

# 2025 IMPACT REPORT



# Rooted's Values



## Authenticity

We cultivate meaningful community relationships.



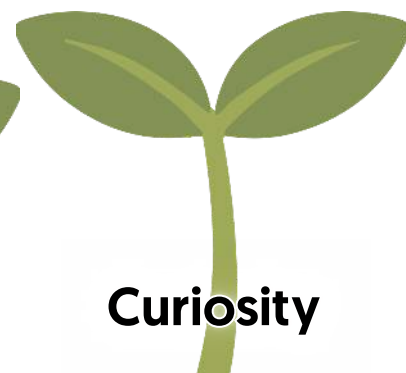
## Respect

We value the land and each other; we acknowledge the past and work toward a better future.



## Resilience

We adapt with care to the evolving needs of people and nature.



## Curiosity

We are all both learners and teachers.



“What brings me joy about Rooted is the sense of community that Rooted is building and has built. The connections that I’ve made with other gardeners has been immensely gratifying. The community connections and also the empowerment that Rooted has given to young people and to chefs, the fact that so many brilliant chefs and now up-and-coming farmers are coming from Rooted is a wonderful asset to our community. Especially the younger people, I hope that gardening gives them a sense of food sovereignty and food justice. I think a lot of people are not familiar with the power that growing our own food and knowing where our food comes from really gives to us.”

-Shadayra Kilfoy-Flores, community gardener & organizer





Dear Rooted Community,

As we reflect on the past year and our mission of growing community, we are grateful to everyone who supported our efforts in 2025. From harvesting thousands of pounds of produce, to the recipes made by youth in our education programs, to shared meals and community dinners, we continue to build meaningful connections through the land we steward and the gardens we tend. It's these moments that help us and those we serve to feel rooted; providing sustenance of the body and nourishment for our collective minds and hearts.

We watched with wonder as our staff planted seeds not only in the ground, but in the minds of our students and their families. For the first time food grown by Rooted and our partners found its way onto the plates of youth in the Monona and Oregon School Districts. We expanded our Gardener-in-Residence program to even more Madison schools, and we were honored to be recognized by the City of Fitchburg for our dedication to building stronger, more connected communities. We see every day how learning to grow, harvest, and prepare food builds resilience, and it's this resilience that leads to lasting community-led food security.



Our work is rooted in authentic relationships, respect for the land, curiosity as we learn from each other, and the evolving needs of people and our environment. After 25 years of this work, we are honored to witness youth move from education programs into community gardens and return as volunteers. We see this same longevity in the relationships we have built with gardeners, supporters, and partners; it's an ecosystem that makes sense in a world that is ever-changing.

Community-led food security can be a reality when we all work together and focus on what is right in front of us: sharing land, resources, cultural traditions, and intergenerational learning.

Thank you for being part of our ecosystem. We are grateful you are on this journey of long-lasting food security with us as we continue through 2026 and for decades to come.

In Community,

*Hedi L. Rudd*

Hedi Rudd  
Co-Executive Director

*Ginny Hughes*

Ginny Hughes  
Co-Executive Director



# A Ground-Up Solution for Food Security

Food security has reached a critical juncture. While 2025's SNAP reductions highlighted the fragility of our systems, the root cause remains a decades-old paradox: farmers want to feed their neighbors, but no system exists to get local food into local hands. For many, grocery stores are "Food Mirages"—places where fresh produce is physically present but financially invisible. With organic items costing **53% more** than conventional alternatives, healthy eating has become a privilege of wealth rather than a basic right.

## ROOTED'S IMPACT



Rooted provides our communities with fresh, locally grown produce.



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



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



Rooted offers urban agriculture education to students of all ages.

Rooted addresses this systemic gap through food production, access, and education. We provide the land and infrastructure for community gardens and emerging farmers, ensuring local harvests reach Madison's homes and schools. By selling produce through our CSA, trading it for volunteer hours, and donating it to neighborhood centers, we make fresh food accessible regardless of income. Finally, our school programs empower over **5,000 children annually**, teaching them to grow and cook their own food. This foundation gives the next generation the agency to sustain themselves and their environment for years to come.

# Land Access



Community gardens aren't just about vegetables, they're about social infrastructure. Over 2,000 gardening family members eat fresh produce grown in our gardens at a fraction of the grocery store cost. When a gardener shares their harvest with a neighbor, they are building a resilient, self-

reliant local network. The shared benefits of community gardening go beyond growing food and into collaborative networks of neighbors supporting each other and the planet.

**4,220**

plots in the Community Gardens Network

**\$50**

average cost of a community garden plot

**9,500**

plants donated to community gardeners

**“Being able to have a community garden gives people an opportunity to eat fresh, which is so important to their health. It’s a way for them to connect around the garden, share with other people in the community. It connects us in such a wonderful way.”**

**-Dr. Fabu Carter, community gardener**

**38**

Emerging Farmers at Rooted locations

**1,130**

pounds of produce sold to schools

**13**

farmers on waiting lists for land access

Some community gardeners set their sights on entrepreneurship and a larger operation beyond a few garden plots. That’s why Rooted manages three collaborative farming hubs for emerging farmers who plan to sell their produce at farm markets, local stores, restaurants, or schools. There is a myth that new generations do not want to farm, but we find that every new opening for farm land is filled before we can spread the word. The barrier for small farmers is the high cost of land and infrastructure. When land and tools are accessible, farmers are ready and willing to grow food for their communities.



# Food Production



Growing food takes time, planning and input. It is not an emergency solution, rather a long-lasting investment in land, tended by people working together to feed neighbors. Rooted has a multifaceted food production solution for local community members across Madison. Troy Farm is our largest food growing hub, distributing 25,876 pounds of food each year to CSA shares, neighborhood centers, schools, and restaurants. Rooted also grows food at both the Madison School Farm and the Badger Rock Urban Farm, sharing a combined 8,880 pounds of food with community members through the Goodman Neighborhood Center pantry and the Badger Rock Neighborhood Center pantry and low-cost farm stand.

**“Rooted is a very special place for so many people including myself, there was times I didn’t have food and Rooted helped me with food to feed me and my family.” -Anonymous**

**18,210**

pounds of donated or low-cost food

**236**

people served through Purpose Grown Project

**25**

years of growing food at Troy Farm



Rooted’s Purpose Grown Project serves hundreds of families across the city, not as a quick fix, but a community investment. Neighborhood centers receive requested produce, and their youth attend a weekly garden class learning how to grow and cook this very same food.

In 2025 Rooted expanded our sales to schools, both from our own urban farms and from our emerging farmer collaboratives. We partnered with Monona Grove School District and delivered over 1,130 pounds of healthy food to be used in their fall lunch program.





“I like to be in nature and see how a plant grows and enjoy eating fresh food straight off the farm. I've learned what happens to plants because we visit every week. I've seen the seeds be planted and grow and grow into seedlings. Then they grow more and become a tiny plant. Then even more to become big plants. And then they get harvested or they die, and all the seeds fall out from the fruit or vegetable or whatever is growing. Once the seeds fall out, they do it again and grow more of their own plants. I feel happy we get to be in nature and be healthy.”

-Abeo Jack, MMSD student (age 7)



# Urban Agriculture Education



Rooted's education programs span 14 Madison public schools and serve hundreds of regional kids through field trips and service trips. We believe incorporating hands-in-the-dirt education is key to

successful academic engagement and whole child learning. Inviting children to learn about food and how it relates to health, culture, and their community is a great way to tie environmental, social, and science education into a familiar setting that builds upon social emotional learning and leadership.

## 5,320

students  
served in 2025

## 100

varieties of carbon-  
sequestering plants  
planted in our  
student food forest

## 13

school gardens  
supported by Rooted  
garden educators

**“I like the different cultures’ foods we can experience and taste and make. I like the different activities we can do in the garden, like chickens, plant things, dig things, and what we make in the garden we can also make in the kitchen” -Jazaya, MMSD student (age 13)**

Teaching children about healthy whole foods is an important step in building community-wide, long-term food security. Helping them build skills to grow and cook their own food, understand local systems, and solve food access problems for their community helps pave the way for a better, more food secure future.



“The joy of the young people who are in Rooted classes, who are in Rooted’s after school program: it brings me joy seeing that they are learning here something that, as far as I know, they are not learning anywhere else in the greater community.

That brings me a lot of joy, seeing that connection and the belonging the young people have with a program like Rooted.”

-Joey Rosas, BRMS principal



## How do we help create a bridge between youth food-based education and long-term food security?

Thoughtful, experience-driven **curriculum** that ties real-life agricultural knowledge and traditions with social-emotional learning to ground students in the cultural and practical importance of food.

Our teachers and curriculum creators are farmers, educators, parents and environmentalists. Our programs are informed by **curiosity**, and help students engage and step into leadership by honoring their own lived experiences and heritage in the garden and kitchen.

We foster deep community roots by **collaborating** with teachers, leaders, parents, community chefs, and local growers to make food education a collective responsibility.

Through **intergenerational** learning and relationships, we transform early curiosity into lifelong agency, ensuring food security persists across every stage of a student's life.



# 2026: Community Investment in Long-Term Food Solutions

As we look towards the remainder of 2026, we are leaning into longevity. Rooted's founding organizations are turning 25 and 30 this year, meaning Rooted has the rare ability to lean on 55 years of experience to feed and grow healthy communities.

We have a **multi-faceted solution for food access:**

- Grow food locally, sustainably, and with the community in mind.
- Give kids and families opportunities to grow their own food and cook healthy meals.
- Cultivate a new generation of young leaders who share knowledge and resources, now and for decades to come.

We continue to adapt, evolve, and refine our programs to be more aligned with community, school, and grower needs. With the help of local supporters, we are expanding our weekly fresh food distribution for the program's 7th year, with plans to expand again in 2027. That means more families with a steady delivery of fresh, organic, locally grown produce.



This work takes dedication, intentional long-term relationships, financial funding, and community trust.

**We need YOU** to help take this work into the next 25 years. Because you believe in local systems and solutions, **you can make a difference** for your neighbors, for local schools, and for farmers who are ready to get their hands dirty and grow healthy food.

# How can you help Rooted grow?

**Activate:** Monthly donations and volunteering.  
**Champion:** Multi-year gifts and foundational support.  
**Collaborate:** Corporate investment and sponsorship.  
**Vision:** Investing in local food as your legacy.

## What does locally grown food mean to you?

Invest in a Dane County that grows its own food, shares it widely with those who need it most, and believes in the change our children will make in the future.

### Ways to Give to Rooted:

Online

Check

Donate  
Stocks

Donor  
Advised  
Fund

Pledge  
a  
Bequest

What is your most meaningful contribution? We are dreamers and doers. If you have an idea for a partnership, a specialized skill to share, or a unique way to invest, we want to hear it. Reach out today and help Rooted grow a food-secure future that belongs to everyone.



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## Our 2025 Partners:

### Impact Partners

AmeriCorps Wisconsin Farm to School Program  
Badger Rock Middle School  
Dane County Parks  
Extension Dane County  
FairShare CSA Coalition  
Groundswell Conservancy  
Healthy Food For All  
Kennedy Heights Community Center  
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Madison Metropolitan School District

Madison School & Community Recreation  
Northport Community Learning Center  
Northside Planning Council  
Northside Wellness Partnership  
Packers Community Learning Center  
REAP Food Group  
Second Harvest  
Sherman Church  
Vera Court Neighborhood Center  
Wisconsin Department of Corrections

### Food System Partners

Bandit Tacos  
FarmHer Greens  
Gib's Bar  
Goodman Community Center  
Grampa's Pizza  
Hy-Vee Grocery  
Jenifer Street Market  
L'Etoile  
Lola's  
Mad Cat Pet Supply  
Madame Chu  
Metcalf's Market

Monona Grove School District  
Northport Community Learning Center  
Nutzy Mutz & Crazy Catz  
Occupy Madison  
Oregon School District  
Packers Community Learning Center  
Purple Cow Compost  
TradeRoots  
Troy Composting Project  
Yen's Flowers  
40 Acre Farms

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Bodwéwadmi Ktëgan (Potawatomi Farm)  
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Yee Circle Farm  
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**Donate to Rooted:**

