

VISION FOR GREENFIELD, 2050

By Abrah Jordan Dresdale

After decades and decades of trial and error, hunger and obesity, struggle and innovation, the people of Greenfield triumphed. It was the year 2050, and everyone, everyone had enough food to eat. How did this come to be, you might ask? Not only did the people change their ways of growing food, preparing food, and cycling nutrients from food, but more notably, there was a shift in the hearts, minds, and world-views of the people.

The words 'local' and 'sustainable' slowly left the people's lexicons. They were living and eating only sustainably and locally, so there was no need to differentiate. Likewise, being food secure was no longer a primary goal, since the people went beyond food security and became food sovereign.

From the students at the schools, to the employees at the hospital, to the farmers living in the meadows, everyone decided how, where, and what food was grown and eaten. People were no longer considered 'consumers,' passively munching along at the end of the value-chain, but rather they had all become active decision makers and producers within their food system. Young ones no longer asked, "does salsa grow on trees?" or "does milk comes from a cow?" The songs the children learned and sang were about their place, and its rich agrarian, innovative history. At a young age, everybody learned how to capture their own rainwater for drinking and irrigation, how to grow their own vegetables and raise their own meat, how to process and preserve fruits and dairy, how to hunt and how to fish, for the fish returned to the streams to spawn once again and the elk and moose multiplied in abundance.

Everyone knew the story of how their people triumphed in the face of peak oil, economic collapse, and environmental crisis. The shift arrived when people stopped seeing the world as outside themselves, as 'other.' The people were humbled and listened to the fierce warnings of Mother Nature. They wisened up and decided to study the ways of their ancestors and the ways of the people indigenous to the land on which they now were living.

No longer was there a psychological divide between areas rural, urban, and agricultural. Land was seen as land, all of it prospectively bountiful and inherently important. Food was grown on marginal land. Conventional farming gained companions as people learned about perennial agriculture, agroforestry, forest farming, rotational grazing of livestock, and bio-intensive cultivation. The town of Greenfield became a town in a farm rather than a few farms in a town. The people were swimming in food just as they were swimming in the Green River, and the food was flowing all year round.

And how did they arrive in such a foodscape, rich with community and renewed natural resources? They first acknowledged they needed to reflect on their own hurts, and

notice how their hurts propelled them to turn around and perpetrate more hurt. Harm towards the land, harm towards marginalized members of their community, harm towards themselves and their loved ones. The people started waking up and taking responsibility for their hurts and their own healing, and then realizing their power to become creators of their collective destiny.

And following this first wave of healing and cultural repair, they started getting active. They received a Community Food Project grant from the USDA; they formed a Franklin County Food Council (FC2) which guided new efforts and new ways of thinking about food; they reached for the Greenfield Food Study compiled by Greenfield Community College students and began to implement recommended changes to strengthen their food system; School children became involved and demanded fresh food in their cafeterias and micro-farms on the sprawling lawns of their school grounds; Doctors proscribed whole grains, fermented foods, and pasture-raised meat as preventative medicine; Corner stores became cornucopias of fruit and eggs and herbal teas; GCC became a revitalized grange where people could come learn how to homestead, start farms, and form value-added food businesses; the Franklin County Cooperative or the 'Co-op' expanded to offer multiple cooperative enterprises such as human-powered food distribution, downtown aquaculture for production of fish and aquatic plants, roof top garden installation, and decentralized compost collection. CISA invested in a permanent marketplace for the new daily farmer's market to be housed, where people could shop and farmers could vend, rain or shine, June or December. Greening Greenfield partnered with the City's Street Tree Committee and planted fruit and nut trees on the medians to offer public produce for all. The Town Planning Board changed zoning to allow for chickens, turkeys, and goats, oh my. The Mayor offered new tax incentives for residents to transform their chemical and fossil-fuel guzzling lawns into victory gardens to show their allegiance to Greenfield's prosperous future. Just Roots expanded their operations to downtown where their new urban farm allowed people without cars to learn farming skills and gain access to fresh food. Big Y and Stop and Shop became cooperatively owned and the worker-owners, who were invested in their community, made a contract to source food from within a 50-mile radius and eliminate all packaging from their products sold in the store. In order to be resilient in the face of drought, Regenerative Design Group invested in a keyline plow and veggie-oil-run earth-moving equipment, and installed ponds on hillsides and managed landscapes to infiltrate water. The Community Development Corporation acquired new properties up and down Wells street and expanded cold storage using passive cooling methods. The CDC continued to offer business advice to start ups who were committed to using healthy food produced in the Connecticut River Valley. And food was shipped and traded up and down the valley and into the hills using waterways and electric train transport.

And in this green jewel of a town, Greenfield saw the bees returning from Colony Collapse Disorder, the children and their parents recovering from diabetes and heart conditions, and the flourishing of new businesses, non-profits, and

community projects that cut across race, class, and political divides. People now lived in a beautiful, walkable, bikeable, publically transportable community where food, water, fresh air, and a culture of respect and reciprocity abounded. The people of Greenfield remembered the hard times, the scary times when they thought they didn't have a chance. And they will continue to live to tell about how they transformed a broken world into a new Eden.