

A Culture of Cooperation

NOTE FROM THE CHAIR

RFC Treasurer Sue Strothers recently shared a newspaper article from the Los Angeles Times entitled “As Santa Ana gentrification hits their pocketbooks, immigrants turn to co-ops to help make ends meet.” Anyone who read the title but skipped the article might come away with the impression that co-operative businesses are crutches; they help people get on their feet but are no longer needed once that goal is accomplished. Or to put it in a more flattering way, co-operative enterprises are engines driving social justice but are not real businesses. Again, the implication is that they merely fill a need that normal for-profit business cannot or will not.

In the case of the Santa Ana residents, formation of workers co-operatives is rooted in traditional society, or what the article calls “a culture of collaboration”. However, Victor Narro of the UCLA Labor Center warns that the new formal organizations springing up in Santa Ana and elsewhere need to adopt the techniques of running a busi-

ness if they are to succeed in a larger society that is highly (and sometimes rampantly) individualistic and profit-driven. I believe that the Riverside Food Cooperative has made impressive progress in adopting good business practices but without losing sight of a larger purpose. Some of us describe that purpose loosely as “making Riverside a better place”. Apolonio Cortes of the co-operative Tierra y Dignidad is more eloquent about his expectations:

He hopes the co-op will allow him one day to be his own boss, but it also represents something deeper. It allows him to “rescue some of the values and traditions of my country,” he said. “It’s that sense of community and belonging and family.”

Like Apolonio, we want our business to represent the best in us.



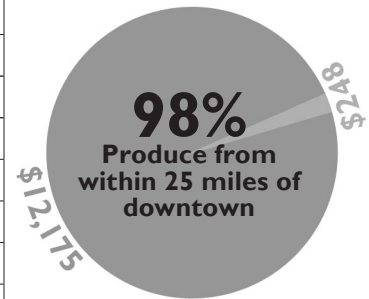
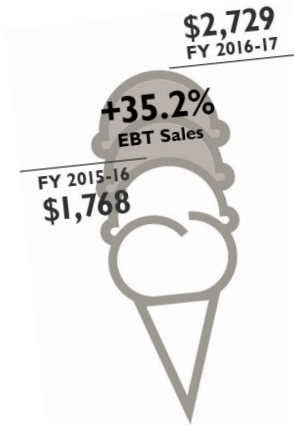
Sala Ponnoch, Chair of Riverside Food Cooperative, Inc.

**RIVERSIDE
FOOD COOP INC.
ANNUAL
MEMBERS
REPORT 2016
2017**



Profit and Loss (May 2016 to April 2017)

Description	Total
Income	
Crop Box	\$14,708.00
EBT Sales of Product Income—HZ	2,728.67
Reimbursement	30,157.27
Sales	5,914.33
Sales of Product Income	408.25
Sales of Product Income—HZ	2,128.82
Shipping, Delivery Income	221.00
Unapplied Cash Payment Income	0.00
Total Income	\$56,266.34
Cost of Goods Sold	
Cost of Goods Sold	5,719.09
Cost of Labor—COS	627.13
Cost of Good Sold—HZ	6,704.50
Purchases—COS	794.25
Total Cost of Goods Sold	\$13,844.97
Gross Profit	\$42,421.37
Expenses	
Advertising	302.07
Advertising—HZ	622.45
Bank Charges	1,119.09
Charitable Contributions	720.17
Bank Fees—HZ	179.17
Cost of Labor—HZ	12,943.82
Equipment—HZ	1,201.45
Freight and Delivery—HZ	484.40
Insurance—HZ	2,686.80
Licenses—HZ	863.98
Payroll Taxes—HZ	3,506.64
Supplies and Materials—HZ	41.88
Insurance	215.00



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May 7, 2016
Al Centro returns for HEAL Zone Phase II.



May 11, 2016
Al Centro employee Ana speaking at the HEAL Zone Phase I celebration.



May 15, 2016
Fox Farm is part of a UC Riverside farm tour.



May 17, 2017
Nick attends the Spring HEAL Zone Learning Community in Pasadena.



May 19, 2016
Nick attends the Grid Alternatives Anniversary Party.

We support all organizations that instill local independence in our community.

May 24, 2016
RFC donates to Riverside Food Systems Alliance.

Profit and Loss (May 2016 to April 2017)

Description	Total
Insurance—Disability	440.00
Legal and Professional Fees	510.00
Office Expense	368.08
Office Expenses (deleted)	101.88
Other General and Admin Expenses	40.12
Purchases—COS—HZ	1,369.61
Refund Crop Box	783.00
Shipping and Delivery Expense	924.95
Stationery and Printing	176.32
Supplies	62.31
Taxes and Licenses	1,185.33
Total Expenses	\$30,848.52
Net Operating Income	\$11,572.85
Other Income	
Other Ordinary Income	00.00
Total Other Income	\$00.00
Other Expenses	
Refund Member Share	3,954.00
Total Other Expenses	\$3,954.00
Net Other Income	(-3,954.00)
Net Income	\$7,618.85

\$49,363
FY 2015-16



FY 2016-17
\$30,849

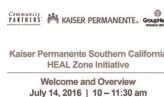


Sue and Scott attend a Kiva U.S. Trustee webinar



Jun 15, 2016
Sue attends the Slow Money SoCal gathering in Santa Ana.

Jun 21, 2016
With a Fox Farm cooler we cordially part with FSA to be more independent.



Jul 14, 2016
Sue attends the HEAL 101 webinar.



Jul 17, 2016
3rd Annual Members Meeting.



Jul 23, 2016
Sala and Nick attend the Annual Ward 5 Constituents BBQ.



Aug 13, 2016
Al Centro sets up for National Night Out at Lincoln Park.

Value in numbers...

Cooperation. A collective effort to create something, together, of value. The higher the number of Members, the less individual effort. In 2016-2017 we also pursued the value of collective community effort itself—the value, as you will see, in our deep-rooted network.

“Roots.” An easy metaphor for growth. But we understand roots can only acquire the basic building blocks for self-development from a sustaining environment. Growth is only as strong as the community we grow in. The value in numbers is only part of our story.

We continue work on major Eastside HEAL Zone projects with respect for the most defining of our Seven Cooperative Principles, Concern for Community.



The Eastside is a disadvantaged neighborhood with poor access to fresh food. By consistently bringing into the community local produce at affordable prices, RFC builds identity and trust relationships with often overlooked neighbors. We make our customers immediately aware that our Al Centro mini-Produce Stand offers naturally grown local fruits and vegetables of a quality that would fetch up to double the price at other chain retail outlets.

A 35% increase from last year in EBT sales is proof of our expanding reach.

Riverside Food Co-op defines “local” in far more rigorous terms than chain grocers. Matching last year, 98% of our produce purchasing is from within 25 miles of downtown Riverside. This is an astounding, quite conscious achievement. The RFC is a locally-owned community-based business in which you invest so your money stays in the local economy. In turn, we support and invest in local independent farms and businesses for a stronger Riverside. Not a stronger Bakersfield, not a stronger Fresno.

If we find it necessary to grow this 25-mile radius, it’s for good reason. Scott is now manager of the local USDA funded food hub, or distribution facility, operating out of RUSD Nutrition Services. A potentially expanded sourcing radius invites more regional farms to meet a higher volume demand for local produce. The RFC is a client of the food hub for the ease of purchasing from a farm network that aggregates produce to a central food facility. The network streamlines our logistics significantly, perhaps in anticipation of a brick-and-mortar grocery store.



Aug 23, 2016
Al Centro sets up for the Senior Fitness Fair at Bordwell Park.



Sep 15, 2016
Scott donates a basket for the Big Brothers, Big Sisters Bowl-a-thon.



Oct 15, 2016
We donate all produce sales proceeds to Pink On Parade.

Oct 21, 2016
Nick joins RCRC to measure urban trees for Citizen Science and Love Riverside.



Oct 26, 2016
Sue and Scott conduct a Community Gathering on Cottage Food.

Sala and Nick speak at R' Garden's Fall Food Open House.

Oct 29, 2016
Sue and Scott attend a Growers Forum.

We dedicate ourselves to local farm production through our very close association with the GrowRIVERSIDE conference and Riverside Food Systems Alliance (RFSa). This year the GrowRIVERSIDE planning committee, including Sue and Scott, secured hands-on farming as the conference focus. Farming promotion and activism goes only so far as what training, financing, zoning and other resources are available to offer real support. As a not-for-profit business, the RFC has come to appreciate that grassroots work can often find you in the weeds.



Mar 4, 2017
Gleaners For Good holds its first event at an historic home in Arlington Heights.

Direct action is still our strength.

Says Sue, “Gleaners For Good happened this year! It is a volunteer effort to link growers of produce they will not use with people who need food.

“At almost every gathering about food I have attended someone stood up, pointed a finger and said ‘YOU need to start a gleaning group.’ In January, I accepted that as a cosmic reason to start gleaning. The co-op’s contribution to this effort is allowing the use of RFC’s phone number and email address for communication. Not all the gleaners are co-op members, but many are.

Picking is gratifying, but seeing it put to use at the food bank is even better. We have delivered almost 1,000 pounds of fruit that would have rotted to hungry people through food banks. If you have fruit trees that bear more than you can use or want to pick, or want to join in, give a shout. Picked from our hands, but given from your heart.”

Using the new food hub, we of course continue with our popular Monthly Member Crop Box to directly support our community economically, ecologically and socially.

Micro-loans through Kiva U.S. is another way we actively mobilize communities toward self-determination. You may learn more about Kiva on page 6 of this report.



Oct 30, 2016
Al Centro sets up at Our Lady of Guadalupe church.



Nov 9, 2016
Nick attends a dinner at Cal Poly’s Lyle Center for Regenerative Studies.



Nov 29, 2017
Nick and Diana attend the Big Brainstorm on Riverside sustainability.



Feb 8, 2017
Sue conducts a Community Gathering on gleaning.



Feb 12, 2017
Nick attends Long Beach Grocery Cooperative’s screening of Food For Change.

Mar 11, 2017
Sue tables at a Growers Forum.

Riverside Food Cooperative, Inc.

Mailing Address

6143 Del Ray Court
 Riverside, California 92504
 riversidefoodcoop@gmail.com
 (951) 290-7327
 riversidefoodcoop.com

Board of Directors

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What is Kiva?

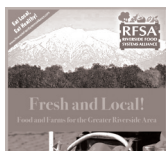
A loan, not a donation.



Kiva Microfunds is an online lending platform that offers an innovative approach to raising small business capital. As its founders remind us, where opportunity is not universal, “we envision a world where all people hold the power to create opportunity for themselves and others.”

Kiva first approves its small-scale (up to \$10K) direct loan applications through “social underwriting,” where friends and family each lend \$25 or more toward the loan request to determine the borrower’s trustworthiness. Only then is the loan is posted for public support. It’s an innovation in social entrepreneurship over the conventional barrier-ridden and faceless lending marketplace. Scott’s persuasive cooler project at Fox Farm was funded through a Kiva Zip loan and a local networking campaign.

The Riverside Food Co-op has a Kiva Lending Team to create a more effective bloc of individual micro-loans toward a project of common interest to the team. In this way we can deploy social power to help build small businesses. To be a part of it, go to Kiva.org and sign up. Then join the Riverside Food Co-op Lending Team. As a group member you may suggest a loan, or connect with your fellow group members to decide on the criteria for group support.



Mar 15, 2017
 We have an ad and entry in RFSA’s new *Local Food Guide*.

Gleaners For Good also has an entry for pretty strong RFC exposure in the guide.



Mar 22, 2017
 RFSA and RFC screen the film *Fresh* at the UU Church of Riverside.



Mar 30, 2017
 GrowRIVERSIDE 2017.

RFC gets quite a lot of acknowledgment in the opening address of Assistant City Manager Al Zelinka. Scott also spoke, and moderated.



Apr 29, 2017
 Sala and Nick table at Victoria Avenue Day.