

SOUTH LA TO HOST NATIONAL SUMMIT OF YOUTH FOOD JUSTICE LEADERS

For Immediate Release

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Hundreds of youth advocates for food justice will convene in South Los Angeles for the 15th annual Rooted in Community [Youth Leadership Summit](#), to be held from July 24 to July 28. Hosted by South LA's own [Community Services Unlimited \(CSU\)](#), the theme of this year's summit is "Reclaiming Our Land, Reclaiming Our Roots." The event will feature youth-led workshops, field trips, creative activism, great food and much more.

Rooted in Community (RIC) is a national grassroots network of youth and adults working together toward community resilience through urban and rural agriculture, community gardening, food security, culinary training, social enterprise, and environmental justice work. The Centers for Disease Control predict that one in three of today's youth will develop diabetes in their lifetime, but these youth are confronting that head on: "As youth, we are on the frontlines of our broken food system – that's what motivates us to make real change. Like all movements for justice in our country's history, we believe youth are the catalyst for systemic change", says 20-year old youth organizer and 2012 Brower Youth Award winner Maya Salsedo from Oakland, CA. At the summit, participants and mentors will cultivate skills and share strategies for youth leadership in food justice and community organizing.

The RIC network will culminate the summit with a Day of Action - entailing an array of educational activities, including a youth press conference on Saturday, July 27, 2013 at 4:15 pm at Mercado la Paloma, 3655 South Grand Ave. Young leaders will announce their work with the Youth Food Bill of Rights Campaign and opportunities for communities to participate in it locally and nationwide. Prominent urban farmer and author Will Allen -- 2008 MacArthur Foundation "Genius Grant" awardee and one of Time Magazine's Worlds 100 Most Influential People -- will deliver a keynote address. Chef Bryce Fluellen of YAMS catering will also lead Southern-inspired healthy food cooking demos. Youth will express themselves through hip-hop, spoken-word poetry, arts and media production to spread their message for food justice and equitable access to land.

Workshops and events will be held at several South Los Angeles sites, including the University of Southern California, Normandie Avenue Elementary School, and the Mercado la Paloma. Field trips will bring participants to a number of historic and culturally relevant locales across Los Angeles, including the Watts Towers and the Downtown Los Angeles historic district. A variety of different approaches to urban agriculture and community gardening will also be featured, ranging from the common farming spaces of Proyecto Jardín in Boyle Heights, to the seaside garden plots of Mar Vista's Ocean View Farms, to Community Services Unlimited's urban mini-farm at Exposition Park.

Community Services Unlimited, Inc. (CSU) is thrilled to be the local host for this exciting and inspiring event. CSU's vision is to build a sustainable food system from the ground up in South Central LA, all while training local youth, creating real jobs and building the local economy. Through the organization's award-winning "Village Market Place" social enterprise, CSU sells and distributes fresh "beyond organic" produce from their own urban mini-farms and from other local farmers.

With partners from across Los Angeles and across the nation, this year's Rooted in Community summit is expected to be the largest in the 15 year history of the event. At a time in which intersecting policies and practices related to the economy, immigration, nutrition and agriculture all threaten the sustainability of the food system, the network's growth comes at a time when hard work, dedication and collaboration is needed more than ever. Through RIC, youth are staying at the forefront of this work.

For more information about Rooted in Community and the RIC Youth Leadership Summit, including detailed schedule information and media availability, check out www.youthfoodbillofrights.com and contact Maya Salsedo at [831-332-7756](tel:831-332-7756). For more information about the local sponsor, CSU, call [213-746-1216](tel:213-746-1216) and check out www.CSUInc.org