

BASZUCKI GROUP

Toward the greater good

State of the Philanthropy, January 2025

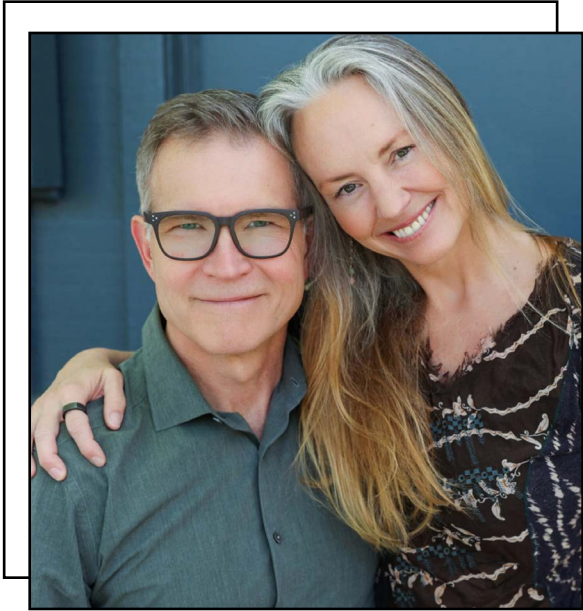


Photo from Baszucki Group Metabolic Psychiatry Retreat 2024

Founded by David and Jan Baszucki, Baszucki Group's mission as we head into 2025 is to improve human health, regenerate the earth's soils and ecosystems, and foster a more representative government in America. Our work in science, medicine, food, farming, and politics advances straightforward but transformative approaches to driving systemic change.

Our key initiatives seek to advance our mission by 1) making metabolic health mainstream 2) transforming farming and food systems, and 3) supporting non-partisan voting reforms that make government leaders accountable to a majority of constituents.

We are guided by three principles for driving powerful social movements that are both interdependent and synergistic; gains in one support gains in the others, and lasting change is only possible when we make progress across the board.



Three Principals

- 1 Identify** elegant solutions hiding in plain sight.
- 2 Build** domain expertise to make calculated bets.
- 3 Engage** a philanthropic flywheel integrating research, advocacy, and capacity building.

Three Audacious Goals

What we call the Three R's

- 1 Reverse** the worldwide epidemics of physical and mental illness with evidence-based ketogenic and metabolic therapies.
- 2 Restore** the integrity of the earth's soils through farming practices that improve food and stabilize climate.
- 3 Rescue** America's democracy from the fringes through systemic electoral reform.

Three Movements

- 1** Metabolic mental health
- 2** Regenerative agriculture
- 3** Nonpartisan voting reform

An example of how our impact areas are synergistic and interdependent:

Human mental and physical health depend upon access to whole, healthy, unprocessed, nutrient dense food. Growing and raising whole foods requires healthy soil, which both relies upon and supports a healthy planet. Building healthy soil that sequesters carbon, stabilizes climate and supports life requires that regenerative approaches to both plant and animal agriculture be encouraged by smart government farm policies. Smart policies require that elected leaders prioritize human health over the profits of special interests like big food and industrialized agriculture. Misguided programs such as subsidies for commodity crops like corn, soy and wheat, and the USDA dietary guidelines, along with the corporate capture of government agencies, stand in the way of progress. Passing legislation to support metabolic health and regeneration will happen only when systemic voting reforms free leaders to put the health of Americans above party politics and special interests.

Three Principals

1 Plain sight solutions

In the few years we've been working toward the greater good, we've learned that ***elegant solutions to big problems are often found hiding in plain sight.***

Transformative solutions to our biggest problems don't always require massive investments in technology, or decades of drug or food research and development, or billions spent on the campaigns of lesser-of-two-evils candidates. Visionary individuals and organizations are making change now by leveraging often-forgotten insights gleaned from evolutionary biology, medicine, ecology, and politics—and by going against the grain to drive those insights into practice.

For instance, farmers are using adaptive multi-paddock grazing and growing crops in concert with the cycles of nature to increase soil organic matter that sequesters carbon, prevents drought, and restores the diversity of earth's ecosystems. Physicians are prescribing regenerative food consumed in ancestral patterns to reverse "chronic" mental and physical diseases like obesity, type II diabetes, arthritis, IBS, PCOS, depression, and bipolar disorder. States and cities are passing electoral innovations that open primaries to all voters and employ ranked choice voting to ensure that candidates must earn a majority of votes to win. These reforms incentivize government leaders to reach across the aisle to make policies representing the will of the majority of the American people.

2 Calculated bets

We leverage domain expertise to make ***bold but calculated bets, working to bring successes from the sidelines to the mainstream.***

Time is our most precious commodity, so while we value incremental progress, we most often embrace an ethos of impatience, investing resources where we think big change is possible in years, not decades. We've been most successful when we've partnered with leaders and organizations who have bold—and sometimes old—ideas, often supported by new technologies, that can promote the health of our species, our democracy, and our planet. Here are a few of the ideas we're betting on:

- Energy metabolism drives human physical and mental health.
- Understanding ancient organisms like mitochondria will influence how we protect health and avoid disease.
- Ketogenic therapy as a reimbursable medical intervention can reverse many mental and physical illnesses.
- Continuous, non-invasive monitoring of glucose, ketones, lactate, alcohol and more is a critically necessary medical innovation.
- Removing starch and sugar can lower insulin and blood glucose to treat depression, diabetes, obesity and cancer.
- The USDA's dietary guidelines must embrace whole foods and evidence-based low-carbohydrate nutrition options.
- Converting farm and rangeland to regenerative practices improves soil and nutrient density, removes harmful chemicals, produces more food on less land, helps farmers thrive, prevents run-off, reverses desertification, and mitigates climate change.
- Adding incentives to the Farm Bill for regenerative agriculture and removing subsidies for monocrop practices that are harmful to human and soil health is a first step toward transforming food production in America.
- Ending the hundred-year-old closed party primary and requiring that candidates win a majority in an instant run-off can heal our country's partisan divide.

When an idea doesn't pan out, we learn from our mistakes and pivot quickly. When we bet on an idea that wins, and change happens before our eyes, we ramp our advocacy and capacity building efforts to help deploy solutions at scale.

3 Philanthropic flywheel

Big change can be made when a ***philanthropic flywheel integrates research, advocacy, and capacity building.***

In science, medicine, food and farming, and politics, we embrace straightforward approaches to fundamentally transforming the way things are done. Changing practice can be driven by breakthroughs in science and understanding, but it also requires fields to buy into radical new—and sometimes old—approaches, and a workforce to be trained to deliver them.

We fund research, amplify scientific and clinical wisdom, leverage storytelling and media to kindle movements, and partner on training and education for practitioners. We support key leaders and organizations, including visionary entrepreneurs who can bring solutions to market and scale quickly. We aim to mobilize workforce development by changing thinking at both the grassstops and the grassroots.

We fund research to test ideas and solutions. We leverage advocacy to promote what works, and we build capacity to transform practice. We look for gaps in the flywheel where our investments can make the most impact. Sometimes that's research, sometimes it's advocacy, sometimes it's capacity building, and sometimes—as in metabolic mental health—we are leading the movement and it's all three.

Three Audacious Goals:

Our “Three R’s”

- 1 **Reverse** the worldwide metabolic and mental health epidemics.
- 2 **Restore** the integrity of the earth’s soils through farming practices that improve food and climate.
- 3 **Rescue** our democracy from the fringes.

Program area one: Metabolic and Mental Health

Our goal:

Reverse the worldwide metabolic and mental health epidemics.

Our motto: “Mental health is metabolic health.”

Our belief:

The twin epidemics of metabolic and mental illness are biologically related, reversible and preventable with proven nutritional and other metabolic strategies.

Our rationale:

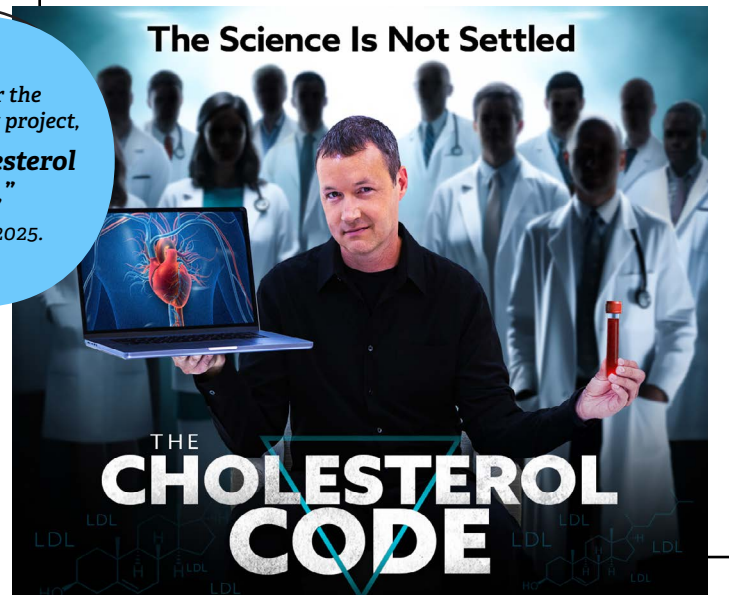
Genes are static, but health is dynamic. To reverse the explosion of chronic illness, we believe science and medicine must interrogate not only genetics but energetics. Energy metabolism must be understood as foundational to human mental and physical wellness. The twin epidemics of metabolic and mental illness are intimately intertwined and treatable with evidence-based nutritional and other metabolic strategies. Fueling research and treatments focused on metabolism and mitochondria is our best shot at improving mental and physical health worldwide.

Advancing research in human metabolism should be a key priority for all science funding bodies, and randomized controlled trials are critical. Hence, we are funding clinical trials around the world and working to collaborate with other funders. Additionally, individuals suffering from “chronic” physical and mental illnesses deserve to know now about safe, readily available metabolic interventions. Ketogenic therapy has been restoring health for people suffering from conditions like diabetes and epilepsy for more than a century, and now shows promise for reversing a broad range of mental and physical illnesses.

Our accomplishments:

- We launched [Metabolic Mind](#) to fuel mental health worldwide. Our website, along with our podcast & youtube channel, hosted by metabolic health expert Dr. Bret Scher, amplifies research, clinical wisdom, and personal stories to drive awareness of ketogenic and other metabolic therapies.
- We are launching [Metabolic Mind](#)’s latest initiative, Think+Smart, as a community-driven tool that supports individuals, families and practitioners in adopting a metabolic framework for mental health.
- We are growing dedicated internal neuroscience and metabolic health expertise to direct insightful investment strategies.
- We have distributed more than \$60 million to mental health research, treatment programs, and impact investments.
- We’ve funded more than a dozen of the more than 20 current clinical trials globally, including several RCTs, of ketogenic therapy for serious mental illness.
- We offer wrap around support for our science grantees, including community and communications.
- We grow our ecosystem with prize programs that reward brilliance and resilience in scientists (The Baszucki Prize in Science, Baszucki Research Fellowship Program, Early Investigator Award), clinicians ([Metabolic Mind](#) Awards), communicators (Metabolic Multiplier Program), and individuals with lived experience (Fresh Start).
- We’ve helped grow the field of Metabolic Psychiatry through advocacy, education, convenings, and community building.
- We work with our partners to develop and deliver free continuing medical education, consensus treatment guidelines, and storytelling projects.
- We’re partnering with metabolic and mental health stakeholders, including philanthropists, nonprofits, scientists, clinicians, entrepreneurs and policy-makers to seed the delivery of metabolic therapies at scale.
- We’re piloting a new program called ReTHINK – researching therapeutic integration of nutritional ketosis – with the potential to drive rapid progress in reducing disease burden in many areas of medicine, from ADHD to depression to IBD to cancer.
- We’re supporting citizen science initiated investigations into keto and cholesterol, along with a documentary film, *The Cholesterol Code*, to add new understanding to the field of lipidology.

Watch for the documentary project, “*The Cholesterol Code*,” in early 2025.





Program area two: Regenerative Agriculture

Our goal:

Restore the integrity of the earth's soil and ecosystems through farming practices that improve food and climate.

Our mottos: "Earth is our Common Ground" and "It's not the Cow, It's the How."

Our belief:

Aligning our food systems with the cycles of nature can protect our soil, our health, our farms and our planet.

Our rationale:

The health of our planet's topsoil directly impacts food production and security, as well as climate resilience. Restoring soil integrity through regenerative agricultural practices not only sequesters carbon to balance climate, but rejuvenates ecosystems, removes harmful chemicals like glyphosate, respects animal welfare, and enables the production of safe, abundant, nutritious food. Farmers and ranchers worldwide are improving yields by implementing simple practices such as eliminating tillage, pesticides and herbicides, planting cover crops, promoting diversity, maintaining living roots underground, and integrating animals with adaptive multi-paddock grazing.

Ruminants co-evolved with grasslands to build soil organic matter over a period of fifty million years, making healthy topsoil second only to oceans as the earth's primary carbon sink. Transitioning farmland to regenerative practices and replacing concentrated animal feeding operations with holistic planned grazing holds immense potential to improve food systems, prevent chronic disease, reverse desertification, and promote climate resilience.

Our Accomplishments:

Our work in regenerative agriculture has thus far focused mainly on advocacy. We've supported story-tellers who are amplifying the power and possibility of regenerative agriculture through documentary films, and who are building a coalition to transition farmland to regenerative practices.

Our key projects include:

- Supporting the impact campaign for "Kiss the Ground" documentary by Big Picture Ranch.
- Supporting the impact campaign for "Common Ground" documentary by Big Picture Ranch.
- Funding the production of "Groundswell," the third film in the climate trilogy from Big Picture Ranch.
- Supporting the documentary "Sacred Cow" and Diana Rodgers' advocacy efforts.
- Advancing the work of the 100millionacres.org coalition dedicated to converting 100 million acres of US farm and ranchland to certified regenerative practices.
- Supporting local organizations employing and promoting regenerative practices.
- Seeding a film project based on Will Harris' book about his family's regenerative ranch in Southern Georgia.

Program area three:

Non-partisan electoral innovation

Our goal: Rescue our democracy from the fringes.

Our motto: “Changing voting changes everything.”

Our belief:

A single election reform, recently adopted and protected in Alaska, eliminates partisan gridlock to make government work for more Americans more of the time.

Our rationale:

We support an electoral reform that combines open primaries with ranked choice instant run-off voting to make elected officials accountable to a majority of voters. In the past two decades, political power has sharply polarized, favoring extreme ends of the spectrum. Restoring the balance of power hinges on altering elected officials’ behavior, which necessitates adjusting incentives. These electoral reforms represent a solution that enables every eligible voter to participate in any taxpayer-funded election, including primaries, and requires candidates to secure a majority of votes to win.

This election system incentivizes politicians to represent all constituents, rather than the small minority who vote in closed party primaries conducted on the taxpayer’s dime. These reforms are already transforming governments internationally, as well as in Alaska, Washington DC and elsewhere.

Our accomplishments:

Our democracy work focuses on advocacy and policy:

- We partner with organizations driving open primaries plus ranked choice voting and other nonpartisan initiatives.
- Our key partners are Unite America and Institute for Political Innovation.
- We are executive producers on a ground-breaking documentary about voting reforms called “Majority Rules.”
- We’ve supported non-profit open source voting technology.

Watch
the documentary,
[“Majority Rules”](#)
now to learn more.



Looking Back and Looking Ahead

Baszucki Group was founded just three years ago. We have grown from one employee to fourteen during that time, and we recently passed the \$100 million mark in philanthropic giving. We are proud of our incredible team and of the rapid progress we've made in our impact areas. At the same time, we have felt, daily, the profound challenges of making social change in the face of entrenched practices and habits, special interests and institutional inertia.

We are a deeply non-partisan organization; we look to partner with those whose aims align with ours, regardless of political affiliation. It is in that spirit that I share my personal excitement for the year ahead. Largely as a result of RFK Jr's Make America Healthy Again coalition, ending chronic disease has become a priority at the federal level. Several of our closest collaborators are being considered for top positions in federal agencies, and the deep connection between metabolism and mental health is being discussed at the highest levels of government. Diet and health are being recognized as intimately linked, and along with regenerative farming and ranching ideas, are becoming part of the public discourse in a new way. Alaska has defended open primaries and ranked choice voting for a second time, setting an example for other states to follow.

The opportunity to improve health, food systems, soil and government has never been greater. In the year ahead, we will continue to expand and accelerate our work in every way we can to take advantage of this moment to drive positive change.

Sincerely,
Jan Ellison Baszucki
Founder and President, Baszucki Group