



Financing Our Foodshed

July 2019

As this newsletter is being prepared, the heat outside is searing. Many people can avoid it by hunkering down in their air conditioned homes or offices, or fleeing to a cooler locale, if you can find one. But farmers have no choice. This is the height of production season so they must endure the heat to get their delicious, nutritious products to market. It's just another instance to be grateful for all the contributions our farmers make to the local foodshed. "What can we do to help?" That's a question that inspires our every action at Slow Money and we hope it's one that will inspire you too.

The financial support we've received in the past year has been deeply heartfelt, starting around the Charlottesville/Richmond regions, and spreading to Tidewater and other parts of the state. We have lofty ambitions for the future direction of our organization as we seek to become the most reliable and effective source of funding for small-to-mid scale, ecological-minded farmers and food businesses in the state.

One step in that direction has been the recent formation of our own 501(c)(3). We first launched our organization in May 2018 under the fiscal sponsorship of the Slow Money Institute. We are so thankful for their support and think so highly of their work. But the time has come to venture out from under their wing as any offspring should eventually do!

In June 2019, our inaugural board of directors met in Charlottesville and we are so excited to announce the six new members of our board.

Board of Directors



Celia Culver Rutt - Celia is a local food advocate and professional photographer whose photographs of food and nature have been exhibited and sold locally and regionally. She earned a BA in Biology from Transylvania University in Lexington, KY, was a researcher at Harvard Medical School, and earned a MS in Biology and Science Education from Boston University. She has

served on the Highland Center board, a non-profit committed to economic and cultural development of Highland County and the Allegheny Highlands region. Celia was also a founding board member of the Allegheny Mountain Institute, a non-profit dedicated to teaching methods of renewing community food production through regenerative practices. In conjunction with the Staunton Creative Community Fund, Celia created a grant program for food based businesses as part of the Invest Local program. She also currently serves as an advisor of strategic planning for Project Grows, an educational non-profit with the mission to improve the nutrition and health of children and youth in the Staunton, Augusta, Waynesboro areas. Celia and her husband divide their time between their farm in Highland County and Staunton, VA.

Hunter Hopcroft - Hunter is a co-founder of Slow Money Virginia. He's been a force in the local food scene around Central Virginia for several years. Most recently he was the Special Projects Manager at Ellwood Thompson's Local Market. Additionally, he's been a partner in JM Stock Provisions a local, whole-animal butchery operation out of Charlottesville. Hunter began his career as a research analyst for Canal Capital Management before starting Harvest Grocery & Supply, a micro-grocery in Richmond. Hunter holds a degree in Economics from Hampden-Sydney and a Certificate in Entrepreneurship from the Goldman Sachs 10k Small Businesses Program at Babson College. Hunter is the chairperson of Tricycle Urban Agriculture. And he is working on earning an MBA through the Executive Education program at the University of Virginia's Darden School of Business. He lives in Richmond with his wife Tabitha

Merope Pavlides - Merope is a special educator, writer, and former nonprofit manager. Her work includes the book *Animal-assisted Interventions for Individuals with Autism* and the website *Autism After 16*. She has been passionate about understanding the relationship between diet and autoimmune disease for over 25 years. From 2013 – 2018, Merope owned and operated Threepenny Cafe, a farm-to-table restaurant in Charlottesville committed to serving healthy, sustainable, local food. In August 2019, Merope will begin working as a Patient and Family Navigator in UVA's Division of Developmental Pediatrics. Merope's education includes an BS in Journalism from Ohio University, an MA in Communications from the University of Maryland, an MS in Special Education from Johns Hopkins University and a PhD in Drama from the University of Wisconsin. She lives in Charlottesville with her husband and has two grown sons.

Michael Reilly - Michael is a co-founder of Slow Money Virginia, and is currently serving as its volunteer executive director, overseeing the day-to-day operations. He began his career in banking and then worked for 15 years as an executive in the broadcast TV business, before turning his attention to food advocacy. He is on the board of several food and agriculture organizations including: the Virginia Association for Biological Farming, Market Central, which provides support services for Charlottesville's farmers markets; and Grow Ahead, which teams up with farmer organizations in the Global South to support climate resiliency initiatives. Michael also serves on the planning team for the Charlottesville Food Justice Network. Michael earned an undergraduate degree at Yale University and a graduate degree at Columbia University. He lives in Charlottesville with his wife and four children.

Kristen Suokko - Kristen is the Executive Director of Local Food Hub in Charlottesville. She served as Chairwoman of the organization's Board of Directors in 2012, and in 2013 became Executive Director. Kristen maintains a wealth of experience in environmental philanthropy and nonprofit excellence, as well as environmental planning and sustainability. She began her career in Washington, D.C., working for the Natural Resources Defense Council and the U.S. Department of Energy. Kristen previously held positions with the W. Alton Jones Foundation and the Blue Moon Fund. Kristen received a degree in Russian from Middlebury College and is from New England. She lives in

Charlottesville with her husband and two daughters.

John Wilson - John is a resident of Virginia Beach and the former owner of New Earth Farm, which he founded in 1995 in the Pungo community. Using organic practices and the principles of permaculture, the farm produced vegetables, seasonal fruit, and eggs for a wide variety of businesses in the region, as well as a CSA. John, who is known around the community simply as "Farmer John," sold New Earth in 2015 and now runs a soil consulting business. He is also maintaining a one-acre farm at the Farmhouse Brewery in Virginia Beach, where he grows a variety of crops for a weekend farmers markets he runs. He also grows hops and other beer flavors for the brewery. In addition, he is starting a composting business using the CMC method (controlled microbial composting). John formerly served on the board of the Virginia Association for Biological Farming. He frequently writes and speaks publicly about organic agriculture. John is married and has grown children.

Please Support Our SOIL Fund!

By participating in this fund you are "investing" by way of a charitable contribution. The contribution goes into our SOIL fund, and Slow Money Virginia takes care of the rest by making 0% loans to farmers who are in need of capital and are dedicated to using resilient, eco-friendly practices that produce healthy, nutritious food for our local communities.

While charitable contributions may not traditionally be considered "investments" per se, we're confident your contribution to our SOIL fund will produce valuable returns in the form of healthier soil and nutritious food for our communities in Virginia. PLUS, as a revolving loan fund your contribution will continue to give for years on-end as loans are repaid back into the fund.

This is a grassroots effort! We hope as many people as possible will support our mission. **Any size charitable contribution** you can make to our SOIL revolving loan fund goes a long way toward helping us help the local foodshed with its financial needs.

Become A Nurture Capitalist Today!

Nurture Capital At Work

This is the face of a delighted farmer who has received a 0% SOIL Loan to improve farm operations. On a recent steamy morning in July, Joel Slezak from [Free Union Grass Farm](#) showed off their new roll-out nest boxes purchased with their Slow Money loan. Joining us on a full tour of the farm were members of the [Charlottesville Area Community Foundation](#), who helped make the loan possible... and Joel very ecstatic.



Always Accepting Farmer Loan Applications!

The mission of Slow Money Central Virginia is to support the financial needs of farmers and food entrepreneurs in our region through our **SOIL 0% Loan Fund**. We accept applications on a rolling basis. We can't stress enough that no request is too small, as we want to be a friendly source of capital to help farm businesses grow in a way that's best for them.



[Slow Money Borrower Information Form](#)

Other Events & Opportunities

Agroforestry Farming Workshop

*August 19-21, 2019
Virginia Tech*



Join Virginia Tech, the Virginia Association for Biological Farming, and several regional agroforestry and sustainable agriculture instructors for this very affordable multi-day field intensive. The event includes a mixture of indoor and field presentations and exercises, but the majority of time will be outdoors at the Catawba Sustainability Center (VT's 377-acre diversified agroforestry farm).

Save The Dates:

It's never too early to plan and you don't want to miss these two great annual conferences:

[Virginia Farmers Market Association Conference](#)
[November 13-15, 2019](#)
[Staunton, VA](#)

[Virginia Association for Biological Farming Conference](#)
[January 11-13, 2020](#)
[Roanoke, VA](#)

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