

Healthy Foods FOR Healthy Kids



The First State school garden experts

The latest news and updates from Healthy Foods for Healthy Kids



Top (L): Heritage Elementary celebrates their first 5th grade harvest.
Bottom (L): 4th graders at John M. Clayton Elementary harvest lettuce.
Photo credit: HFHK Staff.

(R): Drone footage of Carrcroft Elementary harvesting peas.
Photo credit: Brandywine School District.

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Carrcroft, Heritage, John M. Clayton & Rehoboth celebrate first harvests

It was a busy spring as students from Carrcroft, Heritage, John M. Clayton and Rehoboth Elementary Schools celebrated their first harvests.

HFHK Founder Dr. Thianda Manzara, Program Manager Jen Cipolla, new Program Coordinator Rachel Terracina and Public Ally Joe Jankowski teamed up to train the teachers in all four schools in HFHK's "Education Cultivation" program.

"It was a little intense coordinating the 4th & 5th grade teacher trainings this year," said Jen, "but we got it done!" Because of a long, cold spring this season, many of the crops took longer than usual to sprout. This in turn pushed the harvest dates back, bringing some incredibly close to the last day of school.

"Climate change is truly affecting Delaware and it is something HFHK staff will absolutely need to factor into our planting estimates going forward," said Thianda.

Thankfully spring warmed up and bountiful harvests were found at new partner schools, Carrcroft, Heritage, John M. Clayton and Rehoboth Elementary.

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HFHK Founder Dr. Thianda Manzara steps back

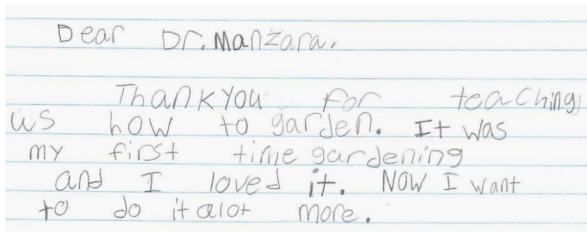
Staff continues to grow, welcomes Rachel Terracina

On June 30, Dr. Thianda Manzara formally retired from Healthy Foods for Healthy Kids (HFHK). Behind the scenes, she has prepared the next generation of HFHK leaders – Lydia, Anita, and Jen – to steer the growth of HFHK.

Motivated by a desire to improve children's health, Thianda combined her love of science and her passions for food, cooking and gardening to create the nonprofit HFHK in 2008. "Thank you all for continuing to carry the torch for garden-based education and growing healthy kids in Delaware." said Dr. Manzara.



Dr. Manzara & Lydia Sarson enjoy the festivities at HFHK's Farm Fest in Oct. 2021
Photo credit: HFHK, Inc.



A student thanks Dr. Manzara.

While HFHK officially celebrated her retirement in October 2021, Thianda graciously continued to volunteer as HFHK searched for additional staff support.

(cont. on pg. 4)

Growing School Gardens Summit

First national school garden conference takes place in Denver

In April, HFHK Executive Director, Lydia Sarson, and Program Manager, Jen Cipolla, traveled to Denver to join over 400 school garden professionals from across the country for the first-ever national school garden conference. The Sprouts Healthy Communities Foundation in partnership with Life Lab and the SGSO (School Garden Support Organization) Network hosted the gathering.

"I've been to many conferences across the U.S. and Europe," stated Lydia, "and have never experienced what I witnessed in Denver. I loved my work at HFHK before and knew the value it has to the students, but the stories people brought to the forefront were beyond powerful and energized me even more. We learned so much and now my goal is to bottle up what was felt in Denver and bring it to Delaware. I hope to accomplish that at our event on September 16th. I want people to know this is a movement!"

THE MOST IMPORTANT
SCHOOL SUPPLY IN THE
WORLD IS FOOD.

– STEPHEN RITZ,
FOUNDER, GREEN
BRONX MACHINE



Stephen Ritz, founder, Green Bronx Machine presents his work and organization to the conference.



Hundreds gather to inform, inspire and invigorate the school garden movement.
Photo credit: HFHK, Inc.

Sessions attended included "Speak their language: Easy peas-y impact communications for diverse stakeholders", "Providing Effective Support to School Gardens in your Region", and "From the Ground Up: Three perspectives on building a districtwide school garden program". The conference kicked-off with tours of Denver Public Schools, where 126 of its nearly 200 schools have a school garden program.

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Garden rebuilds continue through summer



FMC employees, members of Alpha Kappa Alpha and HFHK rebuild the garden at George Read M.S.
Photo credit: HFHK Staff

In June this year Dr. Manzara, Lydia Sarson, and Jen Cipolla rebuilt the handicap-accessible beds at both Springer Middle School and Brader Elementary School and built a new shed at McVey Elementary. A volunteer, Mea, also assisted at Springer and HFHK's Public Ally, Joe Jankowski helped at McVey.

Volunteers from FMC and members of Alpha Kappa Alpha worked together to rebuild the gardens at George Read Middle School. This build even received attention from 6abc!

In July, 'Adopt A Garden' sponsor Adesis will work with HFHK and school volunteers to rebuild the garden at Pleasantville Elementary School. Thank you to Highmark for this grant, which also funded Joe's placement at HFHK.

Jen Cipolla joins DAEE board

The Delaware Association for Environmental Education (DAEE) appointed Program Manager, Jen Cipolla to their board. The DAEE promotes environmental education and meaningful outdoor experiences to create positive community impacts that lead to the conservation and sustainability of Delaware's natural resources.

This is a two-year commitment and already Jen has attended both a Community Engagement Workshop and her first board meeting. The workshop occurred on June 8 at the DuPont Environmental Center. It was not only a wonderful workshop to learn about ways to engage communities and review guidelines but also a good networking opportunity.

'Best of luck!' to Joe Jankowski

On June 30, HFHK staff attended the Public Ally graduation of Joe Jankowski at Wilmington Brew Works. Joe first joined HFHK as an Ally in September 2021.

Joe helped us with our events, teacher training, volunteer organization and social media support. His greatest contribution was the creation and production of five teacher training videos. These videos will be incorporated into our "Education Cultivation" program starting the 2022 school year. We cannot thank him enough for his invaluable help!

Thank you to Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield Delaware for the grant which funded Joe's placement. He is the fourth Public Ally hosted by HFHK. We wish Joe the best of luck in his future endeavors as he pursues a career in geographic information systems (GIS).

Highmark grant funds new gardens, shed

Healthy Foods for Healthy Kids was the recipient of a \$49,117 grant from Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield Delaware in April 2021. The grant supports rebuilding nine gardens that benefit nearly 4,000 students. The rebuilt gardens will yield an estimated 912 pounds of fresh produce per gardening season.

HFHK staff and volunteers started last year with the rebuilds, which included Marshall, Carrie Downie, Brader, Eisenberg, Wilson and McVey Elementary Schools.



(L-R) Thianda, Lydia, and Jen rebuild the handicap bed at Brader.
Photo credit: Brader Elementary



Best of luck, Joe!
Photo credit: HFHK Staff.

How the Board creates road map to success

Strategic planning and board expansion lead the charge

Strategic planning is hardly anyone's favorite topic, yet it is a vital roadmap to achieving desired outcomes. HFHK has had a strategic plan since 2014. We adjust it annually to meet changing circumstances (COVID-19 a prime example).

The Board and staff operate under three core goals outlined in our plan with a Board member leading a task force for each one (see chart):

The Governance Committee, headed by Svetlana Lisanti, works behind-the-scenes to oversee and update policies and bylaws crucial to effective operations.

"This approach and the active engagement of our Board has enabled us to make good hiring decisions, meet our fundraising goals, and increase our community outreach," said

Strategic Goals	Board lead	Key areas of focus
Ensure the sustainability of HFHK	Natalie McKenney	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hires and evaluates senior staff Financial oversight
Grow fundraising to meet the demand for our program	Terence Mhora	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generates diverse and sustainable sources of revenue Takes lead with special event fundraising
Make the HFHK brand a household name	Nancy Mercante	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducts brand survey to shape future communication Oversees communication materials

Natalie McKenney, Board Chair. "It keeps us focused as a team on the most important work we must do to operate efficiently and continue growing. And we are certainly growing!"

Hosted by Vice Chair Thalia Pappas, the board met on June 27 to review HFHK's strategic goals and key objectives for the coming year. The focus areas will remain essentially the same.

Founder steps back, cont.

(cont. from pg. 2)

Anita Broccolino joined in February 2022 as Development Director and in May 2022, HFHK welcomed Rachel Terracina as our new Program Coordinator for Kent & Sussex Counties.

"I cannot wait to see what Rachel is going to do here at HFHK," said Lydia. "Her experience, enthusiasm and passion are exactly what will help us grow our program in Kent and Sussex Counties. She is a wonderful addition to the team and we are thrilled to welcome her."

"I got really excited when I saw the opening at Healthy Foods for Healthy Kids. I was preparing to move to Delaware and the mission just fit everything I am looking for in my career path. I love how HFHK teaches science to students while emphasizing life skills and healthy, sustainable living," said Rachel.

Once fully onboarded, Rachel will be responsible for our current partner schools in Kent & Sussex Counties, including South Dover, Rehoboth, John M. Clayton, and Phillip Showell Elementary Schools and Sussex Montessori. She will be the liaison for 2022 new partners: IRSD Early Learning Center, Lord Baltimore & East Millsboro Elementary Schools.

Rachel has a Bachelor of Science in Biology with an emphasis in Ecology: Evolution and Behavior and minored in Environmental Studies. Her previous experience includes positions at North Lakeland Discovery Center in Wisconsin, Chincoteague Bay Field Station in Virginia, and Matthews Middle School in Illinois. In her spare time, she loves kayaking, biking and exploring the beaches of Delaware.



Rachel Terracina joins HFHK.



Rachel (front, R) jumped right in with students at Rehoboth Elementary.
Photo credit: HFHK Staff.

First harvests, cont.

(cont. from pg. 1)

Students at Carrcroft harvested lettuce, spinach, chard, peas, carrots, and dill.

At Heritage Elementary, they harvested lettuce, spinach, peas, and carrots.

John M. Clayton Elementary students enjoyed lettuce, spinach, chard, and turnips.

Students at Rehoboth Elementary tasted lettuce, spinach, carrots, and peas. Rehoboth rejoined the HFHK program this year after their new building opened in 2020.



HFHK's Jen and Rachel (front) help students harvest peas and carrots.
Photo credit: HFHK Staff

School garden conference, cont.

(cont. from pg. 2)

"It was a phenomenal experience with a lot of connections made and knowledge gained," said Jen. "I can't wait to take some of what I learned in the 'Growing Our Youngest Gardeners' session and apply it to our program as we expand into early learning."

One of the connections made at the U.S. Botanic Gardens put us in touch with Brianne Stuber, the keynote speaker for our September 16 event, "Growing the Future: The Promise of the School Garden Movement".

"I want people to really understand that school gardens are a proven and invaluable resource to schools. And I know the 2.5 million children throughout the U.S. who are currently working in gardens would agree. This isn't just transformational work," said Lydia. "It truly is a movement."



SAVE THE DATE Growing the Future: The Promise of the School Garden Movement

Join us on **September 16** at **Auburn Valley State Park** for a fund- & friend-raising celebration! Hear from keynote speaker, **Brianne Stuber, Director of Programs, Washing Youth Gardens**, as they celebrate 50 years of school garden education.



Healthy Foods 
FOR Healthy Kids
The First State school garden experts

HEALTHY FOODS FOR HEALTHY KIDS INVITES YOU



Growing the Future: The Promise of the
School Garden Movement

AUBURN VALLEY STATE PARK HOCKESSIN, DE	A FUND- & FRIEND-RAISING CELEBRATION DETAILS TO FOLLOW	FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2022 6:00 - 9:00 PM
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Help us reach our goal of \$30,000 to support our "Education Cultivation" program. Sponsorship opportunities are currently available. You can find more information [here](#). Make sure to follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#) for all updates!