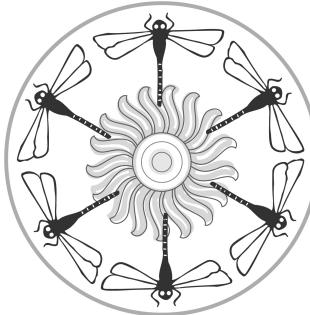


# Seeds of Solidarity Education Center

*Grow Food Everywhere*™



## Backgrounder

Seeds of Solidarity Education Center Inc. is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization based on a 30-acre farm in rural Orange, Massachusetts. The site is transformed from a long-barren landscape in one of the state's most impoverished regions to an abundant farm with no-till gardens, greenhouses, energy-efficient buildings, and solar panels. It is a vibrant model of sustainable food and energy, plus host to cutting-edge youth and community programs.

## Philosophy

Seeds of Solidarity envisions, creates, and sustains initiatives that foster health, food justice, and energy resiliency. Working closely with the land and community, Seeds of Solidarity practices their mission to 'awaken the power of youth, schools, and families to Grow Food Everywhere to transform hunger to health, and create resilient lives and communities.' Efforts are focused locally, with practices and teachings shared nationally and internationally.

## History

Seeds of Solidarity was co-founded by Ricky Baruc and Deb Habib. Baruc and Habib met in 1984 while working at the New Alchemy Institute, a small international organization whose purpose was to "design human-scale, low polluting alternatives to super technology and to design and test intensive food growing methods." In 1996, they initiated Seeds of Solidarity Farm and Education Center. No-till sustainable agriculture and energy efficient practices regularly attract farmers, ecologists, media, and those seeking real techniques to mitigate climate change and promote fresh food and health for all.



*Ricky Baruc & Deb Habib*

Seeds of Solidarity's work is rooted in the needs of the North Quabbin region where they are based. The economically depressed region is rife with high rates of poverty, hunger, and health issues like obesity and Type 2 diabetes. Over nearly two decades, Seeds of Solidarity's programs and initiatives have brought over 50 raised-bed gardens to local schools, health and community centers, low-income families, and childcare centers; educated and empowered over 300 youth through the SOL (Seeds of Leadership) Garden program; and touched the lives of thousands through countless workshops, presentations, and the renowned North Quabbin Garlic and Arts Festival. Seeds of Solidarity has positioned itself as a respected resource for community revitalization.

## Programs

Seeds of Solidarity's programs and initiatives are made possible through public and private grants, and contributions from individual supporters.

**SOL (Seeds of Leadership) Garden** inspires service and activism among teens as they use their hearts, minds, and bodies to cultivate food and a hopeful future. Since the program's inception in 1998, over 300 SOL Garden participants, most low-income and underemployed, have grown and donated thousands of pounds of vegetables, constructed their own solar greenhouse, and helped plant gardens across the community.



*2013 SOL Garden Crew*

**Grow Food Everywhere for Health and Justice** was launched in 2011. Raised bed gardens are created to provide healthy food for people in need, and recipients receive education around gardening, cooking, and nutrition. By 2016, Seeds of Solidarity plans to have created 100 raised bed gardens at homes, family daycares, health centers, libraries, and local businesses.

**Workshops and events** include school garden workshops, Solidarity Saturday tours, a North Quabbin Food Forum that unites residents from diverse economic backgrounds in skill-sharing and local resilience, and the North Quabbin Garlic & Arts Festival. The Festival supports over 100 local farmers and artists, attracting 10,000 attendees each year; it has become an economic and cultural engine for the region, as well as a model of revitalization and environmental sustainability.

## Recognitions, Publications, & Media

### *Recognitions:*

- Northeast Environmental Education Association: Best Program Award (2007)
- MassRecycle Institution Recycler Winner: North Quabbin Garlic & Arts Festival (2007)
- CISA (Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture): Local Hero Award (2009)
- River Valley Market: Co-Op Hero Award for a Non-Profit in the Pioneer Valley (2012)
- Pioneer Valley Transition Town Film Festival: 1st Place Award (2012)
- Greenfield Recorder: 12 Inspirational Woman Leaders - Deb Habib (2012)

### *A Sample of Publications & Media:*

- Seeds of Solidarity Newsletter archives <http://seedsofsolidarity.org/archived-newsletters/>
- Cultivating Healthy Communities Through School Gardens  
<http://seedsofsolidarity.files.wordpress.com/2012/04/schoolgardenmanual.pdf>
- Seeds of Solidarity YouTube video playlist  
<http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLAvUrG3Fv7Xic4D7KRQmyllK4J4Mr1kOr>

*These and other Solidarity's educational resources can be accessed for free at  
[www.seedsofsolidarity.org](http://www.seedsofsolidarity.org)*

### **What are people saying about Seeds of Solidarity?**

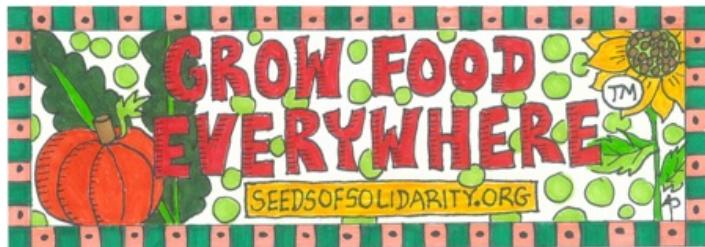
*A few of the many comments from program participants, partners, and supporters:*

"I know I have the skill set from SOL Garden to help my community grow food, and I plan to do so in the future ... I am emotionally and physically more healthy thanks to the things I've learned and SOL itself ... the kind of family that I have grown into at SOL Garden is unlike any other. I feel at home, and loved." - SOL Garden youth program leaders

"Our schools have grown towards that goal of 'community schools' where local organizations, parents and guardians, and citizens can become part of the village raising children. I point towards Seeds of Solidarity as 'that organization' that has allowed us to create new paradigms of collaboration and cooperation." - Dr. Paul Burnim, Retired Superintendent

"When you do a program and it's successful, then people trust you in the community. I think that's the big thing with Seeds [of Solidarity] ... They do realistic things to help move those pieces along." - Kirby Lecy, North Quabbin Community Coalition

"Inspiring and invigorating, your landscape ingrained in my mind a positive perspective for future human settlements. Thank you for sharing your time and teachings." - Eric H., visitor



### **Contact Us**

**Call or e-mail us to learn more, and for articles or speaking engagements:**

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Join our monthly e-newsletter and blog, watch our videos, enjoy our newsletters and publications, and support a vibrant food and energy future at [www.seedsofsolidarity.org](http://www.seedsofsolidarity.org)