

BFI Foodscape Mapping Project – Oral Histories
Category: Student Group Stories

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Transcription of excerpts of an interview conducted with

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Organizational affiliation: Student Organic Garden Association

Padda:

I think what has kept me here at the garden, one, it is a beautiful place to be, but then a bigger part of it is understanding the politics of food in America, and abroad, and internationally. In Oakland where there's going to be one Safeway grocery store for 30,000 people that creates a food desert. And for me it's kind of shocking that people get put into these situations where they don't have enough food to eat, but when we have massive grocery stores throwing away all this food... Why do we have these communities that don't have food at all, but these communities that do have food? And all of these different problems that I feel like I need to help people understand and find solutions for.

There is just a really supportive group of people here at Berkeley, that really just keep you driven to continue fighting for whatever your cause is, whether it is agricultural reform, or trying to incorporate more garden learning into different types of classes, or anything. But I definitely feel like our garden is a place where we can educate people on what food insecurity is and how you can individually and as a group fight food insecurity. Because we are only a quarter of an acre, we are limited by just the scale of our operation, but whatever we harvest in the garden that isn't taken home by community members is sent directly to the food pantry.

There is just something in me that watching a little plant grow-- I've always loved plants and just watching it grow really just invokes something inside of me, that I really like this space and watching nature. And that encouraged me to continue being in this garden. Since this garden primarily serves a very young college population, it's important that that population gets access to healthy foods and doesn't feel like they have to skip meals and that they don't have to rely on some sort of corporate mechanism to get their food. And that they can come back to this garden and learn and take back part of the food system and reclaim it as their

own so that they don't have to rely on just this kind of machine that excludes other populations and only cares about profit.

I definitely feel comfortable teaching these practices and learning how to get connected to the food that you are going to eat. And what it means to live in an industrial, capitalist agricultural society has really helped me understand what this place in Berkeley, this garden, really means to a lot of people and what agriculture and food mean overall.