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DINE FOR DEMOCRACY LAUNCHES NATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR VOTING RIGHTS
Acclaimed Chefs, Bakers, and Restaurants Across the U.S. Sign-On in Support

BERKELEY, CA (July 13, 2020) – DINE FOR DEMOCRACY is a campaign of collective action to support free and fair elections through the joyful act of sharing food. Organized by a small volunteer team of artists, educators, activists, and food lovers the campaign began in 2018 in the San Francisco Bay Area out of concerns about historic voter disenfranchisement and voter suppression that disproportionately affects people of color in the United States and leads to unequal representation in government.

Project founder and artist Lena Wolff writes, “Dine for Democracy is driven by the belief that the right to vote is a fundamental component of a functioning and inclusive democracy. We also know that inequities exist in our voting systems that must be corrected in order to have real representation of the people, by the people – in other words, a *true* democracy.”

In this critical election year and in the midst of Covid-19, the campaign expanded into a national effort to bring a community of chefs, restaurants, bakers, and diners together to uplift the cause of voter engagement and voting rights. Because of the impacts of the pandemic, restaurants and chefs are not required to contribute financially to the campaign unless they’re able. Instead, donations are driven by a model of cross-promotion in which all participants are encouraged to “DINE + DONATE.” (Donations are made separately and independently from food orders through the Dine for Democracy portal.)

Dine for Democracy 2020 is anchored around 5 events on the first Friday of each month from June-October (with 3 events remaining across the country on August 7th, September 4th, and October 2nd). While the campaign promotes heightened engagement around each first Friday event, supporters are encouraged to “DINE + DONATE” at any time.

The Dine for Democracy Voting Fund (set up through the umbrella organization Movement Voter Project) benefits 5 grassroots groups led by youth and communities of color:

- The Alliance for Youth Action
- Black Voters Matter Fund
- Mi Familia Vota (AZ + TX)
- Montana Native Vote (MT)
- Woke Vote

Together, these 5 organizations are working in key states to uplift the vote amongst low-propensity voters, communities of color, and youth. (100% of all donations are re-granted directly to the 5 groups in the fund.)

Since its May 2020 launch, the project has gained significant momentum with more than 90 restaurants, chefs, and bakers participating in 22 cities and six states. A list of all-star chefs and restaurants have signed on including: Zuni Café, State Bird Provisions, The Progress, Hog Island Oyster Co., Josey Baker Bread (San Francisco); Brown Sugar Kitchen, Top Chef Alum Tu David Phu, doña, Jusla Eats (Oakland); Bakery Four (Denver); Chez Panisse Alum Chef Cal Peternell, Bartavelle, Revival Bar + Kitchen, Standard Fare (Berkeley); Anchor and Sail (Cohasset, MA); Mission Chinese, Da Claudio (NYC), HENRY PUBLIC, Lighthouse, Ops (Brooklyn); and more. (A complete list of restaurants is available on the Dine for Democracy website.)

Chef Tanya Holland Chef, owner of Brown Sugar Kitchen in Oakland wrote about why she signed on, saying, “In light of recent protests and the Black Lives Matter movement, it's as important as ever to vote this November in the 2020 Elections. I love the concept of Dine for Democracy - we all have to eat & we all have to vote!”

Former Chez Panisse Chef Cal Peternell summed up his reason for joining saying: “I'm participating in Dine for Democracy because we need to use everything, our strength, our spirit, our tenacity, and every last skillet, spatula, and whisk to make every voice in America heard and counted this November.”

To date, the initiative has raised over \$15,000 (\$5,000 in June and \$10,000 in July) with a total goal of \$200,000 by November. In addition to raising critical funds for grassroots voting organizations led by youth and people of color and bolstering beloved local restaurants across the country at a time when they need it most, Dine for Democracy brings the culinary community together in a new way to advocate and support one of the most fundamental values of a real representative democracy: the right to cast a ballot. The effort is a fun and creative way for restaurants and the public to participate in upholding this basic right in the lead up to the most critical election of our lifetime.

For more information, visit <https://dinefordemocracy.com/> or email us at: hello@dinefordemocracy.com and connect on Instagram @dinefordemocracy.

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ABOUT DINE FOR DEMOCRACY

Dine for Democracy was initiated to bring people together to support free and fair elections through the joyful act of sharing food. Organized by a small group of artists, activists, and food-lovers in the San Francisco Bay Area, the project is driven by the belief that the right to vote is a fundamental component of a functioning democracy. Through the campaign, a community of chefs, bakers, restaurants, and concerned citizens come together to support this basic right and uplift voter engagement across the country.

ABOUT THE ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTED BY THE DINE FOR DEMOCRACY VOTING FUND

[Black Voters Matter Fund](#)

[Woke Vote](#)

[The Alliance for Youth Action](#)

[Mi Familia Vota](#) AZ + TX

[Montana Native Vote](#)

ABOUT THE ORGANIZERS

Mariah Castle is an activist, educator, and theatre artist in the Bay Area. She is the co-facilitator of a Berkeley chapter of Solidarity Sundays, “a nationwide, progressive, feminist, anti-racist activist group committed to resisting and working for peace, justice, and equity”.

Hadley Dynak is a cultural producer and nonprofit consultant who works to connect people to one another and the pressing issues of today. She is the founder of the creative consultancy [PEAK86](#) which uses art, events, content, and digital campaigns to drive people to action.

Lena Wolff is an interdisciplinary visual artist, craftswoman and activist for democracy. Her work has been presented in galleries and museums across the US and the Mayor of Berkeley recently named a day in her honor for her endeavors that merge art and civic engagement. She worked in some of the Bay Area’s most beloved restaurants for years as she built her art practice.

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