



Portland Store Proudly Partners with Local Nonprofit to Advance Food Justice for All



Holly Aker | Portland Store Portland, ME

As a Local Forager, Holly spends a lot of time connecting Team Members with local producers and mission-aligned community partners in Maine. She believes that engaging with our partners is the key to understanding our entire food system and **the role each of us plays** in its growth and success. When we connect with people from different parts of the food system, like small suppliers and farmers, we can **better understand each other** and work to solve common goals—such as expanding access to healthy foods. While the store’s produce team already has a working relationship with Cultivating Community, Holly is hoping to **create new pathways** to increase Team Member engagement with the nonprofit’s community gardens and teen farming program. “I would like our Team Members to understand who these farmers are and who the participants are—and want to be involved in **helping them succeed.**”

Cultivating Community cultivatingcommunity.org

Cultivating Community grows sustainable communities by **expanding access** to healthy, local food; empowering children, youth and adults to play diverse roles in **restoring the local, sustainable food systems**; and modeling, teaching and **advocating for ecological food production**. They support and manage **diverse urban growing spaces**, enabling community members to grow their own food; run agricultural-based **youth empowerment programs** for teens and school garden programs; and operate Maine’s largest land-based **farmer training** program, which is tailored to help refugees and immigrants seeking to return to their agricultural roots as a way of building a pathway out of poverty. The farmer training program is leveraged to create food access across the greater community.



Whole Foods Market Team Members can nominate a local nonprofit increasing access to fresh, healthy food or nutrition education for a \$5,000 grant.

WholeCitiesFoundation.org