



2023 YEAR IN REVIEW

OUR LEADERSHIP

Dear Friends,

When I began my tenure as Chair of the Hand, Heart + Soul Project (HHSP) Board of Directors, I made a commitment to advance the mission and work that we do in the community, to positively impact the health outcomes of the Clayton County community.

HHSP's impact on the community has been significant, and has only been made possible by our generous donors and the partnerships we have cultivated over the years. Despite the looming threat of an economic recession, we have experienced tremendous support from our donors and partners. This support has allowed us to make great strides in ensuring that families in Clayton County have equitable access to quality educational, nutritional, and community resources. Thank you to all our incredible donors, advisors, advocates, and partners. I am in awe of your generosity and unwavering commitment to our work.

There is more to be done. With every stride we make in our community and every family we impact, the need to do more and reach more becomes even greater. The work is not without its challenges, but HHSP is ready to meet these challenges, and we know that this goal is attainable with the continued support of you—our community, our donors, and our partners. Through the gifts of your networks, time, and resources, we are confident that we can create a lasting impact on the Clayton County community and beyond.

As I transition from my role as Board Chair, I can't help but reflect on HHSP's successes over the past year with renewed hope for an even more successful future. I look forward to supporting Kt McBratney in her new role leading the organization toward an even more impactful future. I want to thank my fellow Board members for their passion and dedication to advancing the mission of HHSP. And, on behalf of the Board of Directors, I want to thank HHSP's staff and leadership for their outstanding work in building a healthier community.

Kindly,

Crystal Enekwa, Board Chair

OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Board Chair: Crystal Enekwa, Esq, Ernst & Young
Treasurer: Grant Dollar, The Giving Circle
Jeffrey Capizzano, The Policy Equity Group
Ashley Manning, Blu Synergy Wholistics
Kt McBratney, OwnTrail
Kisha Wesley, Sevita
Julia Taylor, naviHealth
Advisor to the Board: Soumya Bhat

CO FOUNDERS AND CO CREATORS

Toyin Okunoren, MS, RD
Wande Okunoren-Meadows



A SNAPSHOT OF 2023

We partnered with

11

early care and education and school-age programs.

We provided

\$72,000+

in on-site wellness services and supplies which impacted

1200+

Clayton county children and families.

We built and nurtured

8

learning gardens and provided

348+ HOURS

of hands-on nutrition education.

We launched

3

new community programs.

We provided

600+ RESIDENTS

with school supplies and community resources at the 2023 Clayton County Back to School Block Party.

We distributed

11,300+

pounds of affordable produce.

OUR STAFF

"KNOWLEDGE IS POWER. INFORMATION IS
LIBERATING. EDUCATION IS THE PREMISE OF
PROGRESS, IN EVERY SOCIETY, IN EVERY FAMILY."
(KOFI ANNAN)



JOSEPH FITTEN, III
*Food Access and Community
Outreach Coordinator*



JAMES OWENS
*Grassroots Community
Organizer*



BENYKA MITCHELL
*Education Outreach
Coordinator*



BRIANA MADDIX
*Social Wellness
Coordinator*



JONATHAN CARR
Garden Educator

“WE LEARN NOT FOR THE
SAKE OF KNOWING,
BUT FOR THE SAKE
OF DOING.”



BRITTAIN MEADOWS
Intern

IF YOU WANT TO GO FAST,
GO ALONE. IF YOU WANT
TO GO FAR, GO TOGETHER.
(AFRICAN PROVERB)



CHARMAINE GODLEY, M.ED.
*Assistant Director of Programs
and Initiatives*

“THE FIGHT IS NEVER ABOUT GRAPES OR
LETTUCE. IT IS ALWAYS ABOUT PEOPLE”
(CESAR CHAVEZ)



ENGLAND MEADOWS
Intern



DEMOND TIMBERLAKE
*Assistant Director of
Community Organizing and
Operations*



AMANDA EVANS

*Early Care and Education
Program Manager*

“ TRUE ADVOCACY STOPS US FROM
ACCEPTING THINGS SOME SAY CAN'T BE
CHANGED TO CHANGING THE THINGS WE
NO LONGER WANT TO ACCEPT.

ALLISON GORDON, PH.D.
*Policy and Research
Manager*



JASMINE HERNDON
Food Access Coordinator

“ STORYTELLING HUMANIZES THE
HURTS AND THE HURDLES IN
SOCIETY THAT MUST BE OVERCOME.

TASHION MACON
*Communications and
Marketing Strategist*



“THE WAY YOU DO ONE THING IS THE
WAY YOU WILL DO EVERYTHING”
(MARTHA BECK)

JAYME OATES
*Grants and Database
Administrator*



TRINA LABENSKI
*Education Outreach
Coordinator*

ANY ARMY OF DISCIPLINED ANTS
IS GREATER THAN AN ARMY OF
UNDISCIPLINED ELEPHANTS.
(AFRICAN PROVERB)

WANDE OKUNOREN-MEADOWS
Executive Director



IF YOU DON'T TAKE CARE OF YOUR
WELLNESS NOW, YOU WILL BE TAKING
CARE OF YOUR ILLNESS LATER.

MIRIAM BEKELE
*Education Outreach
Coordinator*



WHAT WE DO

MISSION: THE HAND, HEART + SOUL PROJECT CULTIVATES WELLNESS IN CLAYTON COUNTY THROUGH EQUITABLE ACCESS TO NUTRIENT DENSE FOODS, HOLISTIC EDUCATION, AND ADVOCACY.

THE HAND, HEART + SOUL PROJECT HAS THREE STRATEGIC INITIATIVES:

- **Holistic Wellness Education:** Kids and their families will have knowledge to make their own choices and better champion their health.
- **Nutrient Dense Foods:** According to the USDA, Clayton County has 13 “food deserts” (food insecure areas). We aim to eliminate them all.
- **Advocating for Policy Change:** To ensure Clayton County residents are centered in our work, we must advocate for policy change.

[Read our Strategic Plan here.](#)



EVALUATION SPOTLIGHT:

In collaboration with the Public Health Institute and utilizing federal SNAP Education funding, HHSP **conducted a formative evaluation** to determine what nutrition education and outreach support is needed at Clayton County ECE programs and one middle-high school **to increase the consumption and purchase of healthy foods** among the children, families, and staff served.

WHAT IS AN EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION PROGRAM?

Early care and education (ECE) is the formal education and care of young children in specialized settings before those children start primary school. While ECE programs often serve children ages zero to five, programs may also serve older K-12 children through afterschool programs and summer programs.

OUR PROGRAMS



HOLISTIC WELLNESS EDUCATION

CLAYTON COLLECTIVE

The Clayton Collective is a farm to school, ECE, and equity-building program for grassroots leaders and movement builders with ideas to address food quality, parent engagement, provider and teacher support, and more. Instead of prescribing solutions, we teach and vibe with local leaders to design solutions that don't just sound good, but actually solve our community's most pressing challenges. We do this by listening first and engaging on an individual level. We honor the genius and expertise of each leader while challenging them to envision a greater good for our community.

Together, the Clayton Collective impacts over 1200 children, families, and staff. These sites were supported with over \$72,000 in on-site services and supplies to support garden and nutrition education, literacy, parent engagement, and holistic wellness.

PARTNERS:

7 Pillars Career Academy
Arrow Christian Academy
Kids 4 Kompany
Ladies of Favor Dream Academy
Learning Station
Lina Lane's Learning Center
Little Ones Learning Center
Mohammed Schools of Atlanta
Morrow Early Learning Center
Pure Love Learning Center
Rex Childcare and Early Learning



SCHOOL TRANSITION AND SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING

We help prepare children for kindergarten and beyond.

- Hosted the [2023 Clayton County Back to School Block Party](#) providing [600+ residents](#) with free healthy produce, shelf stable goods, school supply distribution, fitness showcase, and more! The event had 16 sponsors, including the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning, Southern Regional Medical Center, and the Atlanta Community Food Bank.
- Developed our Hand Heart and Soul Project Social Emotional Curriculum blending nature-based learning with themes of self awareness, relationships, decision making, and self management.
- Partnered with local art therapists, [Jonesy's Place](#) and [ChopArt](#), and ECE programs to receive training and coaching on [trauma-responsive education strategies](#). Children and students participated in [drama](#)-, arts-, and [movement](#)- based therapy.
- Launched the [Learning Spaces program](#), a free [monthly workshop program](#) for parents and their young children.

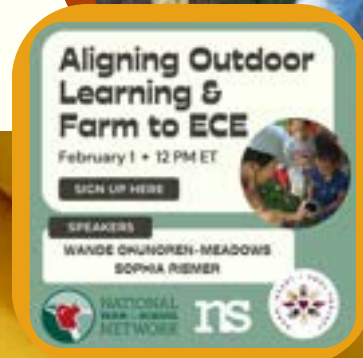


NUTRIENT DENSE FOODS

FARM TO SCHOOL AND NUTRITION EDUCATION

We create thoughtful, culturally aware programming [on growing healthy foods](#) and instilling healthy habits.

- Provided services at [eleven early learning programs](#) and one middle school serving 1200+ children.
- Led 348 hours of hands-on [nutrition](#)-, [garden](#)-, and [wellness](#)-based education.
- [Maintained edible learning gardens](#) at seven ECE sites and one middle/high school.
- Staff presented webinars and workshops [locally](#) and nationally, such as a [National Farm to School Network webinar](#) on Aligning Outdoor Education and Farm to ECE.



THE USDA OFFICE OF COMMUNITY FOOD
SYSTEMS HIGHLIGHTED OUR FARM TO
SCHOOL PROGRAM AND COMMUNITY
PARTNERSHIPS **IN THIS VIDEO!**



FARM STANDS AND FOOD DISTRIBUTION

We increase availability of healthy foods in our community through farm stands that accept EBT/SNAP and feature local produce from regional farmers with sustainable growing practices. We provide [emergency food distribution](#) to community members in need.

- Hosted [10 farm stand market days](#) with produce sourced from an ECE garden and local farmers through Common Market Southeast and Concrete Jungle.
- Distributed 11,300 of fresh and shelf stable food at the 2023 Back to School Block Party in partnership with Atlanta Community Food Bank.
- Harvested 105 pounds of produce from the [Jasmine Greene Memorial Garden](#) to sell at the Little Lion's Farm Stand.

POLICY, COMMUNITY ORGANIZING, AND ADVOCACY

We work with local and national stakeholders to advance changes in policies that address food inequities. We elevate voices that have been minoritized.

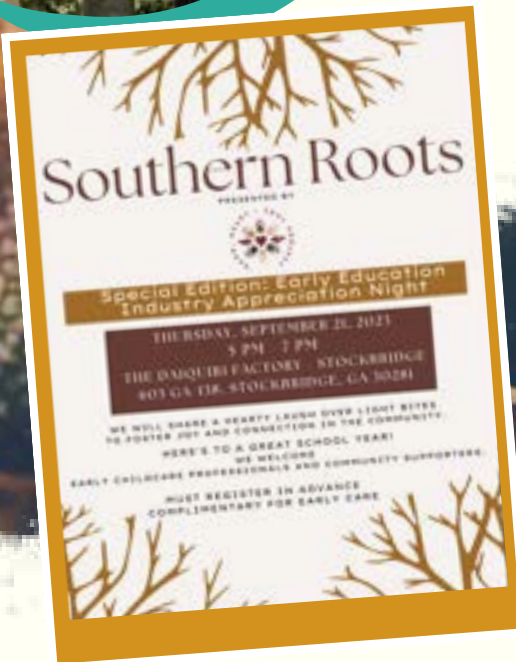
- **Impacted 1200+ people** at in-person and virtual events on the importance of food access, quality education, and equity.
- Launched **TWO new** community organizing initiatives:
 - [The Clayton Collaborative](#) brings together 30+ Clayton County non-profits, businesses, religious, and government organizations to actively address health gaps.
 - [Community Champions](#) brings together 13+ Clayton County residents to identify health related issues in the community and brainstorm solutions.
- HHSP staff developed recommendations for supporting local agriculture through the [Jonesboro Agriculture Plan Steering Committee](#).
- HHSP coordinated the [Forest Park Planning Committee](#) in partnership with the United Way of Greater Atlanta [to convene community members](#) in a participatory community planning process.





POLICY AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

- HHSP was the “community quarterback” for the Atlanta Alliance for Equity Committee, which met to center racial equity to increase economic mobility and family income so that zip code is no longer a determinant of future success. The initiative resulted in the launch of our [Learning Spaces Program](#).
- Hosted community conversations through our [Southern Roots signature events](#) which serve as community-conversation based gatherings for issues of importance to our community, and other events such as hosting a conversation with [Tony Hillery on Social Influences of Health](#).



FEDERAL FUNDING PARTNERSHIPS

- Awarded a **SNAP Education Implementation Grant** through the Georgia Department of Human Services which enables HHSP to utilize federal funding to provide nutrition and physical activity education, policy, and promotion to low income Clayton County residents.
- Awarded a [USDA Farm to School Implementation Grant](#) to further our work in garden based education and support local farmers through early learning programs.
- Awarded a **USDA Farmers Market Promotion Program Planning Grant** to develop a marketing and outreach plan for our farm stands that brings and keeps fresh, local produce in our community.
- Awarded Emergency Food and Shelter Program funding to provide emergency food distribution.



SPREADING THE WORD

HAND, HEART + SOUL PROJECT SERVES ON BOARDS AND ADVISES IMPACT INITIATIVES:

- Atlanta Alliance for Equity, Contributor
- [Big Green Decentralized Autonomous Organization](#), Member, [Advisory Committee](#)
- [City of Jonesboro Agriculture Plan Steering Committee](#), Member
- Union of Concerned Scientists - Good Food for All, Executive Steering Committee Member
- Transformational Farm Bill Coalition, Member
- National Farm to School Network, Advisory Board Member
- Georgia Farm to Early Care and Coalition, Member



HEAL FOOD ALLIANCE SCHOOL OF POLITICAL LEADERSHIP:

HHSP's Executive Director and Assistant Director of Community Organizing and Food Access [completed HEAL's \(Health, Environment, Agriculture, Labor\) six-month leadership program](#) to advocate for policies and solutions that reimagine food and farming systems. The HEAL School of Political Leadership supports BIPOC leaders to develop solutions-oriented campaigns that center racial, economic, and environmental justice.



IN THE NEWS!

MEDIA AND PRESS:

- Civil Eats [showcased Hand Heart and Soul Project](#) in an examination of the USDA Farm to School Program.
- Saporta Report featured how Hand Heart Soul Project [nurtures the minds and bodies of Clayton County's littlest residents.](#)
- AgDaily [highlights Hand Heart and Soul Project](#) in efforts to uplift marginalized food communities.
- Clayton Collective member, Ada Ngoddy of Rex Childcare and Early Learning, was [interviewed by the New York Times on the need for investment in child care.](#)
- Our Executive Director was recognized as an [early care and education champion and "Good Troublemaker"](#).
- Our Executive Director was interviewed by [Shoutout Atlanta.](#)
- Upscale Magazine [shares a Good Food for the Soul distribution](#) event.
- Our new Learning Spaces program grand opening was covered by [Rolling Out News, Atlanta Voice,](#) and [Producers Channel.](#)
- Senator Jon Ossoff honored our Executive Director for her service to the Forest Park Community with [an Official U.S. Senate Commendation](#) which is memorialized in the United States Congressional Record.
- Our Executive Director received the MLK Jr. Advisory Council's [Rita Jackson Samuels Founder's Award](#) at the State Capitol.
- The USDA Office of Community Food Systems highlighted Hand Heart and Soul Project's [collaboration,](#) in this video series featuring our partners [Little Ones Learning Center,](#) [Atlanta Harvest,](#) and [Rex Childcare.](#)



LOOKING FORWARD

As I reflect on our progress this year, my heart is filled with gratitude. Hand, Heart + Soul Project is more than just an organization; it is a movement embedded with the love of people. Each step we take, no matter how small or monumental, brings us closer to a future where access to high-quality early education, nourishing food, and thriving spaces is not a privilege but a right. This year has shown us that when we unite and we **lift each other up**, we create lasting change. We've built partnerships, expanded our reach, and impacted in ways that will ripple for years to come. But we are not done yet.

As we look ahead, I am more passionate than ever about the work that lies before us. We are learning, growing, evolving, and preparing **not to do more, but to go deeper** – for our children, our families, and our communities. **Together**, we will continue to push boundaries and reimagine what's possible with mission-aligned minds. While 2023 brought challenges, we know that we will only become stronger in 2024. With the strength of our collective commitment, we will rise to meet the future with determination and purpose.

In solidarity,

Wande Okunoren-Meadows, Executive Director



OUR WORK IN ACTION











HAND HEART • SOUL PROUD • BIG GREEN & THE CITY OF FOREST PARK
PRESENTS

FOREST PARK COMMUNITY EARTH DAY





SAVE THE DATE

THURSDAY, APRIL 25
 4:00PM - 8:00PM

STARR PARK
 5031 Park Ave, Forest Park, GA 30297

FOOD TRUCKS | LOCAL FARMERS
 WELLNESS CORNER |
 CHILD DEVELOPMENT & AGRICULTURAL PANEL

THANK YOU

TO THE MANY COMMUNITY MEMBERS, INDIVIDUALS,
AND ORGANIZATIONS THAT SUPPORT OUR WORK.

ORGANIZATIONAL FUNDERS & DONORS

Big Green DAO
Clayton County Emergency Food and Shelter Program
George B. Storer Foundation
Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning
Georgia Department of Human Services
Georgia Foundation for Public Education
Georgia Governor's Office of Planning and Budget
MailChimp (Intuit)
Sprouts Family Foundation
The Wilbur and Hilda Glenn Family Foundation
Union of Concerned Scientists
United States Department of Agriculture
United Way of Greater Atlanta
W.K. Kellogg Foundation
Windward Fund
Women's Foundation of the South

FOUNDING DONORS

Jeffrey Capizzano
Candice Jordan
Toyin Okunoren

POLLINATOR DONORS

(\$1000 & ABOVE)

Jeffrey Capizzano
Grant Dollar
Crystal Enekwa
Candice Jordan
Little Ones Learning Center
The LuluaMa Foundation
Mary Mapes
RedefinED Atlanta
Julia Taylor
United Way of Greater Atlanta






SEED DONORS & SPONSORS

(UP TO \$999)

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FamilyTies Inc.
Food Well Alliance
GeorgiaCAN
Gifted Girls of Grace Inc.
Charmaine Godley
Allison Gordon
Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition of GA
Kids 4 Kompany Learning Academy
Trina Labenski
Little Ones Learning Center
Kt McBratney
Morrow Early Learning Center
Jayme Oates
Wande Okunoren-Meadows
Emia Oppenheim
Pembroke Townhomes
Quality Care for Children
Rex Childcare and Early Learning Center
Ellen Reynolds
Clementine Rivers
School Readiness Consulting
Southern Regional Medical Center
Keisha Walker
Kisha Wesley



JOIN US!

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