

HEALTHY FOODS for HEALTHY kids

THE FIRST STATE SCHOOL GARDEN EXPERTS

THE LATEST NEWS AND UPDATES FROM HEALTHY FOODS FOR HEALTHY KIDS



(L): It's all smiles after Christiana Care, Adesis, HFHK, and school staff volunteers rebuild Shortlidge Elementary's school garden
(R): The crew at Sussex Academy celebrates building a garden shed, which requires team effort

**JOIN US NOV 4, 2023!
HFHK'S 15TH ANNIVERSARY
CELEBRATION**

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HFHK WELCOMES 50TH PARTNER SCHOOL, REBUILDS 17TH GARDEN

Over the past three summers HFHK has worked with 17 partner schools to rebuild their HFHK school gardens. These rebuilds, graciously funded by Highmark, and one school funded by Corteva, were critical for program continuity. After 7+ years of use, and having grown fallow from the COVID-19 pandemic, the old beds needed to be ripped out and new ones built and installed so the students could continue growing.

Despite focus on the rebuilds, HFHK is continuing to expand our program and partner schools. We are proud to welcome Wilmington Manor Elementary (WME) and Sussex Academy Elementary (SAE) Schools as our Fall 2023 partners! These schools will be our 49th and 50th partner schools, respectively.

While we were very fortunate to have luck for most of our builds, the last ones packed some whammies. The night before Brookside Elementary School's rebuild on August 8, a terrible storm swept through the neighborhood creating many downed trees which caused road closures and power outages. Brookside's garden shed was completely destroyed and the build was canceled out of safety concerns. Later that month, a shipping snafu for SAE's new garden forced us to reschedule their build - although the shed was built!

As you read the rest of our newsletter, we hope you will join us in our celebration of 50 partner schools and of 15 years of Healthy Foods for Healthy Kids on November 4. We grew this much because of your support and we know we can continue growing and help Delaware be the First State to see a vegetable garden in every school with your continued support.

HFHK RECEIVES 2nd USDA FARM-TO-SCHOOL GRANT

Partial funding received, your help needed to reach \$35,000 goal!

In early January Healthy Foods for Healthy Kids wrote and submitted for a USDA Farm-to-School grant. The request for this federal grant was to help provide some support for our first-ever Garden Coordinator workshop on Nov 4, for staff professional development, and to welcome three new partner schools for the Spring 2024 growing season. In July we received notification of our award and are grateful for its success! HFHK was an inaugural and only Delaware awardee of the Farm-to-School grant in 2013. We were also the only Delaware organization awarded in 2023.



USDA Patrick Leahy Farm to School grant program, est. 2013



**HELP US NOW & DONATE TODAY
BY CLICKING HERE!**

The full project totals \$127,911, and with \$92,757 awarded, HFHK is required to raise \$35,154 for grant implementation.

- This is where you, our champions, come in -

Please help us by donating or sponsoring the workshop today!

Why are these projects imperative for HFHK? The school garden movement is growing not just in Delaware, but across the United States. It is critical for us to expand our support in new ways to the growing number of HFHK Garden Coordinators across the state, to help teachers learn more about garden education practices, and to continue working with new partner schools every year. It is our vision to see a school garden in every school in Delaware.

“Receiving this grant is a huge testament to the the successful momentum we are having here at HFHK and in Delaware as a whole with national school garden movement. We know this program is something special and unlike any other school garden program we’ve come across in the US. We’re proud of it and we want people to know that school gardens work, they are impactful, and it’s happening right here in our own back-school-yards,” noted Anita Broccolino, HFHK Director, Community Engagement and Partnerships. “This program makes a difference.”

[Click here](#) to read the full USDA Food and Nutrition Service press release.

HFHK EXPANDS CROP CHOICE, ADDS BEKANA & CUCUMBER

HFHK partner school students had fun trying a new green this past spring! Schools had the option to grow Tokyo Bekana for the first time and it was a hit. The bright green leaves proved to be a nice addition to the garden with their sweet, subtle flavor. Bekana is versatile and can be eaten raw in a salad or sauteed with ginger and soy sauce. Many schools are choosing to plant Bekana this fall and we look forward to hearing about the different ways it is prepared and served.

New for the fall growing season is a Corinto Cucumber. These cucumbers grow in the fall but the seeds like a warm soil to start. We’ll be testing these at just a few schools this fall. Thank you to Christ Church for funding our experimental crop this season! We are excited to watch them grow and hear how the students like them.

THE STUDENTS WERE
SO EXCITED ABOUT
THE COLOR!
APPARENTLY NEON
GREEN IS ALL THE
RAGE!

- JEN CIPOLLA, HFHK
PROGRAM MANAGER



Bekana growing in a school garden, Spring 2023



Maple Lane 4th graders harvesting Tokyo Bekana in Spring 2023

SCHOOL GARDEN SUMMITS INSPIRE HFHK GC WORKSHOP

National, regional conferences pave way for statewide educational event

School gardening is a movement that is quickly growing. This is something that HFHK's Executive Director, Lydia Sarson, and Program Manager, Jen Cipolla, learned and experienced first-hand while attending the national Growing School Gardens Summit last year. Connections made at that summit led Jen serving on an Advisory Council to help plan a Regional School Garden Summit. After months of planning meetings, the Regional Summit was set for the end of July in Washington D.C. Unfortunately Jen's schedule didn't allow her to attend, but thankfully both Rachel Terracina, HFHK Program Coordinator, and Lydia were able to attend and experience the summit.



L to R (bottom row); Rachel presenting at Regional Summit; Rachel and Lydia having fun together at the Regional Summit

Despite Jen's absence, her and the Advisory Council's hard work paid off. The two days were filled with inspiration, networking, and creative problem solving. Garden education experts from across D.C., Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Delaware came together to build the northeastern garden professional community.

Lydia and Rachel wasted no time getting involved. Day one had Rachel leading a lightning talk sharing some of HFHK's "Seeds for Success" and Lydia connecting with folks from USDA, City Blossoms, and the School Garden Support Organization (SGSO) Network.

On Day 2, Rachel found herself at the Kelly Farm managed by D.C.'s Dreaming Out Loud group. There she was able to participate in small, hands-on lessons led by other garden based educators.

"It's always so much fun to see how other people run their lessons" explained Terracina. "It's so important to remember that everyone has a unique learning and communication style. By watching others teach, we get the opportunity to become more inclusive and accommodating educators."

(cont. on pg. 4)

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED: THE 25,000 PACKET PROJECT

HFHK to fill seed packets by May 2024 for students to plant at home

Thanks to the Laffey-McHugh Foundation, Healthy Foods for Healthy Kids is able to provide each student at each of our 50 partner schools with a seed packet to take home at the end of this school year. Part of our vision is that the joyful gardening experiences the students have in school will lead to generations of healthy families throughout Delaware. This project allows students to share their gardening experience with their families and continue growing through the summer months. We are excited for this very large project and would love help from the community!

HFHK will organize seed packet filling events starting in October. Event information will be sent via email and posted on social

media. If you or your company would like to help host or commit to fill a set number of packets, please reach out to Anita Broccolino at abroccolino@healthyfoodsforhealthykids.org or call 302-690-6535 for more information.



Students at Lord Baltimore learn how to properly plant seeds

Regional Garden Summit cont.

(cont. from pg. 3)

In addition to trying out new lessons, Terracina also had some time to meet with school teachers coordinating their own gardens. Through these conversations, she began to understand what Jen and Lydia had learned in 2022.

“What people might not know about HFHK’s program, is that it is only successful because of the 50+ dedicated garden coordinators, mostly elementary teachers, who volunteer to run the program at their school. These educators know the value school gardens bring their students because they witness it first-hand, but they aren’t necessarily experts in topics like soil health or pest prevention. The purpose of our own HFHK ‘summit’ is to provide these education superstars with as much knowledge and support as possible to make their school garden as productive and healthy as possible,” explains Lydia.

“One of the reasons we’re coordinating the workshop on the same day as our annual fundraiser is two-fold,” she continues. “We want to respect everyone’s time and considering our Sussex partners, trying to carve

out two days can be a lot. Plus we know, after our own experiences at the summits, the garden coordinators will leave feeling energized and inspired. We want to share that feeling with you, too! We invite you as friends of HFHK to join us for a celebratory dinner at Deerfield Golf Club, directly following the workshop, so you can talk to the teachers and hear garden stories directly from them!”

This event also coincides with HFHK’s 15th anniversary as a nonprofit.

Tickets can be purchased [here](#). Sponsorship opportunities are [also available](#). Help us celebrate 15 years of HFHK garden education in Delaware by joining us on Nov 4.



(L) to (R): HFHK at Keene Elementary’s garden build in 2008. HFHK at Red Lion Christian Academy’s garden rebuild in 2023.

HFHK Out-and-About! See us around town? Say hi!



HFHK staff and board members met at Winterthur in June to discuss our 2023-25 Strategic Plan



All set up for Lewis Dual Language School’s Back-to-School Night!



Spur Impact’s Impact Awards celebrated nonprofit leaders from across the state

3rd Quarter Events: Where to find us next!

Sept

Sept 9 - **Garden Build**, Wilmington Manor Elementary School

Sept 4 - **Open House Night**, Maple Lane Elementary School

Sept 17 - **Newark Community Day**

Sept 22 - **Garden Build**, Sussex Academy Elementary

Sept 23 - **Sprouts Foundation Event**, Forwood Elementary School

Sept 26 - **Council on Farm & Food Policy Annual Networking Seminar**

Oct

Oct 7 - **Garden Re-Build**, Brookside Elementary School

Oct TBD - **HFHK Seed Packet Filling Event**

Oct 14 - **Garden Re-Build**, Joseph E Johnson Elementary School

Nov

Nov 4 - **HFHK 15th ‘Crystal’ Anniversary and Garden Coordinator Workshop and Appreciation Dinner**

Nov 13 - **Garden Build**, Booker T Washington Elementary School (tentative)

Stay tuned & tune into 47abc!



Anita interviewed by Jordie Clark of 47abc at Sussex Academy’s garden build prep day, July 2023

STAFF EDITORIAL: A View From the Garden



By: Rachel Terrarina

When I joined the HFHK team, I was in a bit of a transitional period. Not only was I moving across the country from the Midwest to Delaware, I was also making a career change from environmental education to garden based education. HFHK, too, was in a transitional period. After 14 years of being volunteer-led, we were making the leap to become a staff-ran organization.

It was both exciting and nerve-wracking to know that I would be a part of such an integral time in HFHK's history. I knew that the decisions we were making would impact the future of our entire organization. Now, standing on the other side of a full year, I get to look back at the seeds we've sown and see the sprouts of our efforts.



(L) to (R): Rachel teaching Lewis Dual-Language 1st Grade Students how to plant their seeds. Volunteer Salena Circo and Rachel serving smiles, and veggies, at Lewes ES Meet the Teacher Night

Joining in May of 2022, I only had one working month with our esteemed founder, Dr. Thianda Manzara, before her official retirement. One month to absorb as much of her knowledge, expertise, and vision as I could so I, myself, could be a part of carrying on her legacy. After that, the staff embarked on our new journey. There have been ups: 8 new school gardens (and growing), launching our brand new Early Learning Program, and refreshing teacher resources. There have also been downs: some overgrown gardens, hard questions to be answered, and funding proposals that weren't approved. No two days at HFHK have been the same as we navigate through all of the twist and turns of this growth spurt.

That being said, while we as an organization have grown so much in this past year, a few important things remain constant: the joy from students gardening for the first time, the passion from the staff, and the unending support from our board and volunteers. One year after joining this amazing organization and I see an unstoppable combination that has the potential to bring vegetable gardens to every school in the state. From where I am standing, still early in my journey with Healthy Foods for Healthy Kids, the view from the garden is a beautiful one, filled with hope for the future.

YOU'RE INVITED! JOIN US NOV 4, 2023

HEALTHY FOODS FOR HEALTHY KIDS CORDIALLY INVITES YOU

15th 'Crystal' Anniversary

& GARDEN COORDINATOR APPRECIATION DINNER



HEALTHY FOODS
w/ HEALTHY kids
THE FIRST STATE SCHOOL GARDEN EXPERTS

NOVEMBER 4, 2023
5:00 - 9:00 pm
Newark, DE

COME JOIN US
FOR DINNER.
AND BRING A
FRIEND OR TWO!

SPONSOR TODAY!

Every dollar raised helps expand school garden education to teachers and students across Delaware, while keeping our gardens growing. Support this important movement by sponsoring today!

[Click here to learn more!](#)

To purchase a ticket or for more information, [click here](#) or scan the QR code below!

