

PRESS RELEASE

Real Food Real Stories Changes Its Name to Food Culture Collective to Reflect Focus on Culture Change & Collaborative Approach

Founded in 2014 as a Storytelling Community, the Project Has Evolved into a Collective Approach to Using Story, Art & Experiences to Democratize Food Culture

BERKELEY (June 28, 2022) – Today **Real Food Real Stories** (RFRS), the Bay-Area based food culture change nonprofit known for its storytelling gatherings, announced that it is changing its name to **Food Culture (FC) Collective**. The name change speaks to an evolution in the organization’s breadth and purpose, building upon its story-based work to center deep narrative shifts for cultural transformation. In addition, the new name seeks to honor the relationships at the heart of the organization and its focus on resourcing, stewarding, amplifying, and contributing to the collective work of transforming food culture.

“Food Culture Collective is a community united in the belief that we *all* have a role to play in transforming food culture,” explains the Food Culture Collective staff in an email announcing the new name on June 28th. “Food Culture Collective isn’t an organization so much as a collective project, accountable to the flourishing of a community and vision for the future that reaches far beyond any one of us.”

“Cultures shape systems, so we seek to shift the narratives, values, and power dynamics that shape how we grow, cook, and gather around food,” Food Culture Collective Director, Jovida Ross, explains. “For so many of the food workers, organizers, culture-bearers, and creatives we work with, ‘fixing the food system’ doesn’t begin to describe their full impact – their visionary, liberatory, and world-shaping work often sits at the intersections of food and criminal justice reform, immigration and labor rights, queer advocacy, and land rematriation, just to name a few.”

Food Culture Collective names itself as part of a collective effort to assert the power of food work as cultural work, citing a long lineage of vital food cultural work that has been under-resourced, suppressed, and overshadowed, particularly that of BIPOC, queer and trans, immigrant, women, and otherwise marginalized food cultural workers and organizers. “We’re so trained to think about food as a system of production and consumption, but food does so much more than physically sustain us – food cultural workers remind us that food culture is a powerful organizing force, nourishing the systems, values, narratives, and everyday behaviors that define our world,” says Food Culture Collective Narrative Strategist, Shizue Roche Adachi. “Food and story have always been foundational to culture and identity from the micro to the macro scale. When we transform food culture, we transform everything.”

RFRS first signaled a shift in its orientation in August 2021 with the announcement of an updated program footprint and mission, positioning itself as an arts-integrated culture change organization working to democratize food culture. Expanding beyond their

storytelling events, they now offer a slate of programs, including their popular *Around the Table* conversation series, and recently launched cultural Immersions, a virtual practice community that invites participants to “immerse themselves” in the food culture they “long for” through storytelling and creative exercises.

Founded in 2014, RFRS became well known in the Bay Area for its live storytelling gatherings, bringing together food workers, makers, and more to share their personal stories and foster connection among food communities beyond a transactional experience. Like so many nonprofits, COVID-19 required RFRS to make some quick logistical adjustments. But Ross, who joined the staff in February of 2020, noted that on a deeper level the context of the pandemic invited RFRS to reflect on the lasting impacts of its work and role in food and culture ecosystems. “We have always been a place where people converge to reclaim and reimagine our stories of food, land, and belonging, and the values that shape these relationships,” Ross says. “The multiple, overlapping, escalating crises that define this global moment only clarified the need for us to be explicit about our role in growing narrative and cultural power to supplant cultures that normalize extraction and exploitation.”

Food Culture Collective has a number of new and emerging programs and creative projects on the horizon. They will be launching a new membership program next month and will also be announcing a new audio fellowship this summer in partnership with HEAL Food Alliance. In the meantime, you can visit their recently revamped website at foodculture.org.

Food Culture Collective’s visual identity was created by Belin Liu, with creative direction by Shizue Roche Adachi. Food Culture Collective is a fiscally sponsored project of Earth Island Institute.

[Visit foodculture.org](http://foodculture.org) »

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About Food Culture Collective

Food Culture Collective (formerly Real Food Real Stories) **is a community of play democratizing food culture to feed our collective healing and transformation.** We are food workers, culture-bearers, creatives, and co-conspirators who dare to dream of a future where our economies and cultures are shaped by care for the land, waters, and people to which we belong.

Our community is united by a belief that food is culture and foundational to nourishing the systems, values, narratives, and everyday behaviors that shape our world. We use story, art, and experiences to disrupt a culture of extraction and exploitation and collectively reclaim and reimagine our relationships to food. Join us at foodculture.org