



## Spotlight on Equity: FoodCorps Conversation Transcript

### **Dr. Jeannine Rios, Senior Manager, No Kid Hungry Center for Best Practices**

Hello everyone. My name is Dr. Jeannine Rios. We're coming to you from the Center for Best Practices at Share A Strength, and we want to bring you some stories from organizations across the country who are implementing practices at work and in their communities that are grounded in equity. And as you're going to hear today from our guest at FoodCorps, an organization that partners with schools and communities, it's dedicated to nourishing kids, their health, their education, and their sense of belonging. We're going to hear from our guest Morgan McGee, she's the director of school and nutrition leadership. She's going to share more about how they do this and how has their journey been to create a more equitable program and workspace, and their influence in doing that. And so without further ado, I want to welcome our guest, Morgan McGee. Hey Morgan.

### **Morgan McGhee, MPH, RD, Director School Nutrition Leadership FoodCorps**

Hi. Hello everyone listening in.

### **Dr. Jeannine Rios**

I know that with your work at FoodCorps, you do a lot with schools and you do a lot with equity work. But first I really wanted to know more about how you ended up where you are. Like what brought you to where you are in your career and what brought you to California?

## Morgan McGhee

Yeah, so it's funny, I would say my journey actually started here in California. I did a graduate school program that was a coordinated program in dietetics. So I studied public health, nutrition and dietetics. And through my internship rotation in school food, I was completely blown away. I was at the world renowned Riverside Unified and it was just so amazing that staff showed up every day excited to feed children, they enjoyed their jobs, the children loved the salad bars that were happening. There was nutrition education was an option. And it was just, as a young person, I thought you can really create workplaces where people are happy and joyful. And instead of people not liking their jobs, they loved it and wanted to come every day and felt honored and proud. And so that really was where the fire was ignited through my internship, which honestly just brings the importance of just exposure and internships.

And it has taken me on quite the journey. And so I moved away from here about six and a half years ago. I moved to the East coast after the sort of Riverside experience to really get experience at a much larger district. And that experience gave me the operational side of school food, which was really important. Riverside, I was doing mostly nutrition education through a, really actually through Snap Ed. And when I transitioned to the East Coast, I was able to do more operations, being a program administrator for the child and adult care food program as well as for summer food service programs. So still doing nutrition education and I jokingly say, "And other duties as assigned." Just kind of a catchall for special projects working with Chef Ann and United Produce, that now has a new name for bringing salad bars to schools and promoting that. And just various things throughout my three years there. And then started working for FoodCorps and I'm like, "If I can work anywhere and work from home, why not work where it's sunny?" So I transitioned back to California about six months ago.

## Dr. Jeannine Rios

That is wonderful. I've been, since leaving California, I just remembered that we did talk about that we're both from California originally. Once you leave, it is hard to get back unless you have that economic ability to get back. I don't know that I'll ever get there.

## Morgan McGhee

Yeah. Well I'm actually not originally from here. But yes, I grew up here in the sense that I was on my own. I didn't have any family, family around and I became an adult here. But I'm originally from the south and my heart will always be in the south as well.

## Dr. Jeannine Rios:

No, for real. I feel like yes, we were raised by our parents and then we grew up when we went to college. And we had to actually do-

**Morgan McGhee:**

Yes, and start paying bills.

**Dr. Jeannine Rios:**

...stuff on our own. And so tell us a little bit more about FoodCorps and the work in schools that you do. What the mission is of the organization and what really drew you to this work?

**Morgan McGhee:**

Yeah, I would say it's so interesting the path that this life takes you on. And I remember when I first saw this position description in 2019 and it was almost as if the job was written specifically for me. And I was just like, "Wait, what?" It sort of combined all of these areas and school food that I really loved. And one of that, that kind of essential part, was being a preceptor. So working in a school district, there was neighboring universities and undergraduate universities, all types of universities that students needed to do complete their hours or they were taking a community nutrition class and they wanted some kind of hands-on experience. And that sort of leadership development aspect was something that really brought a lot of joy to me.

But I also still really loved school food, but knew that the sort of bureaucratic side of becoming a director and working through some of those challenges wasn't really who I was. I did my master of public health because I like program design. I like being able to set up systems and look at systems to see, "Okay, well who are the players? What are the roles they play? How can we get the right people in the right seats at the right time to move things forward?" And really that was honestly because my director, which I owe a lot to, Rodney Taylor at the time, sort of instilled that in me. I was an intern in the district and then I became a full-time employee. And it was just messaging on that, and it was school food was really shown to me as systems work.

And so when the opportunity came open at FoodCorps, it was a perfect alignment because the work that FoodCorps was doing across all of our service states was like, okay, we're able to take this model and really sort of duplicate it, blow it up, and really share it amongst others in our schools. And so that initially really brought me to this work of wanting to say, "Okay, well how can we look at the school food system, whether that's food education, whether that's the cafeteria, and really bridging those gaps?" Because what I had seen as an operator and as someone doing nutrition education was that there was a huge gap and there still continues to be a huge gap between the education side of the school building and the cafeteria. There's a lot of disconnect.

**Morgan McGhee:**

And so the work that FoodCorps does, our mission really is that all children by 2030 will have access to food education and nourishing meals in schools. And so that's done through various programming, like our direct education program with AmeriCorps service members. That's also done with some of the newer work that I've been leading the last few years around what we call our nourishing school meals work and making sure that we can also support our school food departments, whether that's procurement, whether that's feedback loops, providing various trainings for food service staff that's culturally responsive meals or whatever it may be. And just I'm able to really combine all of those things together. And even, which I think we're going to talk about later, and really building a pipeline for the next generation of school food leaders as well.

**Dr. Jeannine Rios:**

Definitely. I feel like we have the same mission and that is-

**Morgan McGhee:**

Oh yes.

**Dr. Jeannine Rios:**

...the food's out there, but why aren't the kids either getting it or why are certain kids not getting it consistently? What's the missing link? Back when I was in school, I'm going to date myself, but we had everyone cook the meals. So when you showed up at school, you can smell the food cooking for lunch. And that's still present in certain districts. But I remember just we were hungry, we looked forward to eating that school... Even though we still made fun of the meals sometimes, they were all good and delicious. And I know that's not the case everywhere, but we do know that the meals are pretty nutritious. Even though they may look like a typical pizza, it usually is whole grain bread and all of this due to the nutrition standards. What has been your experience with getting the meals to the kids? Do you get to see this on campus? Do you get to visit the schools?

**Morgan McGhee:**

Yeah I would say, I do site visits and so it is important for me to go out there to see what the work that our service members are doing. It's something that I obviously have done in the past, but it is important to go out there to see what's happening, to see the new innovation.

### **Morgan McGhee:**

One thing I loved about having interns, and the same for service members, is that their excitement when they've been working on a project and we've been brainstorming various ideas and then it comes to fruition and to see their excitement, to see the kids' excitement, I have to go out. I'm like, "Okay, you want me to come to Maine?" And when it's freezing cold or wherever I'm going, I have to go because it is something that allows me to stay grounded in the work as well. Since I am a bit further removed in the sort of operations in the day-to-day of school meals, it is important to go out there to see... Because it inspires me and it inspires me to continue to deepen the work. And of course it wouldn't be equity work if I wasn't going out and had no reference point for programs in which I'm trying to create.

### **Dr. Jeannine Rios:**

Do you work directly with the AmeriCorps volunteers and how do you, or whoever hires them, how do you find these volunteers and train these volunteers? And what is the makeup of the volunteers? What does that look like? Tell me a little bit more about that.

### **Morgan McGhee:**

Of course. Shameless plug, apply now [foodcorps.org](http://foodcorps.org). So our application process is actually open now for next program year. And so we've been sort of over the last couple years been differentiating between the program. And so we have food education service members and we have school nutrition service members. And so these are folks and increasingly are coming from communities in which they're serving, which is really important. We don't want someone to have to move from the East Coast just to serve in Oakland Unified. We want someone from the Oakland community. Because from an equity lens, they know their community unlike anyone else. And so that is who we're recruiting. We have made a very intentional effort to increase diversity amongst our service members, which we have been pretty successful in this past service term. And so that's something we continue to do. So they could be a college graduate who has studied sustainability, or it could be really anyone 18 years and older who has an interest in food systems work.

And so there isn't really a huge differentiation other than you're committed to this work. There is an interview process that they go through. There's obviously an application process and then there's matching amongst the service site. So they then go to their service site supervisor and the state teams coordinate that process and the service team... They match it up and everyone's good to go. And then our service term begins in August and it's an 11 month year of service. And we really want folks to return to do a second year. Because again, change takes time.

**Morgan McGhee:**

So you can definitely do some great impact within 11 months, but for some folks it might take you half of that time to even get to know the community. And school food, for folks out there listening who work in school food, it can take a while. And so we really encourage folks to be in their communities, to stay in their communities and continue that work even once their service is over.

**Dr. Jeannine Rios:**

I'm glad that you brought that up about the time that it takes, Morgan. Because I remember when I was a Peace Corps volunteer, our director told us, for the first six months when we got to our site and we're like, "Okay, what do we do? We want to do all this." He said, "Just get to know everyone. Just get to know who's in your community. Just talk to people, build relationships." And as someone who is trained from this go-go-go mentality and to-do lists and all that, even just out of college I was ready to work and do stuff and didn't realize that that was the work. That was the work. Building those relationships, building trust.

And sure enough, people didn't tell me anything until I was there for a year in their community and they can trust me. Because they didn't know who I was. So it takes time to get to know people, which I'm glad you mentioned that trust is not given, it's earned and built in a community and then you can find out what really are the issues or the problems? And how can we really make a meaningful difference now that people are being honest about the problems?

And I've often heard with this kind of work, the answers are there, people know what the problems are and they usually have the solutions if we'll just come to the table and listen and learn.

**Morgan McGhee:**

Exactly. Yeah. And that's the work, progress happens as fast as relationship building. Period.

**Dr. Jeannine Rios:**

So, so true. Something exciting that we talked about before when we spoke that you mentioned your organization, and you've been a part of building some tools that can really actually be used in other organizations and as a model of how do you check yourself, how do you create those checks and balances, that you're creating this system that helps and is really centering the needs of the most vulnerable? Can you tell us a little bit more about this tool that you use? I believe the acronym is SHIFTING. We would love to learn more about that.



## Morgan McGhee:

So the SHIFTING tool is one that has been a couple of years out into the world and it really is a way to help us live into our commitments to equity inclusion and anti-racism. And it sort of prompts us to integrate this into all aspects of our work. And it really is a tool. So with any tool, we like to think of it as... It's an acronym, so there's letters. And we like to think of each letter as a lever that can be pulled. You may not be able to pull each one through every scenario or at the same degree each time, but it is something that allows you to truly think about and live into your commitments as an organization. So FoodCorps developed this tool as a way to help us remember and live into our equity commitments. It prompts us to, at the beginning of a project, at the end of the project, anywhere throughout a project, see how we're integrating equity into that work.

Last year a group of us in our FOLCS network, which is food operators and leaders of color in schools, had the opportunity to then take this template that was developed by our equity team, equity ambassadors and our previous VP of equity. We took the tool and we said, "Well how does this apply to the school nutrition community?" There is a program planning, kind of a project planning template that we developed that truly is a fill in the blank, fillable PDF where you can go through each letter and really answer these questions. So like I said, each letter in this acronym stands for something.

And so for example, the S stands for shift power resources and or access to those most impacted by systemic oppression and are closest to the work that needs to be done. And so in a school food setting you might be saying, "Well, I mean how does that relate?" Well, does your administrative team create opportunities for new staff to participate in decision making? Does your written policy document or production record represent the actual nature of work in your school kitchen?

Imagine someone new to school food or a director who's maybe not been in a school kitchen too often and they're developing a procedure or practice or policy and the staff are like, "This can't be done. This is not the actual nature of the work that's happening on the ground. Have you spent time in the kitchen on the line before you develop that SOP?" And so this tool allows you to go through each one of those letters. Another letter, one of the Is is interrupt internalized, interpersonal or systemic oppression. What are those moments? I've been in school kitchens where they said no Spanish is allowed. That's oppressive. This is my language that I speak. And so do you have a policy or practice that encourages that sort of really harmful behavior, and allowing you to then look at that as an organization and start addressing these concerns in a way that makes sense for you all?

**Morgan McGhee:**

And I think as any tool, it's only as good as you use it. So if you say, "Well we're going to do it for this and not for that," well is it really just... "We did it this one time and didn't work." Well can you really do anything one time and it has a huge impact? Not really. I mean, you kind of have to keep doing it and adjusting and making tweaks unique to your organization, your department. So it's a great tool and we really hope... It's open source, it's on the FoodCorps website. You can just type in SHIFTING and find it.

**Dr. Jeannine Rios:**

This is wonderful, because I was going to ask you could we use it, could we share it with our networks? It's a really great tool from what I've looked at it and it has spaces for you, like you said, it's template form set up. And it really goes back to everything you're talking about, like the building of that trust and trust in the communities that they have the wisdom. And kind of someone who's just starting out in this space, in this work, because it can be intimidating to schools, to nutrition directors who are doing a million things. When people ask, "Well what are you doing about equity?" They may be doing all this stuff but they don't realize it. And this will help to really help them focus and be able to do it more strategically and be able to check themselves. This is how I see it.

**Morgan McGhee:**

Yeah. And I'll add that what our executive team has done in the past is that everyone owns a letter of it. So Janine, you own this letter, Morgan, you own that letter. You're responsible for the H in SHIFTING, you're responsible for the F in SHIFTING. So that when that thing comes up, that project, that idea, you can always say, "Okay, if I'm responsible for the I," which is invest, one of the Is, invest in equity when it comes to budgeting contracts and vendors. Okay, who are we centering when we are going out for this RFP? Have we talked to [inaudible 00:20:31] farmers and producers in our area? Are we investing in it truly, or are we just saying it? And I own that letter and I embody that letter. And I can always bring that letter up to the upfront in making sure that folks are centering that as we're coming up with this new project.

That is such a great way to use it. Because often in this work it feels like there's a small amount of people who are kind of, maybe invested. So this is a way of spreading that out.

**Morgan McGhee:**

Right. We have equity for everyone, please come and get it.



**Dr. Jeannine Rios:**

There's plenty to go around. Plenty of equity work to go around. I love that. I'm wondering, since you mentioned it and you've created this tool, does your organization train others on how to use this tool?

**Morgan McGhee:**

Yeah. So actually our former VP who was really instrumental in developing this tool, her name is Tiffany McClain, has offered numerous sort of SHIFTING workshops and study halls that you can find if you follow FoodCorps on social media outlets. Tiffany has hosted a multi-week class and continues to host that class. Our partners, our state teams also use this. I think that the part about equity that's really interesting is that we create these tools and we have trainings and we sort of go along the process, but the hope, the end goal is that it's naturally integrated into things that you do.

And so for example, as we are exploring partnerships with communities, this shifting tool, some of these aspects, some of these letters are part of that process. If I'm considering X organization has come to me, we have an opportunity assessment and SHIFTING is a part of that. And so we're able to use that internally, we're able to have that conversation with partners externally. And then if you are one of those partners who wants more in depth, you can always, again like I said, follow FoodCorps on social media. And this class, it already started for this session, but I'm sure that is something that will continue into the future and you can always support that work, and really get hands on experience through scenarios and through real life situations of how to implement this in your work.

**Dr. Jeannine Rios:**

That is really awesome. And this is at [foodcorps.org](http://foodcorps.org), is that correct?

**Morgan McGhee:**

Correct. And FoodCorps on all our social media platforms, Instagram and LinkedIn and Twitter.

**Dr. Jeannine Rios:**

Wonderful. I've always, like I've heard about FoodCorps throughout the years and my work, but never really dug in and really looked at what you're doing, which it's very impressive. I really like it. And I'm wondering what in your role has been the biggest challenge internally with this work or externally? And what is the most rewarding aspect?

### **Morgan McGhee:**

Oh, that's a heavy one. Yeah, I'll take my time. I think when folks are involved in this work, when we initially started it's like okay, everyone needs to get trained on this, everyone needs to get trained on that. And once you get past the training aspect, really what it's about is operationalizing that work. So what does that look like for your organization? For us at FoodCorps, it has looked like drafting an accountability process. If an oppressive moment happens, what is that process to attend to the impact of that moment? Having an anti-racism strategy, these things just don't happen because we want them to and we dream of them. It takes work. Who are the folks that are involved in this process to make it happen in a way that everyone feels seen, valued and heard, that their thoughts are brought to the front and it really is something that's reflective of the organization and that you all can actually live into over time?

Our president often talks about what's a bold and audacious dream? Because if we're truly trying to create a future in which we've never seen before, it's going to take out of the box thinking. Another one of my previous directors would say, "Nothing exciting or innovative happens in your comfort zone." And so I encourage people to get uncomfortable. Have the uncomfortable conversations, have the moments where you have to call people in, call people out, and be committed to that journey. But also obviously, and I think I just want to say this, take care of yourself as well. It can be very exhausting to be on this equity journey, especially if you're doing it outside of your job, for you to do it inside of your job as well. It is something that it can, like I said, take a lot out of you. But you have to have that sort of awareness and support system, whether that looks like therapy or other mental health release to take care of yourself, because the operationalizing it is when the rubber meets the road. When you really start putting into practice what you've been saying.

And so accountability in addition to the things I mentioned also looks like we have an annual EDI report. It just was recently released. And so we said, "Hey, we put these statements out, we're doing the things and now we want to show you all annually how we're doing those things and what progress we have made." And honestly, I can say as someone who works at this organization, it's truly astounding. It's such an honor and a pleasure to be able to work for an organization that truly is committed not only in word on the internet or what you might see on social media, but I experience it every day in my job and in the work that I'm doing.

### **Dr. Jeannine Rios:**

It's so wonderful to hear you say all these things. Has it been a difficult process in terms of getting to where you are? Because it sounds like a dream, the way that you explain it. It definitely takes the time and effort and amazing leadership commitment spreading out the work.

**Dr. Jeannine Rios:**

What are those pain points? Because I know a lot of organizations get stuck maybe in the training. And they're like, "Okay, we did it. Check. We're good." It's so exciting to hear that y'all have moved past that and through that and you're having those honest conversations. What does it take to be able to do that?

**Morgan McGhee:**

Oof. I mean I think honestly it starts at the application process. And having people that you recruit to the organization that are reflective of those values. We have recently had a huge shift, and the employees of our organization. We're now over half BIMPOC and through, I've been on many hiring panels where the questions are asked, the hard questions are asked, and you're able to see folks responses. And then when you then join us internally, there are employee resource groups, there are affinity spaces that represent intersectional identities so that you can be a part of and feel supported. And so that those pain points can ideally be met, be minimized, harm can be minimized in those ways. And I think that's part of it as well, is just being accountable. But also it starts with the who of it. Who are you hiring into these positions? Is it truly a commitment to the work or is it something that someone wrote on a resume or a cover letter to just get a foot in the door?

**Dr. Jeannine Rios:**

I love that. That's such great advice and so important, as we've all seen. For those listening who are not familiar with BIMPOC, can you define that for us?

**Morgan McGhee:**

Yeah, so BIMPOC is black, indigenous, multiracial people of color. Yeah. And also I wanted to follow up, you asked me what are the rewards? What is the exciting part of this work? And I think it's one that I sort of referenced in the beginning that people enjoy coming to their jobs. When I was an intern in Riverside and I saw that staff were excited to come to work, it's because they feel seen, valued, and heard. And I think that is a huge reward. I'm able to, one of the affinity spaces that I sort of coordinate at the organization is one for our black staff, affectionately called the Onyx Crown Collective. And in times in this country, which is very often when things can be so tumultuous, it's great to be able to go to folks who have a shared experience and just laugh and just be together in a workspace, right? Because in work, it's work and we're here, we live in this society. But also there should be places where there's joy and there's connection and you can be your authentic self.

### **Morgan McGhee:**

And so having an affinity group and a space where it's not determined by our executive team, it's not determined by this person, the equity department, it's truly whatever we want it to be. We get on there, we've watched movies together on election day or we've had a herbalism class, we did a class on financial freedom. And so there's just really a space where we can just be ourselves. And I think that is important as well. So that as much as you're doing the work you need to be putting into yourself. So that's a huge reward to see my colleagues and to see us just being space and sharing space together in a way that feels very nourishing to our souls.

### **Dr. Jeannine Rios:**

I feel like we could have a whole podcast on affinity groups, but I won't even go there. I have just so much I could ask or say, or you hear people saying, "Well, why do they get to have a group with this certain race or a certain group," but trust us, it's needed. When you are in a society that you are not the majority and you don't necessarily see yourself or relate to everybody in the room, it does really help and provide that support. So thank you for naming that and mentioning that. And what advice would you give another organization who's maybe just starting this journey? How would they go about this? Just what is some advice you would give another organization who's maybe intimidated or maybe hasn't started or maybe they don't even know if they've started?

### **Morgan McGhee:**

Right. I mean, I would say if we look at the last few years if they taught us anything is that, yes, trainings are really helpful, but it's when you get into the action planning of it. And so the sort of first stage of SHIFTING was what we called Just FoodCorps. And really Just FoodCorps allowed us to look at all these various aspects of our organization, from compensation to partnership to geography. And within each category there's a spectrum of change. So we might start here, which was FoodCorps sleep, and how do we get to Just FoodCorps? What are the various definitions along the way? What are the various checkpoints along the way that we can get closer to being just. And maybe it's something like that that your organization creates. What are those aspects? What are the important categories and themes and things that we want to hold up as an organization? And talking to your people about them?

We had our VP of equity at the time went to office hours and staff calls, had one-on-ones with various teams and two on ones and everything that you can imagine to get a better understanding of where are we right now? Once we figure out where we are and where we want to be, then let's start surveying people. And so there was all these surveys and they continue to survey throughout the years. Have we gotten closer? Where do you perceive us to be on this spectrum of change?

**Morgan McGhee:**

And then again, SHIFTING was drafted as a tool to help in that process. So if we're looking at compensation, for example, I was on about a nine-month committee where we were readjusting and reevaluating our compensation strategy. So it was an interdepartmental team, it had folks from various sort of levels and steps in the organization, longevity and time at the organization. Some folks who had come from a corporate background, some folks who have been in schools, nonprofit, I mean all very representative of the organization. And it took us nine months to get there. And some may tell you that it took way too long, but as a participant in the group, there was so much level setting that we had during the very beginning. And people's own lived experience around compensation.

And from that we were able to come out with a new compensation strategy, a new matrix in how folks were able to see themselves in the organization. Because as much as we don't like to talk about the nonprofit space, you have to eat, you need to be able to make money and provide for your family. And in the best cases, provide generational wealth to your family as well. And so I think that's something that we've often in sort of nonprofit and service communities, within school food service I know for sure, for sure for sure as far as the compensation and folks' time being valued is something that's huge. I mean, the amount of subs I would have to hire and tell them that, "Hey, I'm going to pay you eight, nine bucks, but if you wait just a month or so, I can get you full-time at \$15." And it's like, "Miss, I can't wait a month."

And so is your organization, is your department looking at these things? And because that came about, just to give a little school food, really a winning story about compensation particularly is that the time it took to be a sub was, "Hey, you have to be a sub for X amount of time to make sure that you can do all the things." But the time that was previously outlined in the policy, it didn't make a whole lot of sense. Because the reality is you ever [inaudible 00:35:30] in school food, you can tell if somebody can do it or not within-

**Dr. Jeannine Rios:**

Right. Within a week, a day.

**Morgan McGhee:**

...seven, 14 days. It's a pretty special environment. And so we changed that time. We made a new policy and said, "Hey, it doesn't take 60 days or 40 days," or however long it was, "to understand." That means it allowed a shorter time for that sub... Substitute for those listening and wondering what's a sub? For that substitute worker to become full-time. That means they were able to get to that full-time pay benefits in a shorter amount of time. That's equity.

**Dr. Jeannine Rios:**

Yeah.

**Morgan McGhee:**

Why should they have to wait-

**Dr. Jeannine Rios:**

Is it kind of like a trial time? Sorry to interrupt. Is that kind of like a trial time?

**Morgan McGhee:**

Kind of.

**Dr. Jeannine Rios:**

Okay.

**Morgan McGhee:**

Yeah. So with the sub, they're able to go to basically, "Hey, this school has called in because so-and-so called out. We need a substitute worker similar," to a teacher worker-

**Dr. Jeannine Rios:**

The food service.

**Morgan McGhee:**

Right.

**Dr. Jeannine Rios:**

Okay, gotcha.

**Morgan McGhee:**

Right. But in the food service setting. And that's really for most school districts, that's their first entry, an employee's first entry into the department. Unless they're hired and a manager or something like that. But they start out as a sub and then can become a food service worker. So it's complicated.



**Dr. Jeannine Rios:**

Yeah. That is so great that y'all have gone through this journey. And it sounds like, yeah, everything that you've talked about, the whole building trust, it takes that time to really find out, to really listen. And that when, this is what I heard you say, when an organization really commits to this and really is interested, they will find the solutions if you keep working at it and keep trying, and you're not going to get it right the first time. And that's okay. None of us is perfect.

Morgan, it has been so great talking to you. I feel like we could talk for hours about so many things, but I do know that you have this full-time job that you're working at and doing such great work. So I just want to thank you so much for being a part of this time with us today, for just joining us here at Share a Strength on the No Kid Hungry Campaign. And just sharing your experiences, your expertise, your knowledge, your wisdom. We really appreciate it. Thank you so much. And we will definitely be sharing these resources and the website, [foodcorps.org](http://foodcorps.org) and the social handles.

**Morgan McGhee:**

Yes. I have one more thing I want to say to the listeners-

**Dr. Jeannine Rios:**

Of course.

**Morgan McGhee:**

...out there. If you don't mind?

**Dr. Jeannine Rios:**

Of course.

**Morgan McGhee:**

And we kind of touched on this a little bit during our conversation today. But I mentioned a network that we're building earlier on, and it's the Food Operators and Leaders of Color in Schools, or FOLCS. So I mentioned it, but I wanted to also invite listeners today to also go, still go to [foodcorps.org](http://foodcorps.org) whether you want to apply to be a service member, look at our EDI report, or you want to join FOLCS. If you're out there and you are a BIMPOC, a black, indigenous, multiracial person of color working in schools or working with schools, you can join FOLCS. And it's just [foodcorps.org/folcs](http://foodcorps.org/folcs), F-O-L-C-S.

**Morgan McGhee:**

And that is a group of folks that, Jeannine, you mentioned this earlier about folks saying, "Why is there a group just for these people? Why isn't there a group for me?" And so on and so forth? And this group is knowing that there has been very interesting, challenging history for certain folks in this country who have had a really, just because of systemic inequities, have had a challenging time in school food.

And I am one of them. And despite that, it's important for us to nourish the next generation of leaders. And so this network is doing that. It connects our service members to alumni, to school nutrition professionals in the field. That through mentorship, networking, through professional development opportunities can really live into like, "Hey, if you want a career in school food, if you want to be a director or decision maker, there are opportunities out there." Because far too often we see our frontline staff who might be quote unquote representative of the communities, but those folks may not often sit in decision making seats. Or even have the opportunity to progress in a way that they want to because of various systemic barriers that are prohibiting them from doing that.

And so again, we encourage you to join our community. It's one that's blossoming into something very, very beautiful and unique. And we hope that you'll be a part of that journey with us.

**Dr. Jeannine Rios:**

That is awesome. Thank you so much for sharing that. I can't even imagine when I was studying nutrition, if I had these resources or this experience, that I probably would've maybe stayed on the dietetics track and not gone into public health, but then we wouldn't be sitting here today.

**Morgan McGhee:**

I know. Who knows? Yeah, the past-

**Dr. Jeannine Rios:**

It all worked out.

**Morgan McGhee:**

...the future. Yes, it has.

## Dr. Jeannine Rios:

It has. Thank you again for your time and for all that you do. And thank you to FoodCorps.

Thank you for joining us today. It has been such a delight talking with Morgan McGee from FoodCorps. In hearing about their journey towards a more just FoodCorps, we learned about their incredible resource that they have created, used to hold themselves accountable to centering equity, diversity, and inclusion, and in everything that they do. You can find the SHIFTING resource at [foodcorps.org/equity-inclusion](https://foodcorps.org/equity-inclusion). And for more stories like these from No Kid Hungry, please visit us at [bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/equity](https://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/equity).

My name again is Jeannine Rios, and this audio resource was created with the expertise from our sound and editing guru, program manager Chelsea McCormick. And with support from our managing director, Brianna Webster-Campbell of the Center for Best Practices at Share Our Strength. Please stay tuned and join us next time when we're going to hear from Mireya Gómez-Contreras at Esperanza Community Farms. She's going to talk to us a little bit about their Farm 2 Cafeteria project and how they're striving to increase vegetables at Pajaro Valley High School in Watsonville, California, which is largely a migrant and farming community. Stay tuned for more. Thank you again.