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by Paul Young, AmeriCorps VISTA

Guest blogger Paul Young is an AmeriCorps VISTA member serving at the University of New Hampshire on Food Security and other Basic Needs initiatives. Paul has a passion for food systems and how they interact with climate change, health, opportunity and so much more.

While working at UNH, in addition to working with the Sustainability Institute on the 21 Day Challenge, he has helped launch a food repurposing kitchen and the [Cats' Cupboard](#) (the UNH food pantry).

Photos Courtesy of Grandy Organics

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In this installment of UNH Eats Equitably, we are looking at a fascinating company that puts their money where their mouth is.

[Grandy Organics](#), rebranded from GrandyOats in February is a 40 year old company that was initially founded by some hiking friends “who cared deeply about the earth and believed in making a positive impact on people and the planet.” I had the pleasure of talking to Evan Connolly, the Marketing Manager for Grandy Organics.



In the early 2000’s the company changed hands and the new owners wanted the whole product line to be 100% organic. This took a few years but in 2003 they were fully organic, and all of their products are still USDA Organic certified today. Organic farming has been shown to improve soil and plant health, wildlife habitats, and biodiversity. The land used to cultivate the ingredients made for Grandy Organics’ products has no chemical fertilizers, pesticides, or genetically modified seeds.

When asked about the core value of Grandy Organics, Evan said that “everything done [at Grandy Organics] is done with an eye on [sustainability](#). By focusing on what is good for the planet and in a business sense, we can continue having a positive impact.”

Since their inception, Grandy Organics has viewed their business as a way to create positive change in their community as well as the wider world. Their view of doing what is right for our environment does not end with sustainable farming and clean air. Caring about the environmental sustainability of their company also means the environment people live in. Racial and social justice is part of Grandy Organics’ views of sustainability. Roughly six times a year, Grandy Organics partners with non-profit organizations as part of their [Grandy Giving campaign](#). Each Grandy Giving partnership lasts for a month and a portion of their website sales goes to that organization. Some of their

past partnerships include non-profits like the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), Equality Maine, Full Plates Full Potential and Black Lives Matter. A lot of their ingredients are sourced from inside of North America to ensure proper organic and fair trade standards. They have also expanded their fair trade certified suppliers to ensure the farms and workers are paid and treated fairly.

Similarly, to their donations to help social justice issues, Grandy Organics thinks the best way to improve access to organic food is with their checkbook. Things, like solar panels and plant based meat alternatives,



that are environmentally friendly often start off by being prohibitively expensive to the average person or company. The price for these interventions comes down as more people and companies buy them. This shows that there is a market for them, and, with increased interest, more research is done on how to improve them. For example, when Grandy Organics first began using compostable packaging it was extremely expensive because not many people were using it and the business, they were buying them from did not want to hold a lot of them in inventory. Once Grandy Organics and other locations began buying more compostable packaging, the price came down.

The same is true with the organic movement:

“Organic farming is more expensive due to the additional work necessary, and the lower supply compared to conventional farming. If we can [use our money] to help expand the organic movement, that will bring down prices for everyone and make organic food more accessible to everyone.”,



Another way Grandy Organics shows their commitment to sustainability and best practices is with their newest facility. In 2015, Grandy Organics, instead of constructing a new facility, purchased an

unoccupied elementary school in Hiram, Maine and renovated it to meet their needs. They installed 288 solar panels in a nearby field and that array can generate up to 95,000 kWh of clean, renewable energy a year. This is enough energy to offset 145,000 pounds of GHG emissions, the equivalent of driving round trip from Hiram, Maine to San Francisco 25 times. All of their products are made in this facility.

Through their actions, Grandy Organics shows their commitment to environmental and social sustainability and justice in everything they do. Whether that is donating to important causes, implementing expensive best practices, or expanding their commitment to organic, Grandy Organics is proof that a company can be successful and still make a huge, positive impact on the world.

Grandy Organic's granola was featured in the UNH Holloway Commons on April 9, 2022 during the [21-Day Racial Equity Habit Building Challenge](#).

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