



STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2025





MISSION

The **Hand, Heart and Soul Project** cultivates wellness in Clayton County through equitable access to nutrient dense foods, holistic education, and advocacy.

VISION

The **Hand, Heart and Soul Project** envisions a future where Clayton County is at the forefront of the food sovereignty movement.

VALUES

Racial Equity

Food, race, and land are inextricably intertwined. Cultivating healthy foods and high quality learning environments in early childhood education and lifestyles means that freedom and opportunity for optimal growth and development begins with centering and acknowledging race as a critical role in inequities.

Anti-Racism

According to the 2021 census, 73% of Clayton County residents identify as Black. In order to truly support our community, we must be constantly vigilant of the historic systemic racism that can be seen in our food system, educational systems, all by design.

Community-Centric

We trust the guidance, leadership, and expertise of those closest to the work. We will invest in community-driven approaches and will work with community members and stakeholders to solve issues together.

Egalitarianism

We must eliminate old systems that only benefit a few and look at cooperative systems that can be leveraged to benefit the whole. We must use our visibility and platform not only to widen the opening, but to hold the door, leave it open, and continue to create paths for others to walk through.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

The future we imagine is only partially in our hands – we know that it will take many to impact the health outcomes of an entire county.

We will focus on where we know we can excel:



Nutrient Dense Foods



Holistic Wellness Education

There are so many ways to begin this work, and we recognize that healthy decisions start early in life. For this reason, much of our work centers around early childhood education (ECE) centers.



Advocating for Policy Change

ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND

The Hand, Heart and Soul Project was birthed from organic, genuine adoration for the Forest Park Community. With love and faithful intentions, Little Ones Learning Center was founded over 25 years ago to provide high quality care for young learners while providing them access to a nutritious, farm-to-table diet.

As we expanded programming, leading Little Ones to become a three-star Quality Rated and National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accredited center, we were able to garner community support and partnerships and reinvest resources into building the Jazmin Green Community Garden. This community garden has been fruitful in providing healthy and nutrient-dense foods to the children we serve in a community area with limited access to fresh, sustainable produce.

The Hand, Heart and Soul Project (founded in 2018) brought the work of Little Ones to scale and the work evolved beyond early learning to leadership development, advocacy, and promoting quality early care and education for the greater community.



TRACK RECORD OF SUCCESS

Since 2020, we were able to accomplish the following:



70+

HOURS OF
GARDENING
AND NUTRITION
EDUCATION



11,723

POUNDS OF PRO-
DUCE DISTRIBUTED

2,000

RESIDENTS
REACHED

6

EARLY
LEARNING
PROGRAMS

26+

FARM STAND
MARKET DAYS
HOSTED



10,000

BAGS OF FRESH PRODUCE
DISTRIBUTED DURING COVID-19
EMERGENCY FOOD DISTRIBUTION
EFFORTS



21

LOCAL FARMERS
SUPPORTED

50

EVENTS





STRATEGIC AREA:

NUTRIENT DENSE FOODS

Clayton County has 13 “food deserts” or “food insecure” areas, according to the United States Department of Agriculture’s definition.

We aim to eliminate them all.

Metrics

Clayton County residents have to travel less than 15 minutes to access affordable nutrient dense foods.

Children in early education centers have access to fresh nutrient dense food.

Strategies

Build and nurture community gardens.

Partner with local farmers to bring (and keep!) fresh food into the community.

Explore opportunities to sell CSAs and fresh produce online.

Identify ways community members can best leverage SNAP/EBT, and WIC programs to access nutrient dense foods.

Create farm stands and mobile markets.



STRATEGIC AREA:

HOLISTIC WELLNESS EDUCATION

Kids and their families will have knowledge to make their own choices and better champion their health.

Metrics

Teachers and staff are supported and feel confident in teaching garden and wellness education.

Families have access to premium opportunities to learn more.

Teachers have resources to support their own wellness to help keep them in the field.

Strategies

Provide on-site technical assistance and lesson modeling for teachers and staff.

Provide on-demand digital classes in fields such as gardening and nutrition.

Hold in-person workshops for community members.

Develop a holistic wellness curriculum that includes teacher care.



STRATEGIC AREA:

ADVOCATING FOR POLICY CHANGE

To ensure Clayton County residents are centered in this work, we must advocate for policy change.

Metrics

We will have developed and pursued a policy platform that makes nutrient-dense food more affordable and not only brings community members to the table, but ensures they are included in all decisions.

Community members have access to grassroots movement building techniques.

Community led nonprofits receive additional resources because of HHSPs advocacy efforts.

Strategies

Create a policy arm of the organization that focuses on a clear and measurable policy platform.

Build relationships with elected officials and political influencers.

Create trust, relationships, and mutual support within Clayton County.

Build relationships with community leaders and other prominent community voices.

Create a curriculum to train others in advocacy engagement.



STRATEGIC AREA:

SUPPORT THE WORK

In order to accomplish our goals, we must shore up organizational infrastructure.

Metrics

Annual revenue numbers.

Social media followers/newsletter subscribers.

Number of individual donors.

Complete a succession plan.

Recruit and retain high performing team members.

Strategies

Monetize workshops listed in this document, as appropriate.

Create a marketing plan to reach Clayton County residents.

Create a marketing plan to reach potential supporters.

Model best practices for self care, such as taking sabbaticals, putting together succession plans, creating work boundaries, etc.

Provide professional development opportunities, self care programs, and invest in team members.

OUR ROLE IN CLAYTON COUNTY

We strive to truly be community members and show up for our neighbors. In order to meet our mission, we must have relationships that aren't only transactional and aren't only focused on what the organization needs but also what the community needs.

This manifests in programs like our Back to School Block party and our Toys for Tots holiday program. We will continue to find ways to directly meet community needs and build trust.



STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

KEYWORDS

UNITY
COMMUNITY
EQUITY
FOOD HEALTH

“Hand, Heart and Soul Project provides food access and health and wellness education programs that ensure the well-being of the children of Clayton County and their caregivers”

This statement accurately describes how the respondents connect with HHSP’s activities.

GARDENING & FOOD EDUCATION

Several respondents mentioned that gardening and food education are only something that they thought of when thinking of HHSP, but that they believed that a goal of HHSP could be to make sure that every community is equipped with both a garden and HHSP’s guidance.

COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

emerged as a theme, with respondents celebrating HHSP’s current efforts while encouraging the organization to go further: wrapping the community into policy discussions, training instructors to teach nutrition and gardening classes, and cultivating additional spokespersons for the organization.

**CAPACITY BUILDING WAS A COMMON HOPE
FOR THE ORGANIZATION’S FUTURE.**



METHODOLOGY

Hand, Heart and Soul Project began working with Purpose Possible in March 2022 on a strategic plan. The steering committee helped us identify questions to ask, stakeholder to survey, and generally ensure we were staying true to Hand, Heart and Soul Project. We spent March and April gathering stakeholder feedback through one-on-one interviews and surveys. From there, we held a retreat with the full board and staff in late April. From there, the steering committee gathered three more times in May and June to finalize our plans. This strategic plan is a result of all of that work.

We interviewed fourteen constituents and six stakeholders participated in the survey. Our steering committee was made up of the following individuals:

Soumya Bhat, Volunteer/Board Advisor

Abbie Chaddick, Special Operations

Crystal Enekwa, Board Member

Candice Jordan, Board Member

Ky Lindberg, Board Member

Jervonia Melton, Manager of Programs and Outreach

Wande Okunoren-Meadows, Executive Director

