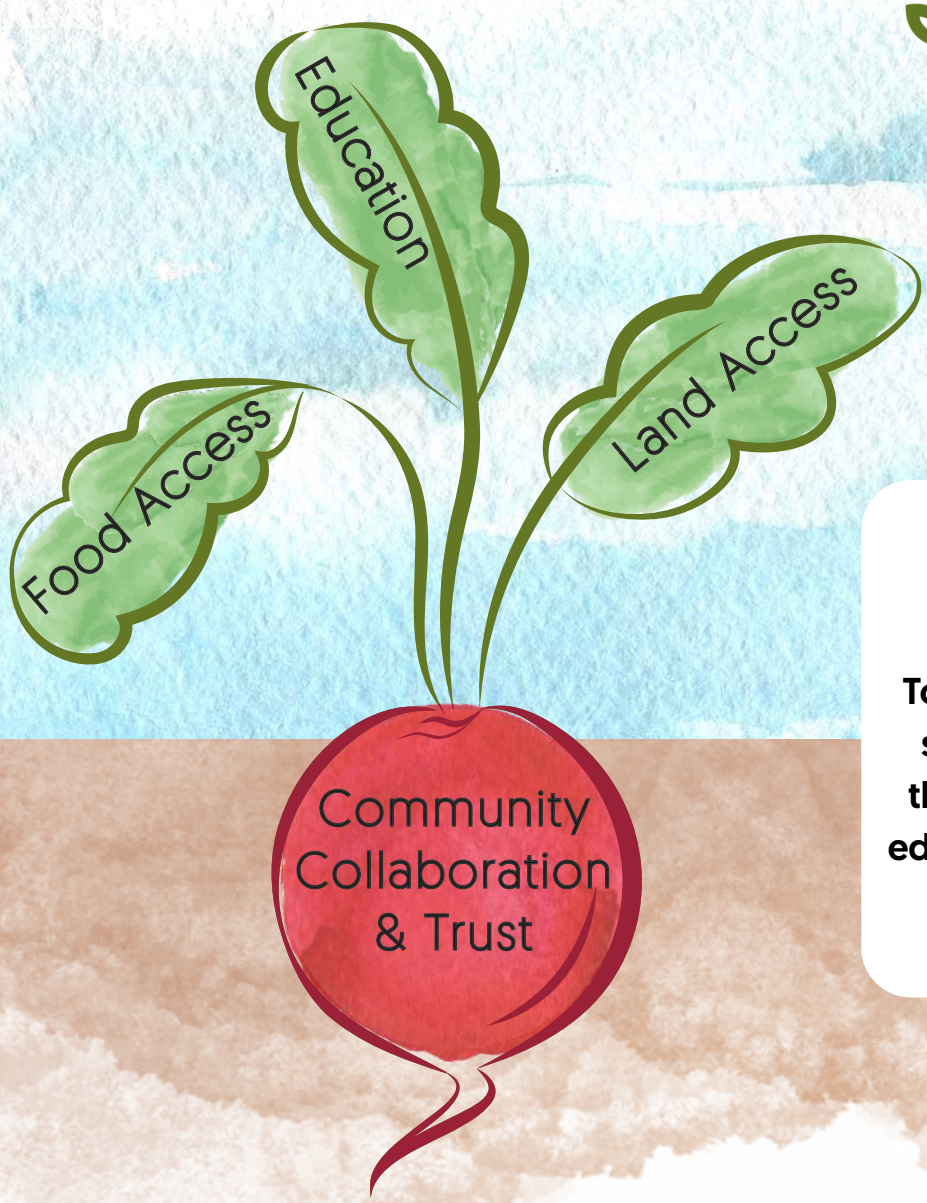

Our Mission:

To grow a community-led, sustainable food system through urban agriculture education, food production, and land access.

"I've been involved with Troy Gardens since 1997; I consider it the most important work of my life. a shared open place with a focus on inclusion and education, belongs in every neighborhood of the world. When we achieve that, we achieve peace, wellness, and ecological stability. it's a model for the only kind of future I can imagine without despair."
-Marge Pitts, Community Gardener and Troy Founder

Rooted in Food

Healthy communities depend on one critical foundation: access to fresh, nourishing food. Many in Dane County face rising food insecurity, and food pantries struggle to provide people with fresh produce.

140
Families Served with Free Food

65,000
Pounds of Produce Distributed at Low- to No-Cost

175
Average Attendees at Free Community Dinners

"I just love for them to come and share their vegetables with Packer [Townhouses]. Rooted coming here means that I spend less at the grocery store, it means that I get organic, it means that everything is fresh. It means a lot having them."
-Hynetia, resident at Packer Townhouses

"I'm a youth employee at Rooted, what I appreciate the most about working here is being able to provide for the community around the south side of Madison. It is a very food insecure area where we are able to grow fresh organic produce and sell it during our markets at a more affordable cost"
-Diego Miranda Naxi, 17 year old Rooted in Urban Agriculture Youth Employee

In 2024, Rooted tackled critical food access gaps across Madison and Dane County, delivering vital programs that provide fresh, locally grown produce to those who need it most, while empowering families to grow food for themselves. Rooted's urban agriculture programs aren't just about food; they are about resilience.

Rooted in Learning

An increasing number of children don't know where their food comes from, and many students have never had the chance to learn to cultivate, nurture, and reap the rewards of growing a garden.

"Rooted has been such an asset, especially with students who are neurodiverse who are so often told "no" during their day: "no you can't touch that," "no you can't put that in your mouth," When they come to the farm this whole new world is opened up for them: "yes I can taste that" "yes I can smell that" "yes I can touch that." It's really cool to see learning come alive for kids. There's no other educational opportunity that connects them to the land in the way that Rooted does."
-Sally Leaf, 3rd grade teacher at Kennedy Elementary

"I have never gardened before, I did not know, but I really like to garden. This is great! I am going to tell my whole family! We can garden together!"
-4th grade student at Mendota Elementary

14
School Gardens Supported

5,254
Youth Attending Programming

3,503
Adults Attending Programming

85
Free Workshops Offered In-Person or Virtually

In 2024, we provided learning opportunities in schools, gardens, neighborhood centers and justice programs. Rooted empowers youth to become farmers, stewards, and advocates, immersing them in the sensory experience of growing, harvesting, and exploring diverse food cultures. Whether young or old, our participants developed essential skills, built confidence, and gained the experience needed to become community leaders.

rooted
Growing Community. Together.
Collaborations rooted in
food, land and learning

En el jardín de Badger Rock, yo recuerdo mi infancia, y a la misma vez, cultivar frutas y verduras es aporte de mi economía y me ayuda bastante a conectar de mis raíces. Normalmente cuando estoy en el jardín, yo traigo a mis hijos conmigo, y ellos miran el proceso de se crean las plantas. Les gusta saber que están comiendo cosas frescas que cultivan.

-Tomás Hernández Martínez,
Badger Rock community gardener

Rooted in Land

For generations, BIPOC growers have tended the land in Wisconsin. Yet our agricultural landscape is dominated by 99% white ownership due to systemic exclusion and skyrocketing land prices.

2,000
Families with Access to a Community Garden

6
Emerging Farmer Members of the Troy Farm Collaborative

16 acres
of Preserved Green Space and Prairie

79 acres
of Community Gardens

"This is our fourth year working with Rooted. They give us an opportunity to grow crops that people in our African and Caribbean communities can't get fresh. The infrastructure here and the land gives us the opportunity to be very productive. The ecosystem is great, no chemicals, no pesticides."
-Sei and Melissa, Troy Farm Collaborative members

"Since 1995 we've been involved in this beautiful 35 acres of land on Troy Drive. The natural areas like the prairie and other natural areas on site are vitally important to the north side and vitally important to the environment."
-Maury Smith, Troy Prairie Steward

At Rooted we believe that everyone deserves access to land to grow, explore, and enjoy. In 2024 we connected people to growing space through our sites and programs across Madison and Dane County, especially for those facing insurmountable barriers to purchase or rent. We also defended vital green spaces and prairie lands within Madison, preserving them from development.

Rooted in Community

Studies show that social isolation and loneliness are linked to disease and illness. We are facing an urgent need for connection within our communities, and to cultivate health and wellness through practices such as gardening, exercise, nutrition and cultural learning.

"Volunteering recharges my batteries after almost every visit, and always leaves me hopeful for the future. I am 69 and have been volunteering since 2014. And my personal satisfaction of volunteering at the farm has remained strong."
-Alan Crossley, Troy Farm volunteer

"We have an exercise class for African American elders that is held on a weekly basis. Most people are on a fixed income, so I wanted to share healthy food with them, food they might not eat regularly due to cost. I see a garden as a way to be hospitable to people and invite them in. Other women have plots as well, and they share their food in the community and bring it back to the exercise class. I see Badger Rock as so meaningful in so many ways."
-Dr. Fabu Carter, Badger Rock community member and gardener

1,058
Volunteers

9,851
Volunteer Hours

3-80+
Age of Rooted Program Participants

80
Collaborating Partner Organizations

Rooted offers intergenerational community activities and connections with nature, and provides gathering spaces and events to connect and build community. These include Badger Rock Neighborhood Center, three community-focused urban farms, community gardens throughout Dane County, and programming at neighborhood centers across the city.

2025: Hope and Urgency at Rooted

As we look towards the remainder of 2025, Rooted holds both unwavering hope and a deep, urgent concern.

Our Hope Springs From:

Witnessing children, hands deep in soil, bright with curiosity, learning the magic of growing their own food. This is the future we're cultivating.

Community engagement: bringing diverse faces around shared values and the fundamental right to healthy food at vibrant, inclusive events.

Proudly serving thousands of children and adults across Dane County, providing tangible spaces for growth, connection, and nourishment.

But a Shadow of Concern Looms:

USDA grants, the lifeblood of many of our programs, are being cancelled leaving our work uncertain. This jeopardizes our ability to serve those who need us most.

Our young people face unprecedented anxieties: climate change, rising ICE concerns, and a precarious future. We must provide them with stability and hope.

The dismantling of vital diversity, inclusion, and equity programs threatens the very fabric of our community. We cannot stand by as progress is reversed.

Rooted: A Vital Lifeline...

Without Rooted, 95 acres of Dane County land would lose stewardship.

Without Rooted, thousands of children would be denied the transformative experience of learning where their food comes from.

Without Badger Rock Neighborhood Center, a hub of community connection, would lose its heartbeat.

Without Troy Farm, a sanctuary for diverse growers would fall silent.

The Urgency of Now: Your Impact Matters

We need you.

As community members, your support ensures that equitable, inclusive urban agriculture thrives, not just for today, but for generations to come.

Your gift is a direct investment in our youth, the health of our neighbors, the sustainability of our ecosystem, and the vitality of our community.

Please, give generously today. Help us bridge the gap and secure the future of Rooted. Every dollar makes a difference.

TOGETHER, WE CAN CULTIVATE HOPE AND BUILD A THRIVING COMMUNITY FOR ALL.

Ways to Give to Rooted:

- Online
- Check
- Donate Stocks
- Donor Advised Fund
- Pledge a Bequest

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Our Partners:

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AmeriCorps Wisconsin
Farm to School Program
Ancestral Resonance
Antojitos Quetzal
Badger Rock Middle School
Briarpatch Youth Services
Brilliant Beginnings
Central Rivers Farmshed
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Dane Buy Local
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La Follette High School
Lakeview Elementary
Lapham-Marquette Schools
Leopold Elementary
Lincoln Elementary
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Madison Gas and Electric
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Mendota Elementary
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Moving Mountains, Inc.
Madison School and Community Recreation (MSCR)
Neighborhood House
Northport Community Learning Center
Northside Early Childhood Zone
Northside Farmers Market
Northside Planning Council
Northside Wellness Partnership
Nuestro Mundo School
Occupy Madison
One City
Operation Fresh Start
Packers Community Learning Center
Preschool of the Arts
REAP Food Group
Rodrigo Carapia Art
R'oujie Wellness
Serve Boldly Madison
Schenk Elementary School
Shabazz High School
Sherman Church
Southside Elementary School
Summit Credit Union
Sweets by Sweet
The Growing Tree
The Nelson Institute
The Wisconsin Alzheimer's Disease Research Center
Tortillas Los Angeles
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Troy Composting Project
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UW-Madison Division of Extension
Van Hise Elementary School
Vera Court Neighborhood Center
Venus Inspires
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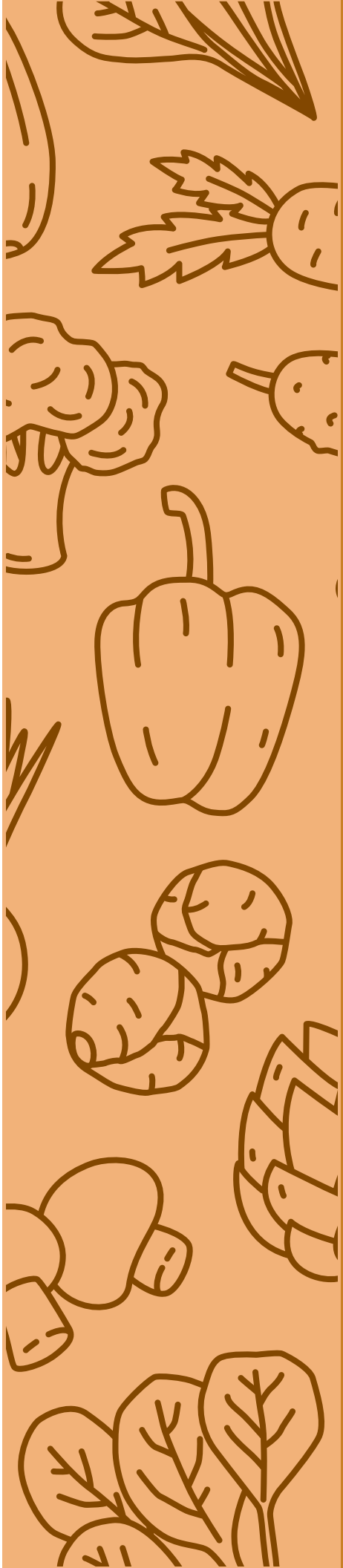
Wisconsin Department of Corrections
Wisconsin Historical Society
Wisconsin Linen Revival
Woodland Montessori
WORT 89.9FM
Young Moms of Madison
Youth Empowerment Initiatives



Donate to Rooted.