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## **Brooklyn Food Conference**

**A grassroots event for a just, secure, sustainable, healthy and delicious food system**

**A project of the Brooklyn Food Coalition**

**Saturday, May 2, 2009**

**P.S. 321 and at John Jay High School, 7th Avenue in Park Slope**

**Conference is FREE and open to all**

**BROOKLYN, NY** – Food activists, local farmers, health advocates, academics, union leaders, elected officials and restaurateurs will gather this day with concerned citizens to discuss the changes and challenges in our global food economy and how it impacts our communities. Workshops and speeches will provide education and networking opportunities for individuals to get involved for improving our diet, health and environment.

The **Brooklyn Food Conference** will have dozens of community groups and hundred of volunteers participating. Key-note speakers include well-known activists **Dan Barber**, executive chef and owner of *Blue Hill Restaurant*, and a leader of fair trade development and healthy food; **Anna Lappé**, co-founder of the Small Planet Institute and the author of *Grub: Ideas for an Urban Organic Kitchen*; **Raj Patel** of the University of California, Berkeley, and the author of *Stuffed and Starved: The Hidden Battle for the World Food System*; as well as **LaDonna Redmond**, head of the Institute of Community Resource Development in Chicago.

“Never before have there been such compelling reasons to rethink our energy policy, our environmental policy, and our health care system – and we cannot make headway on any of these without addressing food,” said Dan Barber, who will speak at the opening plenary session.

The Brooklyn Food Conference aims to increase awareness and education around food issues and establish a Brooklyn Food Coalition that will develop a Legislative Food Agenda. A town hall event will give participants the opportunity to testify in front of the elected officials expected to attend.

The conference is entirely volunteer driven – from event planning to fund raising and community outreach. A team of over 300 volunteers has been planning the conference for 7 months, and 2,000 participants are expected to attend. More than 75 organizations, including non-profit and community organizations, schools, elected officials and local businesses are partners in this effort. There will be a full program of workshops and activities for children.

“We hope to change our food system on local, state and federal levels so that all people have access to healthy food, and to ensure consumers and workers are treated with fairness and justice,” said Nancy Romer, the conference’s General Coordinator. “This conference is the official beginning of our collective efforts.”

**Co-Sponsors** for the conference include: The Park Slope Food Coop; Caribbean Women’s Health Association; World Hunger Year; Brooklyn Rescue Mission; and Brooklyn’s Bounty. The conference is generously hosted by the administrators, teachers, students, and parents of John Jay High School and P.S. 321.

To register and for more information, visit [www.brooklynfoodconference.org](http://www.brooklynfoodconference.org).

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## Keynote Speakers

### **Dan Barber**

Executive Chef and Co-Owner of Blue Hill Restaurant

Dan Barber's passion for a sustainable local food system began in the fields and the kitchen. He started farming and cooking for family and friends at Blue Hill Farm in Great Barrington, Massachusetts; the food was too good not to share, so in 2000 he joined with family members to open Blue Hill Restaurant in Greenwich Village.



Named one of the country's Best New Chefs by *Food and Wine* in 2002, Dan remains true to his roots as a farmer: He cares about where our food comes from and the communities it's grown in, and is avid to preserve farms, farmland and the watersheds they depend on. He's written about local food issues for *Gourmet*, *Saveur*, *Food and Wine*, and the Op-Ed page of *The New York Times*. He's been featured in the *New Yorker* and *House and Garden*, and has appeared on CBS Sunday Morning and *Martha Stewart Living*. His writing has been included in the *Best Food Writing* anthology every year for the past five years.

In 2004, both Blue Hill at Stone Barns and Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture opened their doors in Pocantico Hills, New York. As chef and co-owner of the restaurant and Stone Barns Center board member, Dan works to blur the line between the dining and educational experiences -- seasonal menus dictated by what's growing on the property provide a delicious introduction to the principles of sustainable farming. Dan's efforts to raise consciousness about the broader effects of everyday food choices have generated collaborations with organizations such as New York City's Greenmarkets, the Kellogg Foundation, and Harvard Medical School's Center for Health and the Global Environment.

Both the original Blue Hill restaurant and Blue Hill at Stone Barns have received Best New Restaurant nominations from the James Beard Foundation; Dan won the 2006 James Beard award for Best Chef: New York City. He says, "If there's one thing I would want people to do more of it would be to cook because when you cook food, you engage with it on a level you don't when you eat out."

## **Anna Lappe**

*Author, Public Speaker, Television Host*

"What is is not what has to be," contends bestselling author and speaker Anna Lappe, in *Hope's Edge: The Next Diet for a Small Planet*. For this book project -- her first -- she traversed five continents with her mother and co-author, Frances Moore Lappe, looking for what they call the "invisible revolution" -- people creating change by reconnecting with the earth. *Hope's Edge*, which won the Nautilus Award for Social Change, has been published in several languages, and is a popular teaching tool in classrooms all over the world. Her second book, *Grub: Ideas for an Urban Organic Kitchen*, showcases the ecological and social benefits of sustainable food. She is currently at work on her third book, *Eat the Sky*, which takes on climate change and the future of eating.



In 2001, Anna and her mother founded the Small Planet Institute, an international network promoting research and popular education on the root causes of hunger and poverty. The Institute's Small Planet Fund has raised more than \$500,000 for democratic social movements worldwide, two of which have won the Nobel Peace Prize.

Anna is a regular guest on nationally syndicated radio and appears frequently on television—she's been featured on PBS, Canada's CBC, and Fox News. She hosts MSN's *Practical Guide to Healthy Living* and co-hosts the public television series *The Endless Feast*; she's offered expert commentary on Howdini.com, the Sundance Channel's *Big Ideas for a Small Planet*, the PBS documentary *Nourish: Food & Community*, and hundreds of radio programs, including National Public Radio's Weekend Edition, The Diane Rehm Show, Talk to America, and WNYC's Brian Lehrer and Leonard Lopate Shows.

*Time* named Anna to its eco-"Who's Who" list; stories on her have appeared in *The New York Times*, *Gourmet*, *O: The Oprah Magazine*, *Domino*, *Food and Wine*, *Body + Soul*, *Natural Health*, and *Vibe*. *Organic Style* named her one of the nation's leading environmental change makers, while *Contribute* selected her for its list of "21 Under 40 Making a Difference." In 2007, the Missing Peace Project chose her to receive its Compassion in Action award.

Anna holds a master's degree in economic and political development from Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs. She was a Food and Society Policy Fellow with the WK Kellogg Foundation from 2004 to 2006. She lives in Brooklyn.

## **Raj Patel**

Author, activist, journalist

Raj Patel's *Stuffed and Starved: The Hidden Battle for the World Food System* investigates why one billion of the world's people are overweight, while 850 million go hungry; it also chronicles the efforts of millions around the globe to redress this absurd imbalance. "One of the greatest lies of our modern food culture," he says, "is that it gives us choice and that when we go to the supermarket we are choosing from an abundance of things, all of which we want." The truth is, "we are choosing between a handful of things that have been picked for us already. We're choosing between Coke and Pepsi. It's no choice whatsoever. In life under modern capitalism, we are being made for our food."



Raj is a visiting scholar at the Center for African Studies at the University of California, a fellow at the Institute of Food and Development Policy, and a research associate at the School of Development Studies at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. He recently completed a two-year stint in South Africa, working out of the University of KwaZulu-Natal's Centre for Civil Society. Before that, he was a policy analyst at the Institute for Food and Development Policy/Food First, where he discovered the importance of land struggles, and began collaborating with the Land Research Action Network.

For Raj, land reform politics are a new lens through which to view institutions like the World Bank, the World Trade Organization, and the International Monetary Fund -- two of which he's worked for. Before connecting with Food First, he volunteered with SEATINI (Southern and Eastern African Trade Information and Negotiations Initiative), in Harare, Zimbabwe, where he was doing his PhD research and partnering with fine activist groups such as Padare, a pro-feminist men's organization.

Raj's work in Zimbabwe was conducted in pursuit of a PhD from Cornell University's Department of Development Sociology, which he entered after serving as a researcher in UNCTAD's Least Developed Countries Programme. He holds a Master's Degree from the London School of Economics and a B.A. in philosophy, politics and economics from Balliol College, Oxford.

## **LaDonna Redmond**

President and CEO, Institute for Community Resource Development

In LaDonna Redmond's Chicago neighborhood, you can buy any brand of fried chicken, cigarettes or liquor you desire. "But," she says, "I cannot buy an organic tomato." So she decided to start growing organic tomatoes herself—and working to bring high-quality food to her corner of Chicago.

LaDonna's quest for food justice began with the simple wish to feed her two-year-old a diet that wouldn't aggravate his severe food allergies. As she traveled all over the city in search of organic food, she began to wonder about the origins of the food she couldn't find. Before that, she says, "I would not have even considered the fact that [how] healthy and nutritious food [is] has a lot to do with how that food was produced."

LaDonna now serves as president of Chicago's Institute for Community Resource Development, a grassroots organization she founded. Her efforts to develop sustainable local food systems have given rise to urban farms, a farmers' market, and an Illinois food council. The Institute is now working to form a co-op grocery store.

LaDonna writes a column on current affairs for a local newspaper, and has been featured in local and national publications. She sits on a number of boards in Illinois and belongs to a number of organizations, including the Center for Neighborhood Technology, the League of Black Women, the Austin Green Team, and the Westside Health Authority. She majored in economics at Antioch College.





## Workshop Highlights

### ***Good Food Now: Getting healthy food into underserved communities***

The number of grocery stores in New York City has declined more than 30% since 2001, leaving many neighborhoods with few options for buying fresh and affordable food.<sup>1</sup> This workshop will discuss how activists are using farmer markets, community gardens and supported agriculture, co-ops and grocery-store organizing campaigns to get good, healthy food into underserved communities.

Panelists include **Sarita Daftry**, youth coordinator and project director for East New York Farms!; **Mo Kinberg**, food coordinator for United Food and Commercial Workers International Union Local 1500; and **Yonnette Fleming**, vice president of the Hattie Carthan Community Garden and a farm trainer for the non-profit group, Just Food. Moderator is **Angela C. Davis**, Just Food's community food education coordinator.

### ***Our Sustainable Restaurants: A round table of New York City chefs***

Historic leaders of progressive food perspectives, New York City chefs advance the idea that Americans need to return to eating more local, seasonal and sustainable food. Chefs and owners of some of the City's most renowned restaurants will discuss their role in fixing a broken food system.

Panelists are **Dan Barber**, chef and owner of Blue Hill; **Peter Hoffman**, chef and owner of Savoy and Back Forty; **Bill Telepan**, chef and owner of Telepan; **David Shea**, chef and owner of Applewood; and **John Tucker**, owner of Rose Water. Moderator is **Leonard Lopate**, host of the *Leonard Lopate Show* on WNYC.

### ***Fuel vs. Food: Are biofuels and agrofuels the answer?***

Biofuels have risen from virtual obscurity to become one of the most promoted – and most contentious – sources of alternative energy. Cutting through the clutter of misconceptions and spin, a panel of experts will discuss the pros and cons of different plant-based fuels.

Panelists include **Brent Baker**, chief executive of Tri-State Biodiesel; **Dulce Fernandez**, associate director of Network for New Energy Choices; and **Christina Schiavoni**, co-director of the Global Movements Program at World Hunger Year, dedicated to community-based solutions to hunger and poverty.

### ***The Political Economy of Food: Why are we all eating Big Macs?***

Discover the social costs of Big Food and Agribusiness, and how millions of Big Macs are now served from Ohio to China to Paris to Buenos Aires.

Panelists will be **Arun Gupta**, food writer and editor with the Independent; **Bill Tabb**, professor emeritus at Queens College and the City University of New York Graduate Center, who has written extensively on the global-political economy; **James Subudhi**, sustainability coordinator at WE ACT for Environmental Justice; and **Elizabeth Ramey**, former Midwest farmer, teacher and PhD candidate in economics at the University of Massachusetts, focusing on the role of family farms in the food system.

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<sup>1</sup> *Groceries Grow Elusive For Many in New York City*, by Robin Shulman; Washington Post, Feb. 19, 2008, page A03.



## Brooklyn Food Conference Facts

- The conference is on Saturday, May 2, 2009, at P.S. 321 and at John Jay High School, located on 7th Avenue between 1st and 5th streets in Park Slope, Brooklyn.
- The conference is free.
- Through education and networking, the conference aims to involve people in the way food is delivered to their plates. Ultimately, it will create a political constituency for building a more sustainable, healthy and socially just food system.
- More than 75 community organizations are committed conference partners and hundreds of volunteers are taking part in the event, including some of the city's most talented graphics artists, writers, community organizers, health care practitioners, educators, actors, and documentarians.
- There are five co-sponsors to the conference: The Park Slope Food Coop, The Caribbean Women's Health Clinic, World Hunger, Brooklyn Rescue Mission, and Brooklyn Bounty.
- There will be more than 70 workshops, covering the environment, labor, government policy and health as it relates to the food system.
- More than 2,000 people are expected to attend.
- There will also be workshops developed specially by and for teens with plenty of community-service opportunities. Younger children will have opportunities for hands-on learning with cooking, chickens and a dairy cow, an opening parade, and arts and crafts.
- Lunch and dinner will be available for sale, and the day will be concluded with live music and dance.
- Translators will be on hand to ensure all members of Brooklyn, New York City and the wider community can participate.
- On-line registration is requested but registration on the day of the conference will be allowed.



## General Coordinator Bio

Nancy Romer, General Coordinator of the Brooklyn Food Conference, has been organizing movements to expand democracy and people's rights through the anti-war, labor, public education, women's and anti-racist movements for more than 40 years. A Ph.D. in developmental psychology, she is professor of psychology at Brooklyn College and executive director of the Brooklyn College Community Partnership. She is an officer of her union, the Professional Staff Congress, which represents the 20,000 faculty and professional staff of the City University of New York. She has two adult sons and has been a member of the Park Slope Food Coop for many years.



Romer believes that food is a universal organizing issue: everyone has a close and daily relationship to food; it has cultural and personal meaning to all of us. Changing the food system is key in addressing climate change, the energy crisis, the health crisis, and poverty. She believes that if people unite to change the food system and share the bounty of the earth, we can create a more egalitarian and just society.

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## Facts about Food and Health for Brooklyn and all of New York City

- According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 67% of Americans are either overweight or obese.<sup>1</sup>
- More than half of adult New Yorkers, about 53%, are overweight.<sup>3</sup>
- The generation of children alive today may be the first to have a shorter life expectancy than their parents; Researchers attribute this to obesity.<sup>2</sup>
- The proportion of American children ages 6 to 11 considered overweight more than quadrupled from 4% in the early 1970s to 17% by 2003.<sup>1</sup>
- Nearly half, or 43%, of elementary school-age children in New York City are overweight.<sup>4</sup>
- The poorest neighborhoods in New York City are the South Bronx, East and Central Harlem and North and Central Brooklyn, where more than one in three residents live in poverty.<sup>5</sup>
- Residents in the poorest neighborhoods of New York City have higher rates of obesity, more than three times the number of deaths from diabetes compared to wealthier areas and about one and half times the deaths from heart disease.<sup>5</sup>
- In 2001, the life expectancy in New York City's poorest neighborhoods was eight years shorter than in its wealthiest neighborhoods.<sup>5</sup>
- Over 70% of adults in Central Brooklyn (Bedford-Stuyvesant, Crown Heights, Prospect Heights & Brownsville) are overweight or obese, compared with 53% in Northwest Brooklyn (Park Slope, Carroll Gardens, Ft. Greene, Clinton Hill, Brooklyn Heights and Red Hook).<sup>4</sup>
- About 91% of New Yorkers do not eat the recommended servings of at least five fruits and/or vegetables per day.<sup>4</sup> A serving is defined as one medium piece of fruit, a half cup of cut-up vegetables, or two cups of leafy vegetables.<sup>6,7</sup>
- North and Central Brooklyn, the neighborhoods in Brooklyn with the highest proportions of residents who don't eat at least five servings of fruits and/or vegetables per day, also have the highest rates of obesity; between 25% to 34%.<sup>3</sup>
- The Upper East Side/Gramercy neighborhoods, where a high proportion of people eat at least 5 fruits and/or vegetables a day also has the lowest prevalence of obesity; between 8% to 15%.<sup>3</sup>
- Lack of access to fruits and vegetables has been linked to obesity and related diseases such as diabetes, heart disease and stroke.<sup>3</sup>
- A "Supermarket Need Index" was created by the New York City Department of City Planning to determine the areas of the city with the highest level of diet-related diseases and largest populations with limited opportunities to purchase fresh foods. This index shows that three million New Yorkers live in neighborhoods with a high need for grocery stores.<sup>8</sup>
- Neighborhoods in Brooklyn identified by the Supermarket Need Index as having the greatest need for grocery stores include Bushwick, Bedford-Stuyvesant, East New York and Sunset Park.<sup>8</sup>

- Researchers looking at the availability of fruits and vegetables in food outlets in racially segregated neighborhoods of Brooklyn found large disparities in the number of supermarkets between predominantly white versus black areas. White neighborhoods had 8 supermarkets per census tract, while majority black neighborhoods did not have any supermarkets.<sup>9</sup>
- A study published in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine found that the presence of a supermarket reduced the prevalence of overweight and obese residents.<sup>9</sup>
- The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene found that 82% of all food stores in the Bedford-Stuyvesant and Bushwick neighborhoods of Brooklyn are small corner stores known locally as bodegas. Supermarkets make up only 6% of all food stores in this area.<sup>11</sup>
- The same study found that bodegas typically lack a selection of healthy foods. One in three bodegas sold reduced-fat milk, and 28% carried apples, oranges and bananas. Only one in 10 carried green leafy vegetables.<sup>11</sup>

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