

# Manifest Love



## How it started....

In March 2020, the Executive Directors of four SouthCoast non-profit organizations - Maria Rosario of NorthStar Learning Centers, Desa Van Laarhoven of Round the Bend Farm (RTB), Bernadette Souza of Youth Opportunities Unlimited (Y.O.U.), and Gail Fortes of YWCA Southeastern Massachusetts - collectively decided on ways they could best support the local community during the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic. With the pandemic exacerbating the inequities in our food system, the partners concluded that addressing food insecurity would make an immediate and meaningful impact on the community.

The partners arranged for RTB to grow, source, glean, and pack free, nutritious, farm-fresh shares for roughly 125 New Bedford families from May-December; Northstar Learning Centers would pick up the shares at RTB twice weekly and deliver them to each partner organization, who would then lovingly and respectfully distribute them to their clients; Y.O.U. would provide cooking classes for the students whose families received shares through their program; and the YWCA team would meticulously translate accompanying weekly educational materials into Spanish and Portuguese for accessibility. Not only do each of these organizations continue to play an integral role in sustaining the Manifest Love project, but they each go above and beyond to craft new, creative and accessible ways to inspire healthy living.

## The Partners:



NorthStar LC's mission is to help young people overcome poverty, discrimination, educational disadvantage, violence, and other adversity through learning essential competencies and hopefulness with which they can transform their lives and communities.

Round the Bend Farm a Center for Restorative Community is a working farm and educational non-profit. They are a living laboratory that cultivates, educates, and empowers people of all ages. They are devoted to the global paradigm shift toward hope and abundance by valuing diversity, modeling nature, and redefining wealth.



Sacred Birthing Village is the bridge to eliminating the racial challenges affecting our local BIPOC and other mothers, fathers, and babies

Youth Opportunities Unlimited taps into the wonder and curiosity of youth to seek adventure and learn naturally.



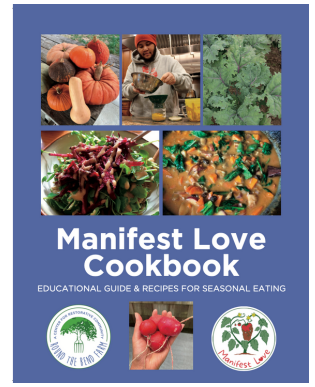
YWCA Southeastern Massachusetts is dedicated to eliminating racism, empowering women and promoting peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all.

The project engages the community in learning about nutritious food. It's not just being 'handed out'... Participants receive recipes which are translated into Portuguese and Spanish. Healthy eating affects more than just physical health - it affects the spirit, emotional health, and mental health... This food is grown with love."

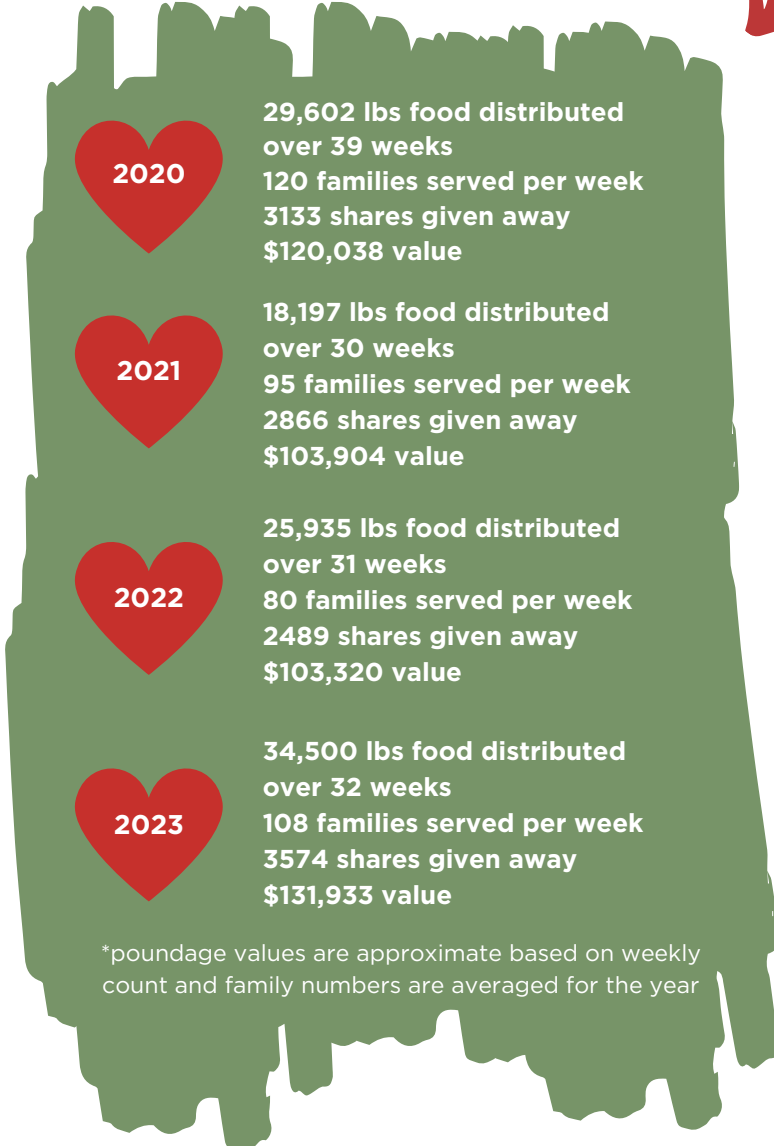
-Gail Fortes, YWCA SE MA

# How it's going...

Manifest Love was very well received during its first season in 2020 and has continued each subsequent year with expansions to the many facets of the program. In 2022 Manifest Love built on its educational offerings with the 101-page Manifest Love Cookbook, a collection of delicious recipes and educational information designed to help participants utilize all their farm shares. Each participant now receives a hard copy of the book, while a free, digital copy is available on RTB's website for any individual or organization to utilize. In 2023, Manifest Love welcomed its 5th partner, Sacred Birthing Village, based in New Bedford. Regardless of the year, Manifest Love evolves and adapts to the needs of the community, with collaboration and feedback from partners and participants central to its success.



## Manifest Love Program Stat Estimates\* 2020-2023 (4 Seasons & Counting!)



\*poundage values are approximate based on weekly count and family numbers are averaged for the year



In addition to the continuation of free, weekly food shares, the inclusion of the Manifest Love Food Truck will allow the program to stay versatile and adapt to community needs now and in the future. The Manifest Love Food Truck is a valuable educational resource that empowers members of the community to learn healthy recipes and incorporate more local, seasonal vegetables into their diets. The Manifest Love Food Truck will provide educational workshops and cooking demonstrations, and accept SNAP/HIP as a mobile market, selling produce and goods from RTB and other local farms.



Since its inception, Manifest Love has given away approximately 108,234 pounds of food, an approximate \$459,195 value.

This is an authentic partnership - not just in words, but in action.”

- Maria Rosario,  
Northstar Learning Center