



**SLOW FOOD
SONOMA
COUNTY
:: NORTH ::**

DECEMBER 2023 NEWSLETTER



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[Thank You, AMIDI!](#)

History of AMIDI

Since 2002, Slow Food Sonoma County North has had a relationship with a group of Mayan women in the rural mountain village of Pachay las Lomas, Guatemala. The women formed an official governmental agricultural association called AMIDI (in Spanish, an indigenous women's farming association).

It began when several Sonoma County North members arranged for AMIDI to go to Turin, Italy in 2002 and they won the International Slow Food Award. From there, these Slow Food members created a scholarship program for AMIDI and our alliance was born. AMIDI soon became an official project of our chapter, with a purpose of fostering mutual education and support of agricultural traditions, food preparation, cultural values around food, and Slow Food concepts.

Last month, the AMIDI project announced that they are stopping active fundraising and stepping back from a proactive role. It is time for AMIDI to flourish on its own.

21 Years of Accomplishments

Infrastructure Changes

Donations from hundreds of AMIDI supporters have helped to create numerous improvements to life in Pachay, such as:

- a spring fed potable water system for the village,
- a Community Center for classes and other



Ana Maria Chali Calan, the founder and leader of AMIDI, with her grandchildren who represent the village's first generation of educated children.

gatherings with bathrooms and a water storage system,

- chickens, rabbits, and/or a goat for each interested AMIDI member,
- fuel efficient, vented, wood burning stoves for each member.

Adult Education

Women learned new farming and life skills to create an income and improve their health, such as:

- cultivating traditional medicinal herbs to create tincture for themselves and for market,
- learning to make and use organic fertilizer,
- planting home vegetable gardens for health benefits,
- germinating coffee seeds and creating a commercial nursery for the seedlings; and learning best practices for coffee cultivation, harvesting, and entering the international market,
- raising and selling chickens, rabbits, and goats,
- developing a natural disaster preparedness plan,
- learning first aid,
- exploring the negative impact of their male-dominated society as it plays out in the home (AMIDI husbands are urged to attend this course!).

Student Education

Donations for student education not only helped children attend and graduate from school, but also had lifelong benefits, such as:

- the life altering experience of becoming literate, especially for those whose parents never had the opportunity to learn to read or write;
- participating in hands on, community building activities such as reforestation, a school-wide

recycling program, and clean-up after natural disasters;

- attending focus groups on human rights and youth issues that led students to demonstrate in support of a government-sponsored school lunch program and a program against domestic violence;
- traveling to other villages to encourage children to attend school;
- upon graduation, filling leadership roles on the AMIDI Board of Directors (including president);
- creating small businesses such as sewing custom clothing, providing access to the internet, and opening a small village pharmacy;
- holding professional positions like budgeting for the government, teaching, creating a traditional music business with engagements throughout the region, and working for a humanitarian organization that benefits youth.

Long-Lasting Support

One of the most significant successes of the AMIDI project is a fund ample enough to guarantee scholarships, through high school, for every student now enrolled in the program. For students interested in higher education, there are also funds available.

Congratulations and Thanks

The Board of Slow Food Sonoma County North congratulates and thanks the committed leadership of the AMIDI project, especially Marilee Wingert and Stephen Wingert. Marilee and Steve traveled numerous times to Pachay

and consistently communicated with AMIDI leaders about their needs, wishes, and accomplishments.

We also appreciate the time and commitment of the project's organizing committee: Phyllis Baldenhofer, Barbara Bowman, Carrie Brown, Stephanie Chiacos, Elissa Rubin-Mahon, and Aletha Soule.

Slow Food Events

Look for an invitation with details about a month before each event.

December

4 Slow Books, Sebastopol, 6 pm: *Our Lady of Perpetual Hunger* by Lisa Donovan

10 Terra Madre Day Dinner, Healdsburg, 5:30 pm. [As of December 1, there are only 3 tickets left!](#)
[Purchase yours here.](#)

2024

We have many events starting in January in the planning stage: farm tours, hands-on food making, a Slow film or two, Snail meetups, and much more.

February

28 Snail of Approval Awards Ceremony, Sebastopol Grange

Spotlight On: Connor Murphy of Shone Farm



Connor Murphy, Shone Farm Manager

Connor Murphy, the Farm Manager at Santa Rosa Junior College's [Shone Farm](#), is the son of a teacher mother and a builder father, and he's an expert in organic vegetable cultivation. He found his way to farm education after teaching English in Mexico, getting hands-on farming and mentorship experience in Salinas, and managing the Evergreen State College's farm in Olympia, Washington for four years.

He now spends much of his time on the 365 acres in Forestville that comprise Shone Farm, where students can access hands-on learning and research opportunities in areas such as sustainable agriculture, viticulture, and natural resources management. Not many people know that Sonoma County's very own public teaching farm was ranked number one in the nation for college farms, but anyone lucky enough to tour Shone with Connor while Tractor Operation Skills students roll by will soon learn that Shone is worth their notice.

Defining Regenerative Agriculture

Slow Food has our philosophy about sustainability in the food system: we seek to promote food that is Good, Clean, and Fair. Recently, though, many in the food community have shifted toward using the term “regenerative agriculture” to name the more sustainable food system they envision. According to Connor, proponents of regenerative agriculture have realized that “the status quo is not good enough” when it comes to climate change. Think of it as leaving your host’s home in better shape than you found it. We can no longer simply sustain our current level of damage to the earth, so “rather than being neutral, regenerative agriculture wants to be a net positive for the environment.”

Connor shares that it will take time to specifically define regenerative agriculture because research is still ongoing, and while “we have a few local examples of regenerative farms” (Sebastopol’s Singing Frogs Farm and Full Bloom Flower Farm spring to his mind), most regenerative growers are practicing on a very small scale. Still, hope and interest among producers and buyers alike continue to gather around the term “regenerative.”

Sonoma County Connections

The ultimate definition of the term may be evolving in our own backyard. Last month, the Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF) held a well-attended event in Sebastopol called “What Does Regenerative Agriculture Mean?” Efforts to create a regenerative certification are also centered in our area, says Connor: “There’s a ‘Regenerative Organic’ label funded by Patagonia that is launching slowly, and it’s

basically based in our county because some of their leadership lives here.”

How to Grow and Buy Sustainable Food

With all this lexical uncertainty, Connor is quick to recommend specific regenerative practices to flesh out our evolving understanding of “regeneration.” Regenerative methods include careful water use management, choosing natural pesticides, avoiding single-use plastic, and practicing low- and no-till organic agriculture.

And how can we consumers know that we’re voting for sustainability with our dollars? “I really do believe in organic certification and the third-party certification process,” says Connor. These certifications offer valuable information, especially for buyers who “aren’t going to be able to develop a personal relationship with the grower, which at any sort of scale is not realistic for most shoppers or most farmers,” Connor added. Regulated terms like “organic” can’t be as easily co-opted by marketers to green-wash their products, and “regenerative” may come to have a legal definition in time. For now, look for organic certification, or familiarize yourself with regenerative practices and strike up a conversation with your local farmers about their approach to sustainability.

Support Shone Farm

You can support Connor and his students by purchasing wine from [Shone Farm Winery](#); all proceeds support the Farm’s educational goals. Gift a Shone Farm Wine Club membership this holiday season to help Shone’s programs thrive, and don’t forget to

share what Connor has taught us about truly sustainable agriculture with your lucky recipient.

If wine isn't your thing, you can [take a class](#) within SRJC's Agriculture and Natural Resources Department to experience Shone Farm for yourself.

Snail of Approval

Snail Trail

This month we follow the Snail Trail to our artisan producers just in time for the holidays, as they make wonderful gifts! Some are brick-and-mortar, some sell at farmers' markets, and many sell online. But they are definitely all local Sonoma County businesses.

[Black Pig Meat Co.](#): bacon, caramel popcorn. Online.

[DaVero Farms & Winery](#): olive oil, jams, honey, gift sets (and of course they also have wine!). Brick-and-mortar and online.

[The Epicurean Connection](#): retail (shelves full for your winter shopping, featuring many local artisan products), catering, prepared foods each week and full cheese production and classes. Brick-and-mortar.

[Fourteen Magpies Handmade Jams & Preserves](#): Online & upcoming holiday events: Christkindlmarkt, Hermann Son Hall, Petaluma | Dec 2; Bacchus Landing Holiday Bazaar, Healdsburg | Dec 3; Head West Holiday marketplace at The Barlow, Sebastopol | Dec 9.

[Gold Ridge Organic Farms](#): olive oil, apple cider vinegar and syrup, gift sets. Brick-and-mortar and online.

[Maison Porcella](#): charcuterie, pates, savory pastries and sausage. Brick-and-mortar, online, Healdsburg & Sonoma Valley Farmers Markets and upcoming holiday events: Healdsburg Christmas Market | Dec 1; Orsi Family Italian Christmas Market, Healdsburg | Dec 2; Santa Rosa Christmas Market | Dec 16.

[Relish Culinary Adventures](#): wild mushroom foraging. Online.

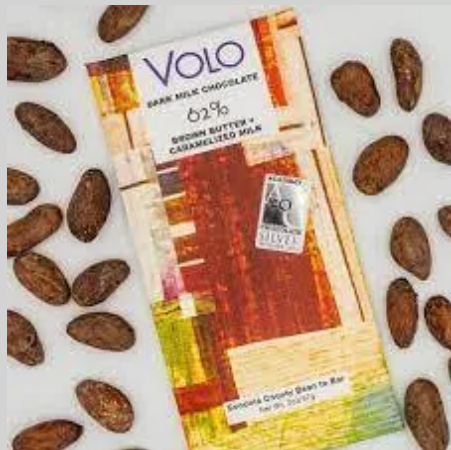
[Tallgrass Ranch Olive Oil](#): you can purchase at The Epicurean Connection.

[Tilted Shed Ciderworks](#): for all your cider needs, made with local organic and sustainable apples. Brick-and-mortar and online.

[Volo Chocolate](#): chocolate, need we say more! Various brick-and-mortar shops, farmers markets, online and upcoming holiday events: Healdsburg Christmas Market | Dec 1; Bacchus Landing Holiday Bazaar, Healdsburg | Dec 2/3.

Support local businesses this holiday season!

Gogouette Bread



Our Newest Snails!

We are thrilled to award five more food businesses the Snail of Approval. Our most recent approvals are:

[Americana Sebastopol](#): farm-to-table classic American-style comfort food

[Fourteen Magpies Handmade Jams & Preserves](#): all natural, handmade, low sugar, small batch jams,

jellies and preserves

[Goulette Bread](#): organic, levain, French country style bread

[Psychic Pie](#): sourdough, al taglio, local, seasonal pizza

[Volo Chocolate](#): handmade bean-to-bar craft chocolate, ethically sourced

For a full list, visit our [website](#).

Membership

Welcome New Chapter Members!

Barbara Fitzharris Barbara Leblanc Emily Shartin

[Join or renew your membership online](#) and list Sonoma County North-CA as your chapter. If you prefer to renew locally by check, please download our [membership form](#) and follow the instructions. Several times a year, Slow Food USA promotes **Pay What You Can Day** where you can join or renew for any amount on one day only. Watch your email for these promotions.

A Note about Our Newsletter Team

Ellen Shick has produced the Spotlight column for 4 years with interviews of our members who are in the food business. October's column was her last as she is moving on to new adventures. Ellen, thank you for bringing us such valuable information about so many producers! Starting with this December issue, Allison Eckert will be our Spotlight editor. Welcome, Allison! Lisa Hunter has written the Feature articles, and Kate Hendricks will be taking this on starting in 2024. Carol Diaz, Director of Communications, weighs in about the Snail of Approval and holds everything together.



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