

Topic of Interest: Food Justice in Food Deserts

The term “food desert” is one associated with a number of areas within El Paso, Texas. One Grub Community (OGC), El Paso’s only all plant-based restaurant, is located within a zip code officially designated as a food desert. The co-owners of the restaurant, a wife/husband partnership who describe themselves as food social entrepreneurs, have taken on the responsibility to increase the access to good, healthy, and delicious food for residents living within or near the boundaries of a food desert area. The owners of OGC have implemented a number of programs to its daily operation and launched a non-profit organization, “Planty for the People,” to make the space of OGC a site of food access in a much-needed area.

Addressing the topic of food justice with OGC’s co-owner Adriana Wilcox will provide an opportunity to learn what “hands-on” food justice involves. Where does a young couple, one a chef by training and one with a business background, get a desire to make their living by making as much good food available to as many as possible? What are the challenges and the rewards of transforming the face of a food desert designated area? Is the massive multimillion-dollar food industry the root of food deserts? Are food deserts the result of an area’s socio-economic make-up or its ethnic and racial make-up? Is the engine that drives a food justice cause the food itself or the network of people and community that is created while working for a society with food equality? Fundamentally these are the questions I hope to explore by speaking with Adriana Wilcox.