Collaboratively growing, preparing, and sharing food promotes health and wellbeing and increases a community's ownership of their local food system. When people cook and eat together around a common table, they discover their shared destiny. They improve their overall relationship with food and work to support and connect each other to available community resources.

**OUR THEORY**

- Annual American healthcare costs are almost 4 trillion dollars; it is estimated that 10% of those costs are now diabetes related.
- Community gardening increases nutrition knowledge, fruit and vegetable consumption, physical activity, and gardening ownership.
- Collaborative community cooking is shown to increase healthy home cooking and reduce obesity, and intake of fast food.

**WHAT WE KNOW**

- Instill greater confidence in individuals' culinary skills and use of those skills at home
- Encourage communities to take greater control of their local green space for gardening and growing food
- Educate participants to impact their dietary knowledge, food choices, and ecological impact
- Increase consumption of and desire for healthy whole foods, especially produce
- Foster a greater sense of social support, deepened relationships, and improved sense of self worth
- Broaden access to opportunities for community activity, ownership, and advocacy

**WHAT WE AIM TO ACHIEVE**

- Education on Food Wellness Systems
  - Engage community volunteers in weeding, seeding, harvesting, and composting
  - Educate on gardening skills and sustainable, regenerative agriculture
  - Explore culinary skills, new food traditions, and scratch cooking through shared meals
  - Promote deep conversational sharing over meals
  - Lead wellness activities to encourage mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual health
  - Educates members on community resources, spiritual growth, and civic action

**Feast - Collaborative Meals**

A collaborative meal that brings a diverse group around a common table to explore food traditions and whole food culinary skills.

**Grow - Urban Farm**

An urban hoop house vegetable farm that grows thousands of pounds of organic produce to feed and educate the community.

**WHAT WE DO ABOUT IT**

**Our Feast and Farm Programs Prioritize...**

**Education on Food Wellness Systems**

- Engage community volunteers in weeding, seeding, harvesting, and composting
- Educate on gardening skills and sustainable, regenerative agriculture
- Explore culinary skills, new food traditions, and scratch cooking through shared meals

**Fostering Community & Stability**

- Increase consumption of and desire for healthy whole foods, especially produce
- Foster a greater sense of social support, deepened relationships, and improved sense of self worth
- Broaden access to opportunities for community activity, ownership, and advocacy

**WHAT WE AIM TO ACHIEVE**

- 90% of all meal participants create recipes and try foods they have never eaten before
- 65% of our meal leadership committee are neighborhood residents
- 100% of meal participants say they feel more connected to their community
- Volunteers annually grow and distribute over 11,000 lbs. of organic produce

“I was anxious when everyone arrived because we were all so different. Soon we were all chopping vegetables as a team and I realized no one cared that I was a white woman from the suburbs. I cannot imagine another environment that can break down barriers faster.”

~Marie Greco

**THE BIGGER CHANGE**

Greater food system ownership and an increased sense of food agency will transform the current food geography of Milwaukee. Families will be empowered to cook meals at home; and individuals will find the resources and support needed to grow as leaders in their neighborhood.

**SOURCES**