



## Coastal Roots Farm

“We’re a community farm created by the community, for the community,” says Sharyn Goodson, director of philanthropic strategy at Coastal Roots Farm, a nonprofit community farm and education center in Encinitas, California. “To us, that means we have a very high priority of being accessible to everyone, no matter their resources or demographics.” Coastal Roots Farm integrates sustainable agriculture and ancient Jewish practices to support their food justice mission: growing food in a way that’s responsible, healthy, and fair for everyone.

This mission means that more than half of what’s grown on the farm’s 15 acres is donated into the charitable food system. Sara Telzer, social enterprise manager, explains that since the farm began in 2014, “We have provided the North County of San Diego with nearly 90,000 pounds of fresh, organic produce, approximately 60,000 pounds of which have been donated at no cost to the food insecure.”

“We strive to address a real need to meet our community members where they are,” Telzer continues, “especially when food-insecure individuals may lack the time and transportation necessary to travel to our farm or to other areas where organic produce is more accessible.” In partnership with Jewish Family Service and Helping Hand Worldwide, Coastal Roots Farm runs mobile farm stands at Camp Pendleton for Marine Corps families struggling to afford San Diego’s cost of living and at Vista Community Clinic, a high-quality health clinic that provides services to patients on a sliding scale, based on their ability to pay. The farm also offers a produce delivery program at no cost to San Diego residents who are survivors of the Holocaust and donates additional produce to food banks and other local social service agencies.

The principles of food justice are present at the farm, as well, through a pay-what-you-can farm stand. “There’s no membership structure here,” Goodson explains. At the on-site farm stand, there is a suggested donation price, but the customer discreetly pays what they can. “Dignity is very important to us,” adds Goodson. Launched in 2016, the pay-

what-you-can farm stand was Coastal Roots Farm’s first social enterprise initiative. “We didn’t know how the community would react to our model, but we have been incredibly pleased to see how well it has been embraced and to see our community going above and beyond to support each other,” shares Telzer. “Many people pay over our suggested donation in order to support those who are not able to pay for their food.”

A Jewish community farm with a strong message of welcoming all, Coastal Roots Farm celebrates ancient Jewish traditions that connect people to community, food, the land, and social justice. “Ultimately,” says Telzer, “we hope to become a valued community asset where not only are we a source of food for all, but a place to grow together as a community.” There are many opportunities for all ages to find ways to engage with the farm, including workshops, community events, Jewish Agricultural festivals, volunteering, and school field trips, which are all also on a pay-what-you-can system.

“Community farms embody an incredible opportunity to bring agriculture and food back to the forefront of our lives,” Telzer continues, “and to exemplify the significance of food and land in building strong, thriving, more self-reliant communities and a more healthy and sustainable environment.”

Learn more about Coastal Roots Farm at [www.coastalrootsfarm.org](http://www.coastalrootsfarm.org).

## Planting the Seeds of Change

The exemplary work of these CCOF-certified members deepens our understanding of how organic farming can serve a community. More importantly, they are creating a blueprint for others to follow and are inspiring farms nationwide to structure their work around a philanthropic pursuit.

Organic farming is about growing community through the act of growing food, and the farms that are profiled here are planting the seeds of social change that have the ability to affect a nationwide community of organic farmers.