

# GROWING CHAMPIONS

2017 ANNUAL REPORT



## DEAR FRIENDS,

With new leadership nationally and also in Kansas and Missouri, 2017 brought changes in the political landscape that meant new and exciting opportunities for KC Healthy Kids.

What we didn't change was our commitment to our mission to advance children's health by increasing opportunities for healthy eating and active living. Our board and staff built bridges across the aisles in state legislatures, mobilized our network of partners and grew more champions for health, especially kids and residents living in our communities of greatest need.

We've already seen how our work is making advocates' voices stronger and our collective impact greater. In this report, you'll read just a few stories—visit our website for more! We hope they will inspire you to continue your support of KC Healthy Kids. No one succeeds alone, and we cannot do this great work without you.

Thank you so much for your support. We look forward to continuing to build new and lasting relationships with you and the community organizations that serve our region.

Jerry W. Glazier  
Board Chair

Gretchen H. Kunkel  
President



# GROWING YOUNG CHAMPIONS THROUGH OUR YOUTH LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

It's so important for kids, especially those in low-income communities, to understand that their voices count, to realize they have a say in their future. So, in 2017, we expanded our youth advocacy program to include Kansas City's only full-day youth advocacy conference.

The Champions for Health Youth Summit brought students together for a day of hands-on workshops about speaking out for healthy communities. Because the kids came from rural, urban and suburban schools, they gained a new awareness of the ways our communities shape our health.

We also brought elected officials from the kids' communities to have lunch with them and hear firsthand what they need to be healthy. Winners of our healthy communities photo contest received \$1,000 to make lasting change in their schools. Since the photo contest began in 2013, we've awarded \$40,000!



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Kids from four elementary schools wrote to the Kansas City Missouri Police East Patrol Division about safety concerns that keep them indoors. Several officers took the time to write personal responses to each letter. That's very empowering for those kids!

Michelle Dake  
Champions for Health Program Manager

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One out of five students in Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools' 21,000 enrollment experiences food insecurity.

Rachael McGinnis Millsap  
Farm to School Academy Director

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## FARM TO SCHOOL ACADEMY

# HARNESSING THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIPS FOR LOCAL FOOD IN SCHOOLS

For many children, the only meal they can count on is school lunch. Shouldn't it be nutritious and delicious too? We think so, and we would go a step further to say that some of that food should be locally grown. This healthier way of eating is good for kids and the local economy, and it's why we continue to invest in our Farm to School Academy.

M.E. Pearson Elementary in Kansas City, Kansas, is also investing in local food. It's across the street from Splitlog Urban Farm and Orchard. At the beginning of 2017, students as young as four were planting seeds, harvesting produce and delivering it to neighbors of the farm.

Meanwhile, Josh Mathiasmeier, Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools' director of nutritional services, was getting more involved with our Farm to School Academy. He regularly attended the program's food service coalition meetings where he helped set parameters for a safe sourcing protocol. When the guidelines were nearly final, he arranged for M.E. Pearson students and cafeteria staff to do a test run of the guidelines at the farm. Now when they harvest produce, they weigh it, wash it, package it and deliver it to the school cafeteria!

After attending Farm to School Academy's food service coalition meetings, Josh became one of the first administrators to issue a purchasing bid for local food. When he invited our program director, Rachael McGinnis Millsap, to join a summer meals task force, she encouraged the district and partnering agencies to make Splitlog Farm a daily stop on the mobile free meals truck route. That summer, when they couldn't eat a school lunch, kids came to the farm to eat, tour the farm and sample freshly-picked produce.

At the beginning of 2017, KC Healthy Kids raised funds to bring the Farm to School Academy to more schools in KCKPS. We continue to host Tasting Local events so kids can taste sweet potatoes, radishes, spinach and more fresh produce.



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I recently processed an online application with a 71-year-old client who was taking care of her three great-grandchildren in Topeka. She told me that without the voice signature, it would take too much time for her to track down a paper application, complete it and take it to the office. She was very grateful we were able to complete the application process over the phone.

Megan Grubb  
SNAP Outreach Manager  
Harvesters Community Food Network

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VOICE AUTHORIZATION FOR SNAP APPLICANTS

## RAISING ADVOCATES' VOICES TO SHAPE POLICY FOR LONG-TERM IMPACT

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program puts healthy food into the hands of 42 million hungry Americans, nearly half of them children. That's why our policy team keeps a vigilant eye on proposed legislation that threatens the program. At the same time, we look for ways to make it easier for people who need SNAP to get it.

In 2017, as a result of our combined advocacy, KC Healthy Kids celebrated with Harvesters, Kansas Appleseed and Kansas Action for Children when Kansas passed Substitute for Senate Bill 95. It allowed community partners such as Harvesters to accept voice signatures when providing telephone support for people filing online SNAP applications. This is critical for people who lack access to transportation or for other reasons cannot easily visit an office to fill out a paper application by hand.

Before the bill went into effect, partners would mail the completed paperwork for the applicant to sign and attach the necessary documentation. The process was extremely time consuming, and meant people went hungry longer. The bill had bipartisan support as well as approval from the Department for Children and Families.



# HEALTHY FINANCES FOR GROWING CHAMPIONS



## REVENUE

High growth in funding led to \$1.865 million in revenue, almost double the prior year.

## EXPENSES

Careful management of spending led to expenses of \$1.3 million, level with the year before and focused on our mission.

## CASH & INVESTMENTS

Available for mission, assets of \$1.7 million provide liquidity equivalent to more than one year of expenses.



KC Healthy Kids is a very active organization, promoting nutritious food for all. I enjoy working with them to educate people on good food to improve their health and the health of our community.

Michael Hursey  
Casa Somerset Bed & Breakfast



This organization directs their attention into so many areas of concern when it comes to affecting kids' health: economics, logistics, community relationships and food. We are a proud supporter of their efforts...

Jeanne Johnson  
Johnson Farms



**kchealthykids**<sup>™</sup>

KC Healthy Kids rallies the people in our communities to improve access to affordable fresh food and safe places to walk and play. When our neighborhoods support healthy habits, we are less likely to suffer from obesity, which is linked to Type 2 diabetes, heart disease and poor mental health. To make a lasting impact, we shape policies that improve our food system and physical surroundings, and, ultimately, the places where we live, work, learn and play.



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