PRESS RELEASE

Acterra Partners with Bay Area Chefs to Highlight Plant-Based Cooking and Climate Solutions

A diverse slate of chefs including the legendary Martin Yan, food sovereignty proponent Crystal Wahpepah, and culinary ambassador Fetelwork Tefferi collaborate to inspire consumers to fight climate change with their dietary choices

PALO ALTO, CA – October 18, 2021 – In a virtual event on November 7, 2021 from 4:00 to 5:00 pm Pacific Time, Acterra is bringing together chefs from all across the Bay Area to showcase their favorite plant-based dishes for the upcoming holidays. The live demonstrations will be intermixed with a Q&A session, and audience members can submit their questions directly via the online portal. All-electric induction cooktops will be used in the demonstrations, as a healthier clean-energy alternative to gas cooking.

Nonprofit Acterra is hoping to drive awareness around how Americans’ current levels of meat and dairy consumption threaten environmental and human health. A diet rich in plant foods helps avert the sizeable greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions resulting from animal agriculture (which also contributes to water pollution, antibiotic resistance, and water resource depletion). The 2021 IPCC report found that up to 70% of global methane emissions from farms is caused by cattle and other livestock.

“Acterra recognizes that broad policy shifts to cut greenhouse gas emissions must go hand in hand with actions at the local level,” said Lauren Weston, Executive Director, Acterra. “Our collective work to address the climate crisis will not be successful without progress on both these levers. Even though individuals can’t shoulder responsibility for the vast majority of U.S. emissions, each of us can still find agency in doing the right thing by ourselves and our communities. Acterra’s role is to support people in solution-finding and taking positive actions through simple, everyday choices.”

“Eating less meat and choosing locally grown produce, as well as how we cook our meals plays a significant role in reducing our personal greenhouse gas emissions,” said Jack Broadbent, executive officer of the Bay Area Air District. “Induction cooking instead of gas reduces GHG’s as well as indoor air pollution, and is a better cooking option.”

“Bringing people together around the table, especially over the holidays, opens up new conversations about how we fuel our bodies each day, and how small incremental changes add up to a much greater impact. We hope our virtual cooking event will show people how fun and creative plant-based cooking can be, with the benefits of better health and a cleaner environment,” said Robbie Brown, manager of Acterra’s Healthy Plate, Healthy Planet program and event organizer.

In addition to live cooking demonstrations, attendees will receive practical tips and tricks on how to embrace a more plant-forward diet, as well as the environmental and home comfort benefits of induction cooking.
Meet the Chefs:

- **Crystal Wahpepah** is an enrolled member of the Kickapoo nation of Oklahoma and the proprietor of Wahpepah’s Kitchen, an Oakland-based successful catering business turned restaurant (as of October 2021). In 2016, she was the first Indigenous Chef to compete in the Food Network’s show, *Chopped*. Winner of many accolades as a proponent of cultural foodways, champion of food sovereignty, and uplifter of indigenous practices, she received the Indigenous Artist Activist Award and has been inducted into the Native American Almanac. She got her start as a member of La Cocina, a San Francisco nonprofit supportive of women, immigrants, and people of color in the culinary industry. She has also served as a chef mentor in Native American Food Sovereignty Alliance’s Food and Culinary program.

- **Martin Yan** is one of the most widely recognized chefs on American television today. Culinary Master Chef Yan achieved stardom as a pioneer of Chinese/Asian cooking and proprietor of the acclaimed M.Y. China restaurant in San Francisco. His tv show, *The Yan Can Cook Show*, has won two consecutive James Beard Awards for Best in Food Journalism and is one of the continuous longest-running cooking programs in the world, educating and entertaining generations of viewers since its origins in Foster City, CA, in 1978. A prolific author with 30 best-selling titles, Yan oversees a brand spanning gourmet and casual dining venues in China and the U.S.; cookware, grocery items, and other merchandising lines; and in-demand motivational speaking and culinary consulting.

- **Fetlework Tefferi** is the owner/general manager at Café Colucci on Telegraph Ave in North Oakland, a storied Bay Area institution since 1991. Café Colucci has received over 25 awards including a Michelin Guide recommendation in 2012/13. Named by Foursquare in 2021 as one of the top 15 best places for vegetarian food in Oakland, Café Colucci’s reputation is cemented for being family-owned, dedicated to authentic Ethiopian flavors and cooking techniques, and a second home to many Ethiopians in the Bay Area. In 2009, Tefferi founded Brundo Spice Company, which supplies all of Café Colucci’s spices, in the central Ethiopian town of Modjo. The nearly all-female-run company employs 39 women in Ethiopia who grind and blend spices grown by local farmers.

- **Kenny Annis** is a vegan chef and current owner of Sky Cafe, in South San Francisco, which celebrates the Bay Area’s diversity of cultures in its unique presentation of international vegan cuisine. Previously he built and co-owned four other Bay Area restaurants (Disco Volante, Nick’s Kitchen, Nick’s on Grand, and Nick’s on Mission) before adapting Nick’s on Grand to its new concept as Sky Cafe.

- **Shruti Boddu** is the founder of Shru’s Kitchen, a cruelty-free and plant-based home bakery based in San Mateo. Shruti draws inspiration from having spent her early years split between India, the US and Singapore, and is known for her minimalist aesthetic and her reliance on simple, organic, and sustainably sourced ingredients.

- **Alicia Casas** - is an educator, vegan baker, and community activist. Alicia has been an educator in San José for 14 years, teaching in K-12 public institutions as well as higher education. She is the owner and head baker of the South Bay’s all-vegan Jaguar Baker, which opened in 2017 and became well known for its Mexican pan dulce and other panadería treats. The bakery is currently temporarily closed, but awaiting a future return to the South Bay.

This event is free to attend and will take place on the online platform Hopin. For those that are able to, we ask that you consider making a donation as well. Please visit [www.acterra.org/holiday-refresh](http://www.acterra.org/holiday-refresh) to register for the event.

Thank you to the event sponsor, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District. The Bay Area Air Quality Management District aims to create a healthy breathing environment for every Bay Area resident while protecting and improving public health, air quality, and the global climate. The Air District supports education, incentives and partnerships to help establish the Bay Area as a leading area for greenhouse gas emissions reductions. For more information on their work, please visit: [www.baaqmd.gov](http://www.baaqmd.gov)

About Acterra: Acterra’s Healthy Plate, Healthy Planet program helps Bay Area eaters understand the connections between our everyday food choices, our personal health, and our shared climate, focusing on plant-rich diets, reducing food waste, and effecting community-led climate solutions. For more information, please visit: [www.acterra.org](http://www.acterra.org)