

LOCAL BUSINESSES
FOSTER NEIGHBORHOODS
BUILD
COMMUNITY



Mission

Buffalo First! is a community of local independent businesses, nonprofits and concerned citizens committed to building a just, sustainable, and local living economy in Buffalo and Western New York. We encourage people to shop locally as a means to sustainable economic development, while giving independent businesses a united voice to shape better policies with a focus on the triple bottom line—people, planet and profit. The goal is to root more dollars in Buffalo, preserve community, and create a healthier environment.

By the Numbers

The impact of Buffalo First!, its programs and its membership can be seen in the following figures from the past year:

191 donating members
9 nonprofits, 91 independent businesses
and 91 individual citizens

Over the past year, **74** press hits including coverage of IndieSound in Allentown, “Give Local A Chance” campaign, “Move Your Money” campaign and community action taken at Canal Side

4,000+ social media reach
follow Buffalo First! on Facebook
and Twitter

Increase in sales of **62%**
over the previous year reported by
Elmwood Village businesses on Black
Friday, during “Give Local A Chance”
Source: Elmwood Village Association

Over **\$100,000**
pledged by the community to be taken out
of corporate banks and invested in local
credit unions during “Move Your Money”
campaign

Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Supporter,

Over the past year, Buffalo First! has set an unprecedented example for how business and community can collaborate to create a more prosperous and sustainable economy in Buffalo and Western New York.

Our business members are more than employers and profit-makers; they are neighbors, community builders and the starting point for social innovation, aligning commerce with the common good and bringing transparency, accountability, and a caring human face to the marketplace.

Our programs focus on efforts that will continue to make our local independent business owners the most potent change agents in our region and the most uniquely prepared to face challenges with an agility, sense of place, and relationship-based approach others lack. We provide them with skills, resources, networks and support to thrive, and consumer education to increase patronage and change spending habits.

Over the past twelve months, our coalition of business members, nonprofit partners and concerned citizens have certainly given Main Street a united voice. We have engaged with decision-makers from Canal Side to Albany in an effort to advocate for policies that would better support local, sustainable and triple-bottom-line businesses — including passage of Benefit Corporation legislation in New York State in December — and challenge those policies that continue to harm the health and wellbeing of our collective community.

Buffalo First! also spent the past year educating citizens on how they could actively contribute to a thriving local economy — campaigns like “Move Your Money,” which reinvested over \$100,000 in community assets to local credit unions, and our annual holiday push “Give Local A Chance,” which tracked a 62% jump in sales in the Elmwood Village alone from the previous year.





Buffalo First! shares its values with the Business Alliance for Local Living Economies (BALLE):



ownership matters.

With local ownership comes local accountability; when you live in the community where your business decisions are felt, you have the understanding to make better decisions.



place matters.

Supply chain decisions based on choosing local resources—vegetables, energy, timber, finance, and other locally made goods and services—engender a natural respect for the environmental and human resources in a place.



opportunity matters.

We're all better off when we're all better off. With inequality, we miss out on good ideas and relationships, unhappiness increases, and eventually systems collapse. Rather than "every-man-for-himself," we understand that real security comes from community.



nature matters.

All wealth comes from nature. Without respecting natural boundaries and renewal rates for the animals, plants, soil and water on which we depend, we will not have wealth or health for our own species going forward.



we measure what matters.

It's time to start defining our contributions and success by what really matters. Our businesses need to be profitable, but we are motivated by knowledge, creativity, health, happiness, meaningful work, and the ability to provide opportunity to others.



relationships matter most.

Only through cooperation will we be able to rebuild local food distribution or make renewable local energy affordable. We must re-connect eaters with farmers, investors with entrepreneurs, and business owners with the communities and natural places on which they depend. No one can do it alone.

And lastly, we were awarded the honor of hosting the 2013 Business Alliance for Local Living Economies (BALLE) Business Conference for our community's tireless approach to "Rust Belt Localism" and our constituency's dedication to a strong, self-determined local economy. Visiting attendees to the conference and Western New Yorkers alike will have the opportunity to connect, share and learn new ways to build a sustainable future and foster a more robust local living economy.

As the local BALLE affiliate, Buffalo First! and its members are given the unique opportunity to tell our story, engage our community, and bring lasting change to our economic climate through hosting the 11th annual conference. Over four days, the conference will bring over 700 social entrepreneurs, local business network leaders, investors and change agents to Buffalo next June, with an anticipated economic impact of over \$700,000.

Real prosperity starts here! Our goal to work toward a new economic model based on human-scale, thriving local economies that function in harmony with the environment, meet the basic needs of all people, support just and democratic principles, and measure what truly matters will require the involvement of every individual, independent business, and community-led organization. If you're not already part of the local movement, join us!

We appreciate all of your support.

Locally yours,


Sarah E. Bishop
Executive Director
Buffalo First!



Board of Directors

Erica Eichelkraut, City Lights Studio, MAIN(ST)UDIOS, WAM
President

Erica Eichelkraut owns City Lights Studio wedding & portrait photography studio, manages MAIN(ST)UDIOS artist building & gallery, works to promote the 500 Block of Main St and hosts WAM, a monthly Writers/Artists/Musicians Showcase.

Steve Lane, Steve's Wonderful World of Pets
Vice President

“Buffalo has the strong ties of a small town and the openness of a large city. Part of this special quality is embedded in the presence of local merchants that support community in a way that national businesses just can’t do.”

Kelly Maurer, Buffalo Common Wealth, Buffalo Cooperative Federal Credit Union
Treasurer

“Local independent businesses are what make Buffalo Buffalo. The best way to truly show our love for our city and all of its unique character is to support our one-of-a-kind businesses.”

Chris Murawski, Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper
Secretary

“I am very proud to be part of an organization that strives to create an atmosphere of cooperation and mutual respect in our community. When we make a point of nurturing the people around us we create a world that is beneficial for everyone.”

Jonathon Welch, Talking Leaves ...Books

“Locally based small businesses, arts organizations and community-based nonprofits are growing, surviving, creating jobs, keeping people here, paying taxes, building community and forging a unique identity for and pride in this special place.”

Dr. Joe Battin Jr., Battin Eye Care

“For more than fifty years, my family business has enjoyed the support of the community, and has continued to grow as a result. As the third-generation proprietor of Battin Eye Care, I am deeply committed to the ‘Buy Local’ initiative and to supporting the unique businesses that make Buffalo great.”

Sanjay Connare, Connare Tech, Inc.

“Localism isn’t just about shopping local or thinking local. It’s about being local, and being part of a whole. Buffalo is a community-oriented city, and when we invest in that community, we create a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts.”

Todd Salansky, online thymes, llc

“Reduce your carbon footprint. Be local, buy local, support your community.”

Steven Nagowski, Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy

Steven S. Nagowski holds an Undergraduate Degree in Environmental Design and a Masters Degree in Urban Planning from the University at Buffalo.



Buffalo First! receives generous support from the John R. Oishei Foundation. The John R. Oishei Foundation strives to be a catalyst for change to enhance economic vitality and the quality of life for the Buffalo Niagara region. The Foundation was established in 1940 by John R. Oishei, founder of Trico Products Company.

Annual Statement Fiscal Year ending March 31, 2012, figures not audited

CASH INFLOW

Grants & Outside Contributions	\$27,000.00
Direct Public Support	3,293.55
Membership Support	14,710.00
Program Income	3,068.18
Events Income	1,886.00
Fiscal Sponsorship Income	14,381.66
Dividends & Interest	0.02
Other Income	4.35
TOTAL CASH INFLOW	\$64,343.76

CASH OUTFLOW

Program Expenses	\$830.13
Events Expenses	3,256.09
Fiscal Sponsorship Expenses	14,812.69
Business Expenses	87.57
Facilities & Equipment	3,239.65
General Office Operations	4,948.06
Promotion & Advertising	200.00
Insurance	1,258.89
Memberships & Dues	500.00
Staff Development	373.26
Other Expenses	559.78
Payroll Expenses	44,029.46
Travel & Conference	2,872.76
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$76,968.34

Balance Sheet

ASSETS

Cash on Hand	\$8,575.80
Accounts Receivable	1,972.00
Undeposited Funds / Petty Cash / Other Current Assets	205.07
Furniture & Equipment	424.27
Other Assets	400.00
TOTAL ASSETS	\$11,577.14

LIABILITIES & EQUITY

Accounts Payable	\$710.00
Payroll Liabilities	1,015.61
Opening Balance Equity	788.08
Unrestricted Net Assets	21,686.55
Net Income	-12,623.10
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	\$11,577.14

Buffalo First! served as the fiscal sponsor for two local initiatives whose missions align with the goal of a local, green and fair economy in Western New York. The first is the Buffalo Niagara Green Expo, an annual green business fair, and the second is Emerging Leaders in the Arts Buffalo (ELAB), a dynamic group of emerging local artists, arts professionals and mentors who network, support and promote one another.

Buffalo First! is supported by a strong and dedicated membership base. This past year, the organization was bolstered by 191 donating members, including 9 nonprofits, 91 independent businesses and 91 individuals.

Become a Member

Join the movement! Please support us through membership online at buffalofirst.org/register, by calling us at (716) 725-6100 or by using the form below.

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Email _____

Phone _____

Business/Organization Name _____

Business Membership

- Seed (\$100/year) Sapling (\$250/year)
 Tree (\$500/year) Forest (\$1000/year)

Nonprofit Membership

- Seed (\$25/year) Sapling (\$50/year)
 Tree (\$100/year) Forest (\$250/year)

Individual Membership

- Seed (\$10/year) Sapling (\$25/year)
 Tree (\$50/year) Forest (\$100/year)

Checks may be made payable to Buffalo First, Inc. or please provide your credit card information below. Be sure billing address matches the one provided above.

Card Type _____ Name _____
 Card Number _____
 Expiration Date _____ CVV Code _____

2013 BALLE Business Conference in Buffalo

I am interested in more information on:

- Volunteer opportunities
 Sponsorship for my business

Name _____

Email _____

Programs & Initiatives

Benefit Corporations

Buffalo First! is proud to announce that on midnight on December 13th, 2011 a law was enacted creating Benefit Corporations, a new class of corporations required to create benefit for society as well as shareholders. Unlike traditional corporations, Benefit Corporations are required to create a material positive impact on society and the environment; consider how decisions affect employees, community and the environment; and publicly report their social and environmental performance using established third-party standards.

Continuing a national trend of strong bi-partisan support for Benefit Corporation legislation, the New York bill (S79-A and A4692-A), sponsored by Senators Daniel Squadron (D-25) and Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver (D-64) and co-sponsored by William Larkin (R, C-39), passed both houses of the New York legislature unanimously.

Benefit Corporations, the brainchild of B Lab, fill the need for environmentally and socially conscious businesses to lead the way to a more sustainable economy. When companies have a legal responsibility to their employees, consumers, environment and community (not only shareholders) their impact is strikingly more positive, and more profitable.

Bicycle Benefits

In 2011, we partnered with Green Options Buffalo in providing the community with a progressive bicycling program called Bicycle Benefits in order to reward individuals and businesses for their commitment to cleaner air, personal health, and the use of pedaling energy to create a more sustainable community.

#BuffCashMob

The brainchild of Artvoice's Chris Smith, the #BuffCashMob is taking on the economic revitalization of our region, one local independent business at a time. The #BuffCashMob is a "reverse-Groupon. Instead of businesses offering crazy discounts to get people to mob their stores, the Buffalo hivemind is going to take the initiative and spend money for goods and services at posted prices. The best way to promote and grow Buffalo businesses is to support and patronize them." Buffalo First has partnered with #BuffCashMob and Smith to promote local and independent establishments as the cash-mob destinations week in and week out.

Canal Side Community Alliance

Buffalo First! sits on the Steering Committee of the Canal Side Community Alliance, comprised of over 60 community organizations. Through good-faith negotiations, the CSCA continues to push the Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation to make provisions for quality jobs, green design standards, high road economic development principles, and to think local first. In January, Buffalo First! and its business members led an action at ECHDC headquarters to demand at least 50% of retail space at Canal Side be reserved for local merchants.



Give Local A Chance

On Black Friday, stores in the Elmwood Village reported an average 62 percent jump in sales from the previous year. Local independent shopping districts throughout Western New York saw increased traffic and spending this holiday season. In no small part because of the active efforts of local business association marketing campaigns, Buffalo First!'s "Give Local a Chance" initiative saw overwhelming success throughout the region "occupying Black Friday." Buffalo First! also hosted a "Give Local a Chance Marketplace," featuring local artisans and merchants. More and more, people are turning to local independent retailers for their holiday shopping, keeping more of their money in the local economy.



IndieSound in Allentown

On Memorial Day weekend, Buffalo First! presented IndieSound in Allentown, a unique musical experience that showcased local musicians while reconnecting Western New Yorkers with Buffalo's historic Allentown independent business district. From jazz to house music, art galleries to clothing stores, people followed their ears in and out of storefronts from Wadsworth to Main Street and everywhere in between.



Move Your Money

On November 6th, Buffalo First! led Buffalo Bank Transfer Day, part of a national movement, which encouraged people to transfer their savings and loans from large multinational banks to local credit unions, where money literally stays in the community. Buffalo First! held an open community workshop on how to most effectively and responsibly move savings and loans to credit unions in the area. Close to 100 people participated in the protest, and since that time over \$100,000 in community assets have been transferred to Western New York credit unions.



Sustainable Business Workshops

Buffalo First! launched its quarterly series of business workshops aimed at giving local independent proprietors a leg up and a strong network of peers. These business-to-business events serve as a great way to empower our membership, make locally owned business a priority and strengthen our self-determined local economy. Business workshops in 2011 included "Mission-based Event Planning" presented by Jennifer Devor of the Sustainable Business Network of Greater Philadelphia and "#GrowLocal: Social Media and Marketing."

Teaching By Example

In 2011 we launched "Teaching By Example," a lecture series that brought one local expert every month to speak and answer questions on their work, their story and their contributions to a new economy in Western New York. Speakers included Kevin and Melissa Gardner of Five Points Bakery, Tyra Johnson of Blue Sky Design Supply, investigative reporter Jim Heaney, city planner Chris Hawley, Geoff Kelly of Artvoice, Prish Moran of Sweetness 7 Café, Tim Bartlett of the Lexington Cooperative Market and Aaron Bartley of PUSH Buffalo.





Unidos jamás
Serán Vencidos
Puerto Rico Bakery #2 (544 Niagara)



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www.buffalofirst.org

To all our members and supporters, thank you.