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CONTACT: Regina Anderson, Food Recovery Network, +1 (240) 615-8813,
regina.anderson@foodrecoverynetwork.org, www.foodrecoverynetwork.org

Food Recovery Network Executive Director, Regina Anderson, Member of a Panel at South by Southwest

AUSTIN, TEXAS — Apr. 10, 2019 — On March 13th, Regina Anderson, Executive Director of Food Recovery Network (FRN), sat on a panel titled “Cultivating the Next Generation of Food Leaders” at South by Southwest (SXSW) in Austin, Texas. The panel was stacked with leaders from across the food industry, including Haile Thomas, founder and CEO of [Healthy Active Positive Purposeful Youth](#) (HAPPY); Tony Hillery, founder and Executive Director of [Harlem Grown](#). Danielle Nierenberg, President of [Food Tank](#), moderated the panel. The session brought together over 100 young food activists, entrepreneurs, teachers, farmers, and storytellers. The attendees had one common goal: to make the food system more environmentally, economically, and socially sustainable for everyone.

Each panelists discussed how race and socio-economic status interacts with access to food, food justice, and food equity. The wide-ranging dialogue explored the interconnectivity of these issues, spurring a substantive and invaluable conversation. As the moderator, Nierenberg ensured the panel was a space where the full audience was able to have such delicate and authentic exchanges.

Thomas founded HAPPY at the age of 13; the mission of the organization is to bring nutrition education to children through cooking classes, summer camps, and in-school programming. At 18 years old, the youngest member of the panel, Thomas was uniquely qualified to inspire future food leaders and to act as a voice of the new generation of thought-leaders the panel hoped to encourage.

Hillery founded Harlem Grown in 2013; it operates urban farms in Harlem, New York, while also increasing access to knowledge of healthy foods to elementary-aged Harlem youth. Hillery also spoke at FRN’s National Food Recovery Dialogue (NFRD) in 2017. As someone who works with youth daily, Hillery took the position of mentor and educator on the panel. He said, “food leaders don’t just sprout up fully educated and ready to lead, but that’s where we come in. We have to encourage, teach, and grow the next generation with a gentle hand, like you’d grow any seedling in a garden.”

Whereas Thomas acts as the voice of the new generation of food leaders and Hillery as the mentor, Regina Anderson, Executive Director of FRN, works to empower college-aged students and FRN alums. For example, FRN's [Regional Outreach Coordinators](#) (ROCs) and [Student Alumni and Advisory Board](#) (SAAB) programs afford students within their network leadership valuable opportunities. These opportunities grant them the chance to hone their leadership, organizational, communication, and project management skills. "It's so fulfilling, exhilarating, to see these students flourish in these leadership opportunities and take ownership of this nationwide movement," Anderson said.

Danielle Nierenberg, President of Food Tank, approaches the idea of cultivating the next generation of food leaders by offering a data-driven pathway for these future leaders to model. Food Tank is an amplifier of today's and tomorrow's ideas for a better food system. Nierenberg said, "agriculture must foster innovation in order to become more sustainable and equitable. There are thousands of people out there pioneering new methods, we simply give them a larger voice."

About Food Recovery Network

Food Recovery Network (FRN) unites and supports college student leaders in the fight against food waste and hunger in America. Since 2011, FRN students have recovered more than 3 million pounds of surplus food, that would otherwise go to waste, from their campus cafeterias and local restaurants to donate to hungry Americans. Food Recovery Network has more than 200 college campus chapters in 44 states and the District of Columbia. For more information about Food Recovery Network, visit www.foodrecoverynetwork.org. Follow us on Twitter @FoodRecovery and Instagram @FoodRecovery and like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/FoodRecoveryNetwork.

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