

# Rick Nahmias LiveWell Interview Transcript

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food, produce, community, volunteers, years, growing, people, great, organization, rick, fruit, students, trees, started, work, coachella valley, waste, ucla, abundance, day

## SPEAKERS

Dr. Wendy Slusser, Rick Nahmias

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**R** Rick Nahmias 00:00

That food forward can touch, potentially a quarter million people a day with what it does in plant based nutrition is a really something I'm very proud of. I'm very proud of the team that makes that happen.

**D** Dr. Wendy Slusser 00:13

Hi LiveWell listeners! Welcome back! Today, we are going to hear how going on a simple walk turned into noticing an awareness of surplus citrus on trees which then turned into collecting that produce and donating it to local food pantries. Well, flash forward 15 years, Rick Nahmias and his team at Food Forward are still transporting produce to communities in need; but now, it's nearly 90 million pounds of food and dozens and dozens of team players. As Rick mentions later in this episode, around 40% of food created becomes food waste -- this is not only a threat to mother earth, but it is in fact an opportunity to step in and re-route that could-be food waste into nutritious, accessible, and free produce for communities in California. Today, we hear that story, and much more thanks to our special guest, Rick Nahmias. Enjoy. So welcome, Rick, it's such a pleasure to have you on this podcast for all of our listeners. I just like to share a little bit of a background on Rick and we'll hear more as we move forward. But he's a fearless founder and CEO of food forward, and a gifted and award winning storyteller through the art of photography and writing. And I won't say too much more, as we will talk more about his organization and what led him to work in food justice in this podcast episode, but to set the stage food forward to celebrating their 15th anniversary and as a food recovery nonprofit, bringing wholesome nutritious food to communities experiencing food insecurity, and simultaneously reducing food waste for people and the planet. I get that right. You got it. You got it right on. Rick is also a graduate of the Culinary Institute of America as a trained chef and serves on the LA Food Policy Council, and is a recipient of many accolades such as the LA City Council food champion, a 2017 18, senior fellow at our UCLA Luskin School of Public Policy, and one of 40 inspiring leaders awarded by the Center for nonprofit management. So welcome. Welcome, Rick. And thank you for taking the time out of your schedule to chat with us today.

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Rick Nahmias 01:38

It's my pleasure. Thank you, Wendy.

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Dr. Wendy Slusser 01:39

Okay, so let's get started. And I'd like to dive into some of the nitty gritty questions about Food Forward so our listeners can get a feel for your work. Your story of how you got started is such an inspirational one, and I think really can activate others to take action. And I'd love you just to give us a little bit of a snippet from very beginning of how you got going.

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Rick Nahmias 02:04

Sure. So in 2009, I was, you know, in a kind of thriving photography career, but I was also volunteering for the Obama administration's, you know, for the election around trying to get Obama in the White House as well as the No on Prop Eight campaign, which is around marriage equality. And as several people who were around then No, it was kind of a political whiplash. We got Obama in the White House, but many of us who were then legally married, saw our rights evaporate overnight. And it was really difficult. And so I said to myself, look, I've been working at a state and national level here. As a volunteer and activist, I need to do something in my own community. And around that time, I'm just walking an older dog that was taken slower and slower walks in my neighborhood out in Valley Glen here in the Valley. I was just seeing a lot of fruit go to waste. What a lot of people don't know is the San Fernando Valley 100 years ago was the home of commercial fruit and not orchards. And I live in an area that had both of those and so you know, beautiful trees just hanging dripping with tangerines, or avocados would just go to waste. And so I decided to do a little experiment at a friend's house and say, what if we harvested your fruit and got it to a local food pantry really simple, take a place from abundance, move it to a place of need, have volunteers be the change makers in that process. And lo and behold, the food went to soba, which is a Jewish Family Services pantry out here in Van Nuys, that serves people of all faiths and backgrounds and just was kind of like a bolt of lightning. It felt great. It was great for the trees, it was great for the homeowners, it was great for the people getting the fruit. So that first year, it just scaled very quickly. We saw a lot of people wanting to get into community activism based on the Obama administration's push to kind of be the change you want to see. And to my delight, it just was kind of the first time I ever really felt not just like a little wind behind my sails, but just like Gus, and it just kept moving. And after that first year of work with all volunteers and you know, ragtag garages and dumpster diving for boxes, and not even a nonprofit behind us, we moved about 100,000 pounds of hemp pick fruit, which was again, really an amazing feat. And then on top of that, we just saw growing interest in the food scene as the Food Network started taking off. And, you know, celebrity chefs started becoming a thing. And so we said there's something here and there's something here to really dig into, you know, Flash forward to today with all of our three programs, especially the big baby, which is the wholesale recovery program. We're moving about three to 400,000 pounds a day of diverse produce to about 13 counties across the state and seven additional states and tribal lands throughout the year. So we've scaled quite a bit in 15 years. We are, you know what we call a b2b business to business solution, if you will, we will do anything from harvest a tree, or glean at a farmers market. But with the wholesale program we are set are a hub that can actually disseminate it to a community fridge in Compton, or the YMCA that might have 17 feeding sites. We work at that kind of toggling of scale, which is another unique thing that food forward brings to the table is that ability to work

with agencies that are really micro, or ones that are regional, we've now have a staff of about 50 people, and 1000s of volunteers still that do those backyard harvests and add an additional the farmers market. So it's been a, an incredible journey from that first genesis of just kind of one or two people and one or two trees and, you know, making those connections.

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Dr. Wendy Slusser 05:53

Wow, that just takes my breath away hearing you say it in a matter of a few minutes, a 15 year journey. I really find it cool that it was a dog. It was an observation. It was a time where Obama had a motto, right? Yes, we can. And you had a skill set already in place of activism, and you mobilized your your own strengths and interests to do something that just grew to tremendous scale. If I recall, like the number of fruits and vegetables per day now, thanks to you is what's the number about a quarter?

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Rick Nahmias 06:30

Well, it's actually we just kind of closed out 2023 numbers. And we did over 87 million pounds last year, as opposed to the 100,000 pounds in the first year. So at 87 million pounds, we're seeing about 270,000 people receiving produce. Now, I should I should qualify that and saying we move the produce that would give the 270,000 people their five servings a day, according to the USDA, because of all of the folks that do take the baton the last mile for us. And that's hundreds of hunger relief partners that we have throughout these counties that I mentioned, most of them in Los Angeles, of course, it's very hard to get the metrics of how many people and how many unique people they feed. But as you know, there are a ridiculous and shameful amount of people who are food insecure across the state. I think Cal matters released a study in the last quarter of 23. That stated I think one in three individuals in California are food insecure. And when you look at how much food is either grown here, or lands here, that's that's just a shameful number, that food forward can touch, potentially a quarter million people a day with what it does in plant based nutrition. Is it really something I'm very proud of, I'm very proud of the team that makes that happen, warehouse workers that are at the warehouse at three or 4am in the morning, and any number of other things that make it home, you know, communications team development team and whatnot. Wow,

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Dr. Wendy Slusser 08:06

that I'm just in awe of the production and the outcome that you've been able to do within the last 15 years. And I think that for the listeners, it would be great if you could sort of help everyone understand what food insecurity means or what's the definition of one out of three individuals are identified as food insecure and stir?

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Rick Nahmias 08:29

Sure, you know, we do follow a lot of the guidelines of the USDA, which we feel in the last three years or so has really kind of upped its game as far as looking at nutrition. And so we're kind of looking at the USDA definition, which is something they define as a lack of consistent and equitable access to healthy, safe and affordable food that promote optimal health and well

being. I mean, that's their formal definition. So basically, we're talking about an adequate access to healthy food. In short and long term. It doesn't have to be just you know, for a week or two, if it goes on longer. That's food insecurity as well. And you know, it creates nutritional hardships, and, you know, negatively affects one's overall quality of life on many fronts. But

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Dr. Wendy Slusser 09:16

you're pointing out in terms of food security or insecurity is the ripple effect of what happens to individuals or communities, if they are food insecure is really, luck can be long lasting. I mean, we see it absolutely university setting we unveiled in last 10 years, similar data to California data that there are communities on our university campuses, that one out of three are food insecure, and that can impact their ability to graduate.

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Rick Nahmias 09:45

And also, to learn I mean, the brain functions and all the things and, you know, I know that we sunk up early on when UCLA really took this by the horns and said, Hey, we've got students that need food on campus and we also have students that want to watch Read this. And again, it was a real honor to be able to facilitate the connection of the student laborer that wanted to get out and volunteer on West Side farmers markets where we were just growing a presence and adopting a farmer's market, glean, if you will, which is the collection of excess produce at the end of a farmer's market session, and then bringing that produce back to UCLA. And then you know, allotting a good chunk of it to stay on campus, it's been really wonderful to see students not only attack the issue, you know, there are other organizations like swipe out hunger and others that are were student led. But it's been lovely to see that kind of ecosystem and that sense of empathy. And that sense of we can take a problem and in a sense, really make a big dent in it from where we sit as students. Yes,

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Dr. Wendy Slusser 10:48

Yes, you just brought up so many memories of Savannah Gardener and other students that you inspired to work in the community during a food justice, summer internship. And that's I think, when we first met and yeah, yeah, and that was about 10 years ago.

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Rick Nahmias 11:08

It was and it just the openness to it, I think, you know, if there's a superpower to food forward, it's its simplicity. And something that for me has always and it happens weekly, harks back to first of all, I mean, I'm not a religious person, but you can you can track this back to the book of roots, you know, the idea of gleaning farmers leaving something in their field for those who are underserved, underrepresented, and you flash that forward to today, and how many ways in which we as a city, and as a region have so much, you know, we we do see just so much abundance here, and I think, metaphorically, the oranges and the grape fruits and all the things that grow in so many yards that we see is an easy way for folks to get into that concept of sharing and sharing abundance, I'll tell you, you know, is our main warehouse of produce pitstop. And it was just incredible to see everything from bags of, you know, peanuts, to fennel

to ghost peppers to, you know, I think it's like about 400 types of produce on an average year that we move through the organization. And just knowing that, that that kind of variety, and that richness of nutrition is really not available for free to most of these communities from any other resource. And if that's what we do, that's great. Let's stick with it. And let's keep it simple. And let's keep people whether they're five years old, or they're 85 years old, involved in this really system of sharing.

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Dr. Wendy Slusser 12:39

What you're expressing also is your superpower of inspiring others and having them have the capacity to share. If someone was listening to this and said, Hey, I'd love to try this in my own state or whatever. Where would you start? Like, what would be your advice to them?

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Rick Nahmias 12:55

Well, to me, there's always been like a three legged stool to food for there is a need, right? So you plug into where is the food needed? How big is that community? And what do they need? We've been very intentional about really trying to get culturally specific and appropriate foods to people. So it's not just how much is needed and where it's needed. But what is needed, right? Getting the buy in from those folks that this is a partnership, you're getting the produce for free. And we're counting on you to get it to the finish line, and not waste it, not sell it. You know what I mean? It's got to be an understanding that there's a value here. I mean, last year, when it was kind of crazy, we had about a six and a half, just under a six and a half million dollar budget. And that created \$175 million in social impact, which was the value of the produce, but you've got that one store, which is the need, then you need to have obviously the supply, which is whether it's backyard fruit trees, which is all we did for a couple of years before we added farmers market. I mean, it was a scaling up to those three programs, they did not did not happen overnight. So the third leg is, you know, kind of charismatic leadership and people who are coming into it most likely to start unpaid, but really get it and really can keep a simple connection, but do the checks and balances, deal with the logistics, cultivate volunteers cultivate all of these relationships. And then you start to spiral up into compliance and board members and funding and all those things that you and I both know are essential to a healthy and vibrant nonprofit. And the end of the day, it's not rocket science. A lot of it is people and relationships, but you need someone in that third leg. And it's not just one person which is important. It is a team that's built over time. It often starts with one person, but very quickly has to be disseminated because otherwise you lose lose your head or you burnout.

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Dr. Wendy Slusser 14:55

Well I find those pearls of wisdom around these three legged stool that could apply to a lot of different approaches to community organizing community building, you really are such a tremendous storyteller. And I know you touched on a little bit, but I'd love you to tell us about a time you really understood and saw firsthand the impact that food forward had.

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Rick Nahmias 15:20

So you've touched on my background as photographer and my first project that I did was

So, you've touched on my background as a photographer and my first project that I did was called the migrant project. And it brought me into contact with an incredible array of people across California who were able to help me illustrate the human cost of feeding the country through portraits and oral histories. And one of those communities was deep in Coachella Valley, you know, the other side of the tracks, if you will, from Palm Springs, Palm Desert and all the resorts. These were the people who were the maids, and the maintenance people but most importantly, there were farmworkers that often lived in trailer parks and sub standard housing in crowded really horrible conditions. And I documented their lives over two or three trips, and had a pulse on them but kind of lost track as Food Forward started taking its pace. And then, over the pandemic, I was sitting out my backyard and I got a text from a woman who is a nurse, incredible activist. Her name is Rosa Lucas. She's a woman who grew up in Beverly Hills, but she's dedicated her life to engine and health care. And she said Did you see this and it was an article she sent me over my phone about the Coachella Valley lead it's campesina which is a group of farmworker women that come out and be parameterless. And basically bring health care into the fields as volunteers. on their days off from working. The article was about a food distribution that had just started happening in the Coachella Valley. And the food was coming from Food Forward. And to see that connection, go first circle, really, I got first chills. And then I just kind of started crying because it was like to have that ability to be leading an organization, which without me even knowing it found its way back to that community that opened itself up to me about I wasn't close to 20 years ago, to know that we're able to bring food back to them. And again, I've always felt this horrible irony that those people who feed us and harvesting this food are unable to often afford what they're picking for us.

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Dr. Wendy Slusser 17:38

And I'm curious, where communities like that are others? How do you connect with those communities? How do they know about you? And how do you?

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Rick Nahmias 17:47

Yeah, that's a great question. And the short answer is it's not easy. And you know, what we want to do is first do the, on the ground research from Rn to find out is there a hub? Because that's really where we work best? Is there a hub where a 53 foot truck, which is 40 pallets of produce, it's a lot of food can be dropped. And that day can be shared, right. And so we begin by doing the kind of academic research through websites and government channels. But we also just build and build on relationships. We went to City Council offices and nonprofits that were kind of of note and he said, Can you teach us about what you're doing around healthy eating, and if there's anywhere that we can assist. And so we're really looking for robust partnerships where there is a reliability of professionalism, a sense of appreciation for the work it takes for us to get the food there and knowing that again, they can pick up that baton and get it to the finish line. But I'll tell you that the the relationships really take time to develop and with the tribal lands, we became I think all of us who work in food access, very aware of the need during the pandemic. But I think we also need to understand at the same time, issues around food sovereignty. And just because I might have an abundance of watermelons or mangoes are those going to be used and appreciated with tribal foods? Can we supplement with squash corn, beans, tomatoes, right things that might be more tribally centric. I think our rural and isolated work has been really interesting to me because we've been touching communities like all the way up in trona. And we became aware of it through a partner we have that basically said this is a community that is a mining town and has no access to fresh

produce. They basically it's a giant borax mine. And these are folks that basically live off what we would call a company store. Are they have to drive 30 miles to a Walmart to get to the closest grocery store. So we began twice a month drops there and those kinds of things. Again, they had the equipment. But it was like a whole different type of population and challenges than we were finding in farmworker communities or indigenous communities. And when we learned about the population and the chronic need, we said, there's a priority here. But to come back to your question, it's really about kind of learning where there is a critical mass of need, that can absorb a large amount of produce, and then can be, you know, their sweat equity, if you will, is the redistribution of it. So that we're not having a lineup 10 agencies, we line up one and they do the kind of hub and spoke model off that location

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Dr. Wendy Slusser 20:50

I'm digesting this, this whole series of how you make this decision to move on with a different community or a different organization. And it's so extraordinarily thoughtful, and it's a simple mission, but it has a lot of logistic complexity to it. Kathy O'Byrne, who first approached you from our community engagement center here at UCLA. One of the things that why she chose your organization to send our students for Service Learning for internships was because she vetted your organization as one that was true to the mission of helping mentor the next generation. Oh, that's wonderful. Yeah. And she was very discerning, she didn't pick every organization, and you emanate that kind of being true to your work and being a great example for our future leaders.

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Rick Nahmias 21:48

Well, thanks, thanks. That's great to hear, I'll tell you that I love especially in the early brainstorming process to really have our youngest employees and even interns in those meetings, because I was that age. And I know that, you know, it's often hard if you're the youngest one in the room to speak up and throw out a creative idea. But I think the value of having multiple generations in an organization, I mean, this was a crazy idea, taking fruit off a neighbor's tree and getting it to a food pantry. It was really, you know, somewhat out of left field and I value as someone who was an artist and really likes the creative process is to have a lot of people in that collaboration to start. There's a really neat kind of synergy that comes from that.

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Dr. Wendy Slusser 22:34

I love hearing what you just said. And I really feel that each generation has something to contribute. You know, we had an you know, Corby, Kummer, current director of the food and society at the Aspen Institute on our podcast. And he talked about shifting from his past freelance writing jobs, to work that really made a direct impact in the community, I'd like to know what was the shift like for you, in terms of a sense of purpose, you've talked a lot about it, but I'd love to hear a little bit more reflection on it.

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Rick Nahmias 23:03

You know it wasn't easy. I'll tell you that it was, you know, I was I was very comfortable behind

You know, it wasn't easy, I'll tell you that it was, you know, I was I was very comfortable behind a camera or a microphone, doing interviews or portraits, you know, to actually go from having that two dimensional life, which is what we call, you know, paper based art when it's a photographic print or a magazine, you know, to to the four dimensional storytelling where you step out from behind the camera, and you're part of that story. That was awkward. I was self conscious about it. I felt like, you know, I wasn't necessarily something I had earned, because I didn't go to college for that. And, and then I just said, Screw it, we're doing good work. We're consistently keeping the mission focused, throw the rulebook out and just do it. And for me, it was really saying, Okay, you are a reluctant leader, but for whatever reason, you're finding yourself at this moment at this time with this skill set, and with these people and these resources that need direction. And, you know, in a sense, I had done actually some film directing, I had done some shuffling, where you have a crew and they people need to have someone they look to to figure out what's on the menu and when it needs to come up and what needs to be prepped. And so there were there was enough like kernels of, of the skills to develop, but the work itself, and the immediacy of it, Wendy, is what kept me engaged, that literally, you took an orange off of a tree and you put it in a box and that box went to a pantry and someone was fed. When you have that kind of immediacy and engagement and sense of being part of a solution. All the other stuff melted away all the kind of self consciousness of can we do this? Should we grow that, you know, it's like no, this is this is an immediate thing. And this is something that nature has given us and I just found kind of on a spiritual level, it really nourished me to be able to step into this new part of my career. And I guess the the other piece of it, I'd say is I was really intentional and still am, whether it was board members or staff, I was really clear that it was important to curate who you were engaging with long term, I meet every employee before we hire them. And I make sure it feels like there's a mission connect, and a cultural Connect. Because that vibe of doing something that's that's not a glass is half full, but a glass is overflowing. We talk about abundance, that it's not just a buzzword, but it's a it's a way in which we connect and see the world. I want to know that an individual coming in, even if it's a key volunteer position, like a board member, shares that view, or can at least come to understand the value of it.

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Dr. Wendy Slusser 25:57

Oh, totally. I love that. You know, there's so many more questions I have. And I want to know your vision of where you want to be in the next 15 years. But before that, we we haven't touched on another area that you're really impacting, which is Mother Earth. And I'd love for you just to give us the data that you've been gathering about the recovery and what it means in terms of not having that food go to landfill.

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Rick Nahmias 26:24

Yeah, so you know, one of the things that a lot of people don't know, but it's kind of a kind of a dirty secret is that the, you know, food waste in America, like 40% of what we create as food goes to trash, we don't eat it. So that's almost half and that number, sadly, has not moved much in the 10 years that those numbers started coming out from NRDC, issue number one here is that you've got human labor, fertilizer, packaging, road miles, right water, big one here, right? All just just completely wasted to create food that doesn't get nourished. That's kind of offense. Number one offense number two is, well, it doesn't just sit there it actually is a negative because it emits carbon into the air and becomes a huge contributor of climate change. Basically, depending on which study, you look at it's third, fourth or fifth, worldwide,



you know, it would if it was its own country, it would rank up there as far as the biggest emitter of greenhouse gases. So by saving 87 million pounds from that mountain of rotting food, we are also having on the flip side of the coin, not just feeding people, but we're nourishing the planet.

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Dr. Wendy Slusser 27:42

And you've created a model of win win win. I know you've talked a lot about what you've been proud of. But is there something that you haven't mentioned that you're especially proud of in the work that you're doing.

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Rick Nahmias 27:53

Part of our mission that is inspire others to do the same is not taken lightly. You know, thankfully, some of our long tenure board members have been real sticklers about keeping that in our mission statement, although it's a little vague. And having the opportunity to mentor and seed other food recovery efforts continues to be one of those great things we, we'd like to find ways in which we can do more of that. And sometimes it is like a Boy Scout troop that just kind of says, you know, for the next year, our focus is going to be on on gleaning and food recovery. And they become kind of their own little tribe amongst, you know, food for our volunteers and they'll do 16 harvests is and that's that's amazing. You know, I love when people can get bit by the bug of how simple it is. And again, just what it what it means to be an agent of change in that in that food chain.

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Dr. Wendy Slusser 28:47

So empowering for especially young people, but all ages, I think, yeah, well to feel like they can make a difference. So in in 15 years from now, is there a vision or a dream that you have?

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Rick Nahmias 29:00

I mean, clearly the the dream is to always put yourself out of business, right? No, but but as we learn that, as the food industry and the ag world works, there is what we call kind of an insurance policy built into the growing specs. And they will always have more than they need to fill the market or else they're not doing their job. I would love there to be a greater alliance between growers, the USDA and organizations like food forward so that we would have rather than two days notice of those brussel sprouts coming our way maybe two months notice. I would also like to see farmers and folks who are producing this food who really struggle to have a greater tax incentive for donating food. When you look at a company like you know, a fast food chain that can donate burritos or meals that are have a retail value and get \$1 For dollar tax credit for that, why is it that your carrot farmer or your asparagus farmer cannot get that same value for their donations, if that could be changed and streamlines so they're not mired in paperwork at tax time to do it, that would be a win for everybody. And I continue to kind of beat that drum. It's not something that food forward necessarily would directly benefit from. But I think we'd see more donations of fresh produce, rather than things getting dissed under

because it's easier that way. So I'd like to see those two things happen. And those are long term lifts you need, you need multiple administrations that can move those through the bureaucracy, all the stops that it needs to take to get to the finish line.

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Dr. Wendy Slusser 30:45

Really liked those two recommendations. Those are good ideas for people that especially want to focus in on the policy where/

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Rick Nahmias 30:52

Exactly yeah, policy and government work on those fronts will be great. Yes.

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Dr. Wendy Slusser 30:57

we always ask this question to our guests on our live well podcast, what does it mean for you to live well?

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Rick Nahmias 31:04

I would say at this moment in time, it's about balance. It's the balance of really meaningful professional work. And, for me, my private personal life is very much about connecting with nature these last few years. And continuing to do that and have that sense of when I'm not in the COC. I'm disconnected and I get to recharge my batteries. I'm delighted to say I am, I was awarded a sabbatical by the Durfee foundation for this year. And so I get to take a three month break this summer, which I'm delighted about. It's exciting. It's a little intimidating. But I'll be doing that June, July, August, and I will be completely completely disconnected, I cannot get a text, a phone call an email from the office, and vice versa. I mean, they get down to the point where they change your passwords. So that balance will be the first time in my entire professional life, no matter what I've been doing, where I'm actually taking, like a three month break. And returning to the job, you know, it's kind of cool. It's not like after that three months, I have to worry about what's next. So that that will be great, because it's an intense year, it's our 50th anniversary. And for people that are interested, starting in April, we'll be doing these really cool celebrations, whether it's our anti gala the spring melt that happens April 20, at the Henson Studios in Hollywood, community day with some of our farmers market and backyard harvest programs involved. You know, even just stuff that's going to fly all the way into October, there's there's a lot that's going to happen on either side of that sabbatical. And so it's going to be a busy year, plus, we're going to move about, you know, between 87 and 90 million pounds of food again. So keeping the team going, keeping the fundraising going. It's going to be a definitely kind of a milestone year for us on all fronts. Wow.

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Dr. Wendy Slusser 33:01

That sounds like good advice for all of us to have the balance.

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Rick Nahmias 33:05

Yeah. It's I think everyone defines it differently. Yeah, for me, it's definitely personal and professional at this point.

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Dr. Wendy Slusser 33:15

And exciting year to something looks forward to in all respects. Well, thank you again, Rick. It was just a tremendous opportunity, not only to interview you, but to hear more detail about your story and the tremendous work you've done with food forward. And what a year, 15 years.

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Rick Nahmias 33:34

Yeah, it's kind of wild. Well, thank you, Wendy. It's an honor to be connected with you and the whole UCLA group and, you know, continue to really just remember how important students and administration are in solving a lot of these problems. You know, you guys have the biggest petri dish out there and often the resources and most importantly, the will to be changemakers. And really welcome those interactions and just thank you for the opportunity.

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Dr. Wendy Slusser 34:03

I am blown away by the tremendous work that Rick and the entire Food Forward team has accomplished. As we said -- a clear need, an actionable protocol, a strong mission, and a collaborative team is the recipe for success. I hope this episode served as a lightning strike for you, in the same way the fruit trees in the valley did for Rick. Talk to you soon!