

# HAND, HEART AND SOUL PROJECT

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2020 Impact Report



# OUR MISSION

To nurture and advance the needs of the community by creating equitable access to quality educational, nutritional, and collective resources.

# WHO WE ARE

Hand, Heart and Soul Project (HHSP) is the not-for-profit arm of Little Ones Learning Center, a Quality Rated and NAEYC accredited early learning program in Forest Park, GA in operation since 1994. Under Toyin Okunoren and Wande Okunoren-Meadows' leadership, Little Ones has transformed into a holistic center focused on wellness programming meeting the nutritional needs of its 175 children and their families. The center also teaches those it serves how to eat and grow local and sustainable produce.

In 2018, Toyin and Wande founded HHSP to share this transformative programming with the Clayton county community through actionable training, resources, and support. In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic brought unexpected hardships and heartbreak. It is this year that HHSP truly found its footing and rose to meet our community's needs. As you read through our report, remember that much of this work was accomplished just from June to December with extremely limited staff, budget, infrastructure, or resources. Imagine what we can do fully supported!



Executive Director

**WANDE OKUNOREN-MEADOWS**



# OUR PROGRAMS

## Support for Little Lions Farm Stand

In 2019, Little Ones' bimonthly farm stand gained international attention and support after the City of Forest Park determined that the farm stand was in violation of a local zoning ordinance. After a year of grassroots advocacy, city council members voted unanimously in August 2020 for a conditional use permit allowing produce sales.



## Emergency COVID-19 Food Box Distribution



As a distribution site for the 2020 USDA Farmers to Families Box Program in partnership with Common Market Georgia, we provided **8,982 boxes of fresh, local produce** to families in need during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This overwhelming response prompted us to start the Good Food for the Soul produce pick-up. In Dec., we distributed **230 bags of groceries**.

## Daymaker Partnership

Daymaker fosters meaningful connections between children, families, and companies. As a community partner, HHSP provides holiday gifts and resources to children we serve throughout the year. In 2020, we gifted Small Bites Adventure Club home taste test kits to 68 children.



# OUR PROGRAMS

## Community Classes and Resources

In 2020, we coordinated:

- **Yoga classes** for 52 community members
- Toys for Tots **holiday gift distribution** for 100 children
- A **six week cooking program** led by a local chef for 50 kids



## School Transition Council

With United Way of Greater Atlanta, we are addressing the early learning needs of young children by developing an early care to school transition plan. Activities include promoting pre-k programs and summer transition camps, providing opportunities for children to visit elementary schools and school staff to visit early learning programs, and coordinating the annual Clayton County Back to School Block Party.

## The Clayton Collective

The Collective is a Farm to Early Care and Education and equity building program where grassroots leaders address food quality, parent engagement, and teacher support. Instead of prescribing solutions for our community, we design solutions together by listening first, engaging second, and supporting last.

Participants gain access to:

- Garden, taste testing, and CACFP menu support
- Kid and adult cooking, health, and wellness classes
- Racial equity professional development
- Access to emergency food distribution
- Stakeholder engagement





# A LOOK AHEAD

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Hand, Heart and Soul Project will celebrate with, advocate for, and advance the needs of our community. To drive outcomes, HHSP will focus on the following strategic priorities:

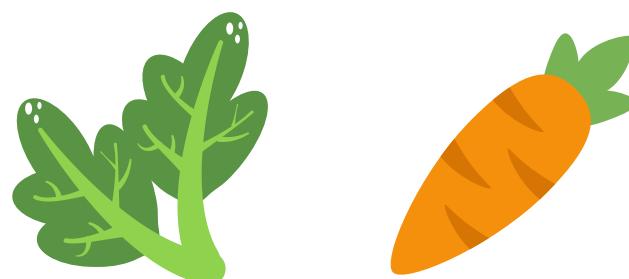
**Leadership Development:** Work to organize and amplify the voices of parents of young children and the early childhood provider community so that their needs are truly reflecting in policies impacting early childhood education and health.

**Policy and Advocacy:** Engage in advocacy efforts to influence local, state, and federal policies that impact food and early care and education systems.

**Best Practices:** Scale best practices related to child development, nutrition, and social emotional development.

**Wellness:** Promote health and wellness initiatives within and outside Little Ones Learning Center.

**Shared Services Model:** A full service wellness and education center focused on the needs of families, children, and early care providers.





# Join us!

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