

JUST ONE THING

Title: Urban Farming in Boston

Company/Organization: John Benford Photography

Type of Organization: For profit

Number of Employees: <100

Category: Community

Challenge or Opportunity: Since the end of the Civil War, 98% of the land owned by Black farmers has been transferred to white or corporate owners, fueled by racist policies: discriminatory lending, fraudulent tax assessments, etc. At the same time, housing segregation driven by redlining and other discriminatory practices, and "grocery store redlining" have created a food apartheid, where Black and brown neighborhoods have far fewer grocery stores and more fast food and junk food outlets than white ones.

Approach or Solution: I contacted Boston Farms Community Land Trust, which acquires abandoned urban lots in Black and brown neighborhoods and converts them to farms in partnership with the Urban Farming Institute, which trains farmers and operates several urban farms in greater Boston. I offered them pro bono photography services to create updated marketing photos for them and their farmers. So far we have completed one photo project at Tommy's Rock Farm in Roxbury with Sabrina's Garden, a flower farm.

Impact: To be determined. BFCLT and Sabrina's Garden have some beautiful new photos to use in their marketing, but haven't had a chance to do anything with them yet. We will pitch the story to several magazine outlets. I get to connect with people outside my usual circles and expand my world. And we're developing an ongoing relationship, that hopefully will involve multiple photography projects.