

Healthy Foods FOR Healthy Kids



The First State school garden experts

The latest news and updates from Healthy Foods for Healthy Kids



Senator Tom Carper visits 2nd grade's soil lesson instructed by HFHK Program Manager, Jen Cipolla.
Photo credit: Rehoboth Elementary

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Carper visits Rehoboth Elementary, attends garden lesson

On March 25, Senator Tom Carper visited Rehoboth Elementary School to celebrate their National Blue Ribbon School designation. This award program recognizes exemplary public and non-public schools on a yearly basis.

In between chatting with students and touring the new building, Senator Carper visited the HFHK garden and participated in a 2nd grade soil lesson led by Program Manager Jen Cipolla. "The students were so excited to have Senator Carper visit the garden during their lesson. Hearing from and interacting with our state leaders demonstrates the importance of our 'Education Cultivation' program to the students," said Cipolla.

Rehoboth Elementary rejoined Healthy Foods for Healthy Kids' program this spring, after the old elementary school was demolished in January 2018. "Prior to the building of our new school, our students embraced learning collaboratively about the importance of growing and harvesting their own food. They took pride in their various roles in the process and our garden-to-table meal days were always fulfilling," explained Principal Doris Person on why she is re-partnering with HFHK. "Additionally, we look forward to re-establishing community partnerships to provide food to those in need."

'Adopt a Garden' program gains momentum Adesis & Nemours add their support

If you have ever worked with HFHK's Executive Director, Lydia Sarson, there is a good chance you have heard her loudly proclaim, "Teamwork makes the dream work!" This rings true for many aspects of life, but especially in gardening!

In late 2021, Sarson and HFHK staff worked together to refresh and actively pilot their revised 'Adopt a Garden' program, which involves corporate support from the local community. The goals of the program are to provide additional volunteers to the schools and garden coordinators and help HFHK grow our statewide expansion.

Each of our 40+ gardens needs volunteers for "Adult Days", where the gardens are put to bed or opened in preparation for planting. These days tasks can include weeding and clean-ups and are often the responsibility of the garden coordinator/garden steering committee.



Photo credit: HFHK, Inc.

Volunteers rebuild Carrie Downie's garden, July 2021

(cont. on pg. 4)

Indian River School District-wide expansion to bring HFHK gardens to 4 more schools

In January, HFHK Executive Director, Lydia Sarson, and Program Manager, Jen Cipolla, presented to nine elementary school principals in the Indian River School District (IRSD). This invitation came from Kelly Dorman, Director of Elementary Education for the district, after hearing of the program's success at Phillip C. Showell Elementary School.

"The Healthy Foods for Healthy Kids program has been a wonderful addition at Phillip Showell. I am thankful that my students have had the opportunity to experience gardening from start to finish. Many of my students would never have this opportunity outside of school. As a school administrator, I love that the program ties to our Next Generation Science standards," stated Christy Kerr, Principal. **"This is so valuable for student learning and allows the teachers to see it as an integral part of learning and not just 'one more thing'.** Finally, after COVID, where we were all separated, it has been a wonderful activity to draw us back together as a school with a common goal."

MANY OF MY STUDENTS
WOULD NEVER HAVE
THIS OPPORTUNITY
OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL.

– CHRISTY KERR,
PRINCIPAL, PCS



Fifth graders have a bountiful harvest at Phillip Showell in Oct. 2021.



Volunteers and staff from John Clayton build their new garden, April 1, 2022.

Photo credit: HFHK, Inc.

In February, HFHK staff toured John M. Clayton Elementary, East Millsboro Elementary, Lord Baltimore Elementary and ISRD Early Learning Center. "This partnership will provide our students with knowledge around good nutrition and will hopefully inspire healthier eating that lasts a lifetime," said Dorman.

(cont. on pg. 5)



Photo credit: Anita Broccolino

Welcome to Anita Broccolino

HFHK hires new development director

Healthy Foods for Healthy Kids has announced the addition of a new Development Director: Anita Broccolino, to the Healthy Foods for Healthy Kids team. As the Development Director, Anita will be responsible for overseeing all Healthy Foods for Healthy Kids fundraising activities, some communications and elevating awareness of the mission, progress and accomplishments to the broader community.

"We are delighted to have Anita on board," said Lydia Sarson, Executive Director of Healthy Foods for Healthy Kids. "She has the right personality, skill-set, and strong connections locally, and nationally to work with the community and local leaders to advance our fundraising, communications, and marketing activities."

Anita brings a wealth of knowledge from the for-profit and non-profit sectors to Healthy Foods for Healthy Kids. In her previous roles she assisted with development and management of events, conventions, TV and stage shows, capital campaigns, proposal and grant-writing, sales/PR/marketing, program management, growth of sponsorships and stewarding large donors.

"I am delighted to join the Healthy Foods for Healthy Kids team," said Broccolino. I look forward to bringing many sectors of the community together to create partnerships between HFHK, the schools and local businesses, restaurants, and corporations, as we continue expansion throughout Sussex and Kent Counties, to complement the efforts of our 35+ school partnerships in New Castle County.

I grew up with a large backyard garden my grandfather cultivated, and am excited that we are teaching children about not only the science behind plants, but giving them the opportunity to do the work in the garden themselves," continues Broccolino. "Allowing them to see the tiny seeds they planted grow to veggies, and then tasting and enjoying their harvests, is an exciting education that will stay with them their entire lives."

Anita has studied communications, marketing, psychology, social media and non-profit management. She earned her undergraduate degree from Loyola University and has completed graduate level coursework at the University of Wisconsin and American University in DC. She moved from the DC-Baltimore metro area to

Rehoboth over 5 years ago. Joining such a collaborative and respected team under Lydia's trust-worthy leadership, combined with the solid foundation laid by Thianda, inspires me even more. I'm fortunate that my fundraising and marketing experiences have led me to this right place at this exact moment."

Anita can be reached at abroccolino@healthyfoodsforhealthykids.org. Please join us in welcoming her!

Thank you to Soliant Consulting!

Have you visited our donor page recently? If so, we're sure you noticed some amazing changes!

Thank you to Soliant Consulting for their in-kind donation of consulting hours to improve our website's donor page. Their expertise in User Experience (UX) and Application Integration has allow us to create an easier and more secure "Give to Grow" donation process. The integration of Stripe processing

and a new visual experience will allow donors to not just understand where their funding goes, but feel secure in their giving. Thank you, Soliant, for all your help!

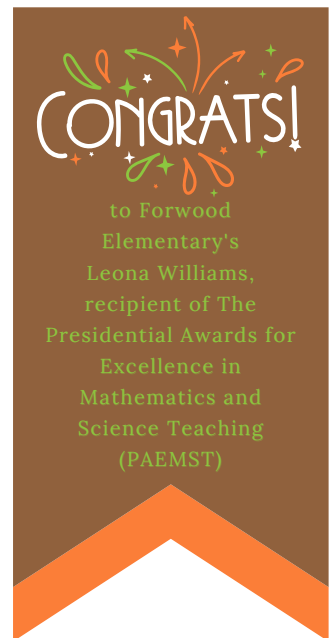


Image credit: Soliant

Leadership changes on HFHK board

HFHK welcomes new Chair and Vice Chair, still accepting board applications

Natalie McKenney is the new Chair for HFHK. She previously served as Chair of the Governance Committee. Natalie has seen the impact that growing fresh vegetables can have on children’s interest in eating healthy food. Her top priority this year is to support our organizational and program growth.

Thalia Pappas is our new Vice Chair. She spent 21 years of her career at DuPont Agricultural Products. She feels school vegetable gardens teach students how to make healthy eating an enduring part of a healthy lifestyle.

Thanks to **Fran Taccone** for her dynamic leadership as Board Chair for the past two years. Fran successfully guided HFHK through the challenging COVID years and staff changes with heart and clarity. Fran has graciously agreed to continue to serve on the Board.

Lisa Hoffman, who ably served as Vice Chair during Fran’s tenure, also remains on the board. Lisa, an executive with FMC, continues to be a steadfast advocate for HFHK and its programs.

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Read more about all HFHK board members [here](#). If you share the same passion for HFHK’s mission and are interested in serving as a Board member, please reach out to Lydia Sarson at [lsarson@healthyfoodsforhealthykids.org](mailto:lsarson@healthyfoodsforhealthykids.org).



Natalie McKenney, RDN,  
HFHK Chair 2022-2024



Thalia Pappas, PhD,  
HFHK Vice Chair 2022-2024

## Adopt a Garden, cont.

(cont. from pg. 2)

"While school gardens differ from community gardens, it takes community to be successful (in nonprofit work)," notes Sarson. "We are beyond grateful to Nemours Children's Health and Adesis, Inc. for their belief in our program and organization."

"Nemours supports Healthy Foods for Healthy Kids because we recognize the need and importance for kids to have access to healthy foods," remarks Yvette Santiago, Director of Community Engagement. "At Nemours, we recognize the importance of addressing these social determinants of health that have an enormous impact on health."

The gardens adopted by Nemours and Adesis are at Carrie Downie and Pleasantville Elementary Schools, respectively.

President/CEO, Andrew Cottone, "Children have an innate curiosity about everything! Adesis is a community of scientists, so we love programs that cultivate and encourage this curiosity – like sponsoring the (school) garden at Pleasantville (Elementary) School. Helping to ready the space was the first step in what promises to be an inspiring and educational collaboration between Adesis, Healthy Food for Healthy Kids and the students. Since we are a homegrown Delaware company, we’re proud to give back to our community in this way."

We'll update you in future communications about our 'Adopt a Garden' program and how you can get involved. If your company is interested in participating, please contact Lydia Sarson at [lsarson@healthyfoodsforhealthykids.org](mailto:lsarson@healthyfoodsforhealthykids.org).



(Top) Volunteers from Nemours ready the garden at Carrie Downie Elementary.



(Bottom) Volunteers from Adesis, Inc. clean the garden at Pleasantville Elementary. Photo credit: HFHK Staff



## Rehoboth, cont.

(cont. from pg. 1)

Kindergarten and First Grade planted lettuce, spinach, rainbow chard, carrots and peas and the first harvest is expected to be on May 6th. This is also the date when Governor Carney is visiting Rehoboth Elementary for a tree planting ceremony. HFHK staff will be in attendance as well.

This garden was funded by Delaware Department of Agriculture's Specialty Crop Block Grant. Thank you to DDA for supporting HFHK's 'Education Cultivation' program and statewide expansion.



## You helped us reach our DoMore 24 goal!

Thank you to everyone who shared, liked and donated to our DoMore24 campaign! Because of your efforts we raised **\$2,285**, surpassing our goal of **\$2,022**! All monies raised supports our continued statewide expansion. Thank you for helping us "veggie-cate the First State"!

## IRSD expansion, cont.

(cont. from pg. 2)

John. M Clayton will be the first school to join HFHK's 'Education Cultivation' program, starting this spring. Volunteers and staff built the garden on April 1 and students will begin planting on April 8.

"At this moment in education, Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is a huge element of developing the whole child in school. I believe that building this relationship with Healthy Foods for Healthy Kids will allow each one of our students to learn how to become a healthier individual, which will in turn affect their social and emotional well-being.

"Being a small part of a big production like this creates a team atmosphere and a sense of purpose all while teaching students the importance of cultivating their taste buds. Hopefully, the lessons will positively affect their education as well. Ultimately, our goal is to plant the seed and hope our school is able to reap the benefits of the program," said Allisa Booth, Principal at John M. Clayton.

East Millsboro, Lord Baltimore and ELC will join Fall 2022. ELC will be HFHK's first foray into an early learning program.

This garden was funded by Delaware Department of Agriculture's Specialty Crop Block Grant. Thank you to DDA for supporting HFHK's 'Education Cultivation' program and statewide expansion.

To read more: ["Green thumbs to spark young science minds at JMC"](#), [Coastal Point.](#)

## ICYMI: Carrcroft & Heritage start their first season



Did you see all our photos on social media of the Spring 2022 garden days?

Make sure to follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#) for photos of all the garden fun!

(Left) Students at Carrcroft Elementary celebrate a properly cultivated garden.

(Right) Students at Heritage Elementary prepare the soil for planting.

Photo credit: HFHK Staff