

From Heather

My hope for Food as Medicine Global is to grow a collaborative community to support food sovereignty and health justice for all. That we work to advance a more equitable and inclusive *food as medicine* movement for addressing our most urgent health and environmental challenges impacting the well-being of our planet - all organisms, physical environments, and the atmospheric climate.

I learned about growing food as a child while visiting a family friend's garden. Fresh vegetables were unknown in my own household. Tasting greens out of the ground for the first time changed the course of my life. I immediately returned home and dug up our suburban lawn for a vegetable garden.

My interest in healthcare sparked in high school while taking care of my ailing great-grandmother. In trying to find solutions for her, I learned about "health food" and natural medicine. It was an eye and heart opening experience. It was the first time I thought of food as medicine - as a way to remedy illness and support wellness. I also became aware of how hard it can be for many to access nourishing food due to a lack of availability and/or prohibitive expense.

As I entered adulthood, I became more and more committed to a holistic lifestyle embracing whole foods and nutritious eating practices for overall wellness and to address health issues. With a strong commitment to the environment and social justice, I spent years commuting by bike, practicing zero-waste living, and volunteering for eco-friendly initiatives. My interest in food and farming remains a continued thread. I have managed a local farmer's market, co-owned a healthy food catering business, and created a farm-based educational program devoted to holistic and sustainable living. Seeing the value of keeping my hands in the soil and fresh vegetables on the table, I have grown food on balconies and porches and in front and back yards replacing grass with gardens and fruit trees. For two years I had the good fortune of living and working on a 10-acre organic farm. Now as a homeowner, I have filled my small site with edible landscaping, a micro vegetable garden, and a tiny flock of hens. Pure happiness!

Over the past decade, I have served in multiple leadership roles with national nonprofit organizations devoted to natural health, social justice, and ecological regeneration. With a

solution-focused approach, my work draws strongly upon collaborative governance principles and a social justice imperative.

In my formal education, I hold a BA in Law and Policy with a dual concentration in Health Policy and in Healthcare Leadership from the University of Washington and a Master of Advanced Studies (MAS) in Health Policy and Law from a joint degree program with the University of California, San Diego's School of Medicine and the California Western School of Law. I earned a Certificate in Documentary Studies from Duke University's Center for Documentary Studies and completed mediation training with California Western School of Law and with the Dispute Resolution Center of King County in Washington State.

It is an honor to be working with our Board Members and Circle of Advisors. Together we bring the complementary skills and experience needed to successfully create and steward Food as Medicine Global. I truly believe in the power of food in community and the positive impact that happens when people work joyfully together in the soil, in the kitchen and at the table.

