



Bio – Erika Lesser
Development Director, The Sylvia Center
Collaborative Member

BIOGRAPHY

Erika is the Development Director for The Sylvia Center, a nonprofit organization whose mission is to inspire children to eat well. By teaching them to cook, TSC helps children to establish independent healthy eating habits—so that they may lead healthy and productive lives.

Erika Lesser works with clients in NYC and beyond to develop community-based food programming, launch new food enterprises, and increase organizational capacity. Previously, as a Senior Consultant for Urbane, Erika spearheaded the Two Bridges NeighborFood initiative, a 5 year food + small business development and resiliency project in the Lower East Side of NYC that combines a community-based marketing and district identity campaign with in-store technical assistance for a network of over 80 small retailers adversely affected by Superstorm Sandy.

Prior to her time with Urbane, Mrs. Lesser spent over a decade working for the international nonprofit Slow Food, beginning as a founder of Slow Food USA in 2000, helped open the University of Gastronomic Sciences (2003-04) and served as Executive Director (2004-2009), developing national programs that defend biological and cultural food diversity; promote food education in schools and universities; and strengthen connections between farmers and consumers. Mrs. Lesser earned a MA in Food Studies from New York University and a BA in Italian Studies and Art History from Brown University.