

READ MORE!

Kimmerer, Robin. 2024. The Serviceberry: Abundance and Reciprocity in the Natural World. Scribner.

Spade, Dean. 2020. Mutual Aid: Building Solidarity Through this Crisis and the Next. Verso

ORGANIZATIONS REFERENCED!

- A Bookkeeping Cooperative - bookkeeping.coop/home/
- Common Good City Farm - www.commongoodcityfarm.org/
- F.A.R.M. Cafe - farmcafe.org/about
- King Kone - [www.facebook.com/pages/King Kone/ 227147680632743](https://www.facebook.com/pages/King-Kone/227147680632743)
- Nature School Cooperative - www.natureschoolcooperative.org/
- One World Everybody Eats - www.oneworldeverybodyeats.org/
- Roots Dreams and Mustard Seeds - www.rootsandmustardseeds.com/
- Stone Soup Cafe - thestonesoupcafe.org/



BSE is an assemblage of teaching and learning projects aimed at advancing conditions from which communities can make and remake their own conditions of life.
Check us out!
Instagram: @Building_Solidarity_Economies
Website: buildingsolidarityeconomies.com

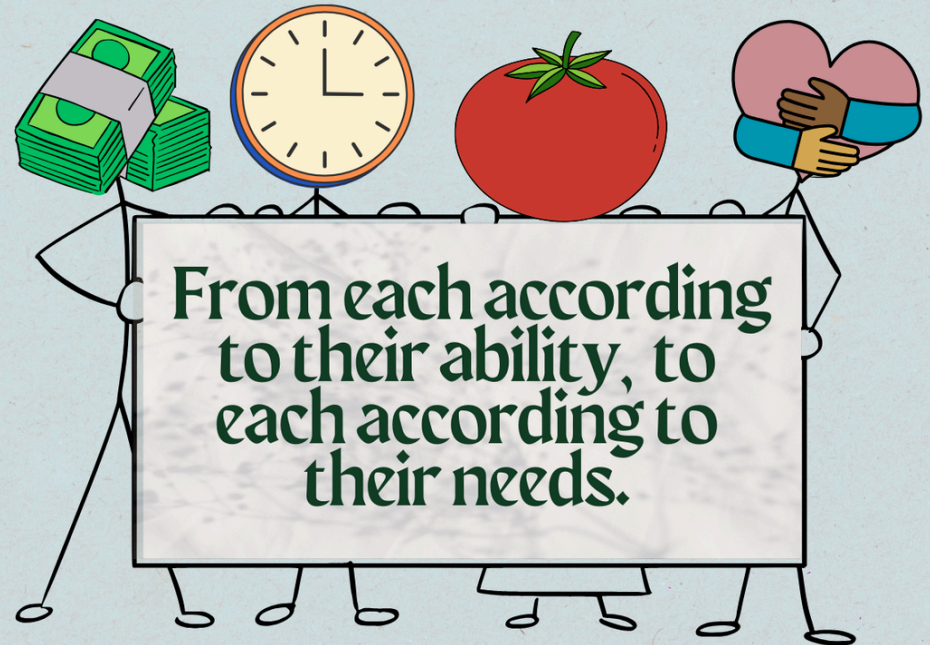
A BSE and Stone Soup Collaboration



STONE
SOUP
CAFÉ

PAY WHAT YOU CAN

PAY-WHAT-YOU-CAN



December, 2024



PWYC & GIFT ECONOMIES



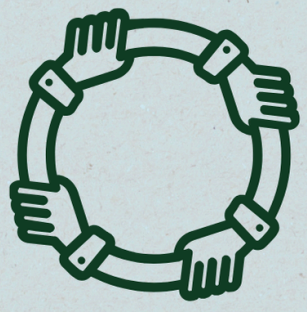
"To name the world as a gift is to feel your membership in the web of reciprocity. It makes you happy—and it makes you accountable. Conceiving of something as a gift changes your relationship to it in a profound way, even though the physical makeup of the 'thing' has not changed."

Robin Wall Kimmerer, The Serviceberry.

PWYC can help cultivate an economy of gratitude and abundance. It is about building relationships across difference.



Unlike charity, PWYC can help realize interdependence rather than hierarchy.



Unlike market transactions, PWYC can encourage community care and inclusion rather than self-interest

* Photo from: www.uwosh.edu/sirt/rwk/

PAY WHAT YOU CAN

PWYC is used by nonprofit and for-profit organizations alike

It can be seen at...



Concerts



Community Stores



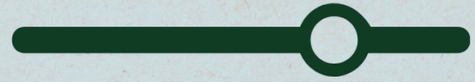
Art Galleries



Restaurants

and more!

PWYC utilizes sliding-scale pricing for folks of all different class levels to access the same goods and services



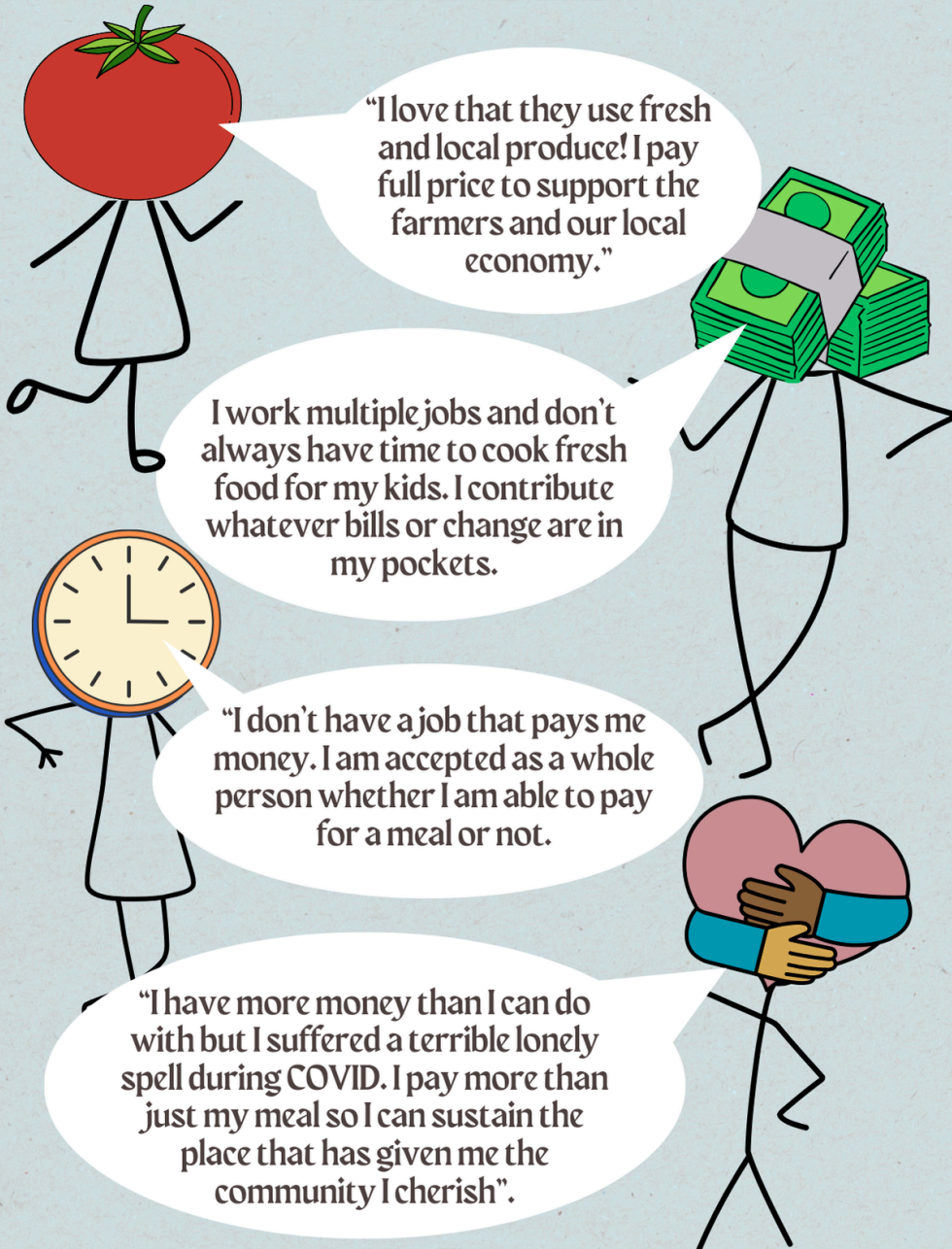
It looks different everywhere it crops up!



It only works when trust, reciprocity, and community building are centered.

- Some have price floors (ex: \$2), while some allow for \$0
- Some have suggested pricing listed
- Some include a volunteer element/option

PARTICIPATION EXAMPLES



Colonial capitalism assembles a world of exclusion, violence, and inequality. As the very wealthy flourish, it's become more and more difficult for the rest of us to meet basic needs and lead healthy lives.

Food insecurity is rising at unprecedented rates...

34%

of Massachusetts' households reported experiencing food insecurity in 2023*

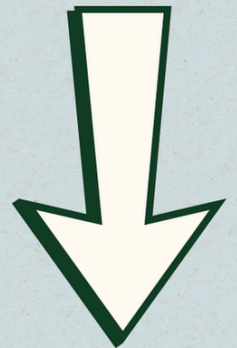
41%

of western Massachusetts households are struggling with food insecurity**

Amidst an ever-worsening loneliness epidemic...

Since 2003 there has been a decline in social participation and social networks are getting smaller***

For young people ages 15-24, time spent in-person with friends has reduced by nearly 70% over almost two decades***



Food security and social connections have been deteriorating for years. The pandemic has only made things worse.

* Greater Boston Food Bank

** Mass General Brigham and the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts

*** www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/surgeon-general-social-connection-advisory.pdf

STONE SOUP CAFE



Greenfield, Massachusetts

Since 2010, the Stone Soup Cafe has created a community space where all are welcome to share nourishment, connection, and learning for body, mind, and spirit.



Three Peacemaker Tenets	
1. Openness	
2. Bearing Witness	
3. Loving Action in	all they do

Stone Soup has its roots in Zen Buddhism

Stone Soup strives to be a mutual aid organization. Executive Director and Chef Kirsten Levitt says, "There is no us and them, there's only us."



In 2020, the pandemic and the Floyd Rebellion forced the closure of in-person meals but also strengthened Stone Soup's commitment to anti-racism, mutual aid, social change, and co-creation. Stone Soup serves more meals than ever before, now distributing 550-600 meals every Saturday. They have opened a PWC community store, created a culinary education program, featured art and music, and continue to deepen relations with local farms and businesses.

We are enmeshed in an economy that defines us as separate individuals, acting out of self-interest.



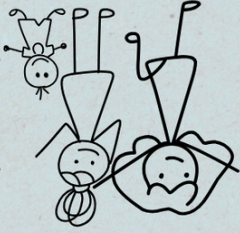
We are taught that this is natural, that competing for resources is baked into our biology.

BUT...

These are just stories, made up to justify our current political and economic model, not speaking some innate truth about humanity.



In reality, we are social creatures. We are interdependent with other beings from the moment of creation.



We are like oak trees, We thrive with roots intertwined, creating a collective structure that provides stability and nourishment



* Drawn from Naima Penniman's work



📍 Pittsfield, Massachusetts

King Kone is a cooperative, soft-serve ice cream store in Pittsfield, MA. Opening in the summer of 2024, King Kone's pay what you can was a happy accident.

Explains manager Michael Hitchcock, "We started Pay What You Can because we opened before everyone knew how to use the cash register."



What they discovered, though, was that PWYC could be both a successful business and community-building model. Revenue has exceeded what they would have gained by charging market rates. It's also been an opportunity to engage diverse community members about the violence of capitalism and discuss what other economic forms might be possible. King Kone is part of Roots, Dreams, and

Mustard Seeds, an organization that is building an ecosystem of care including several worker-owned cooperatives, a community center, a food bank, with a community farm in the works. Their goal is economic democracy.



MUTUAL AID



Dean Spade

"the radical act of caring for each other while working to change the world."*

Mutual aid seeks to meet our community's direct survival needs,



ranging from fresh local food, to clothing, to companionship.

Mutual Aid inherently resists dominant social relations, emboldening us to break away from individualism, move towards collaboration and care, and build social movements.

**SOLIDARITY
NOT
CHARITY**

Mutual Aid differs from the traditional charity model by refusing separations between "us and them" or "deserving and undeserving".

Everyone has something to give and everyone has something to gain.

* Dean Spade, "Mutual Aid"

** Photo from: www.deanspade.net/about/

PAY WHAT YOU CAN

in action!

PWYC is increasingly being used to help facilitate mutual aid in a wide range of enterprises. Common Good City Farm in Washington DC, uses a PWYC model, providing up to 30 lbs of produce free of charge to those who need it, while encouraging others to "self-assess" what they can pay, either more or less than a standard cost.



Unionized and worker-owned Bookkeeping Cooperative offers accounting services on a sliding scale to better support organizations and groups committed to social change: "groups focused on collective liberation and solidarity economy work that are owned and governed by people of color, immigrants, disabled people, LGBTQIA+, working class, and poor people without access to institutional funding."



Nature School Cooperative is a worker-owned, early education school in Aurora, Colorado. Their goal is to have a student population in which 1/3 pay full tuition, 1/3 adjusted tuition, and 1/3 tuition free.



The most celebrated PWYC models are cafes or restaurants. One World Everybody Eats counts over a dozen cafes in their networks, with more in motion. And many more restaurants use some form of PWYC.



Photos from: @f.a.r.m.cafe on Instagram



Boone, North Carolina

F.A.R.M. is dedicated to providing "real good food" to help curb food insecurity and to build relationships among community members. Customers can pay a suggested price, can pay more or less than that price, or can pay nothing. Customers can also volunteer an hour of time in exchange for a meal. F.A.R.M. also deepens community connections by working closely with local farms and businesses on food recovery and redistribution.

F.A.R.M. REAL. GOOD. FOOD. cafe

FEED ALL REGARDLESS OF MEANS