



## 2022-2023 ANNUAL REPORT



### OUR MISSION

To improve children's health and wellness through physical activity and healthy eating.

### OUR VISION

A community where every child has the opportunity to live a healthy life.

### OUR VALUES

Equity • Collaboration • Excellence  
Possibility • Persistence





# CEO LETTER

Dear Friends,

At Fit4Kids, our values keep us determined and ground all we do. As we enter the new year, our unwavering commitment to **equity** remains at the heart of our mission. Our dedication to centering student voices and partnerships with resident-led organizations is reflected in our programmatic and systems change work.

Through **collaboration** and partnerships with 40 schools across six local school divisions, we impact more than 6,500 students annually. We are dedicated to **excellence** and providing high-quality, high-impact programming, driven

by our belief in the **possibility** and potential of every student we work with. Additionally, our **persistence** is shown in our pursuit of policy change, recognizing that it takes time, but our efforts can positively affect thousands of children through systemic improvements.

Thank you for being on this journey with us.

With gratitude,

*Mary Dunne Stewart*

Mary Dunne Stewart  
Fit4Kids CEO



## A YEAR IN REVIEW

### MAKING THE MOST OF RECESS



Our Making the Most of Recess initiative impacted 827 students at two schools, ensuring that recess offers fun, physically active, and meaningful play opportunities for every student. We conducted focus groups to identify schools' pressure points, led interactive teacher trainings, and distributed 45 active recess play kits!

### GIRL POWER!

Game On, Girl! offers the power of choice! In addition to getting kids moving and learning about healthy eating, students chose what other wellness concepts they wanted to explore throughout the year. Areas of learning include body image, building trust, the confidence gap, goal setting, values & identity, and more!



### HYDRATE RPS!



Student and teacher "Hydration Ambassadors," VCU researchers, an advertising creative, parents, community partners, RPS, and Fit4Kids have united to enhance water accessibility and encourage students to prioritize water consumption throughout their school day. A widespread marketing campaign — "make water your superpower" — was developed teaching how hydration improves focus, energy, and mood! These exciting efforts are part of community informed research to improve the RPS hydration landscape.

### NEW FIT4KIDS WEBSITE



To be a resource to educators, supporters, and community members, Fit4Kids' new website increases functionality, boosts engagement, and highlights our work to empower students, teachers, and champions of children's wellness.



## SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

There's nothing better than starting your day with a nice walk, scooter, or bike ride to school! By promoting safe behavior, training 99 crossing guards, and advocating for important "infrastructure" like crosswalks and signage, Fit4Kids reached 36 schools this year fostering a "safe route to school."

## LET'S GET COOKING TOGETHER!

With support from the Anthem Foundation and partnering with Soul Food RVA's Chef Ray, Fit4Kids piloted "Food as Medicine" cooking classes at the UMFS Child and Family Healing Center and River City Middle School. At River City, caregivers and siblings attended and families were sent home with ingredients to recreate recipes! Students loved sampling tasty new recipes like plant-based orange chicken stir fry, spaghetti sauce from scratch, and three bean chili.

### WHEN ASKED ABOUT HER INTERN EXPERIENCE, ONE INTERN SHARED:

"It was so much better than I could've imagined. I didn't have the best internship experience (last year), and I thought that it would be similar here in that I would just be seen as a dispensable intern. Instead, I am walking away from it with a new passion for teaching kids about health and wellness and skills that will help me with my professional endeavors in the future."

\* \* \* \* \*



## MAKING HEALTHY

## FUN FOR KIDS

### LEARNING GARDENS

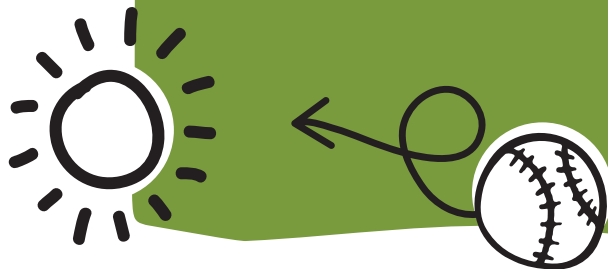
At schools across Richmond, Henrico, Hopewell, and Chesterfield, Fit4Kids used on-site gardens as an outdoor classroom to feed students' appetite for hands-on, edible fun and learning. At our 25 participating schools, 97% of teachers reported that their kids learned healthy habits and 99% shared that students were more willing to eat fruits and veggies as a result of their garden experience. We love seeing these academic lessons take root through outdoor exploration!

### ACTIVE CLASSROOMS THROUGH WELLNESS INTEGRATION

Fit4Kids Wellness Integrators continue to partner closely with elementary schools in Petersburg, Hopewell, and Prince George (new in 2022-23) to bring academic movement lessons to the classroom and build a culture of health and wellness among students and staff. In addition to the geographic expansion, our two Fit4Kids Integrators taught the most lessons (over 1,600) they've taught in the past four years!

### GAME ON, GIRL!

At our 8 middle school sites, this girl-centered after school program continued to promote physical activity through new offerings like field hockey and pickleball. Fit4Kids also incorporated more cooking and nutrition education into our lessons where students prepared snacks such as hummus and smoothie bowls. With an energizing array of health and activity lessons each week, Fit4Kids leveraged a range of tools to promote lasting, healthy choices.





# HIGHLIGHTING OUR SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIP WITH SOUTHAMPTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Among our 40 dynamic partnerships with public schools in the region, Southampton Elementary School in Richmond stands out as an exceptional example. Since 2016, Fit4Kids has been delivering engaging garden lessons within the school day and facilitating an active after-school garden club. Last year, more than 375 students immersed themselves in experiential learning through Fit4Kids garden lessons, savoring delightful treats such as pizza salad, snap peas, and cucumbers with tzatziki.

MS. SHELETA CREWS, SOUTHAMPTON'S LONG-SERVING PRINCIPAL SHARED,



“

The Fit4Kids Learning Garden at Southampton Elementary School has truly blossomed into an educational oasis, enriching our students' lives by providing hands-on experiences that ignite a passion for learning and a love for healthy living.”



## BEAZLEY RUN CLUB TAKES OFF



With the generous support of the John Randolph Foundation, Fit4Kids extended our Active Classrooms program to Beazley Elementary in Prince George County. Fifty enthusiastic students got their brains and bodies energized with a new before-school run club and over half of them participated in the Sports Backers 10k mini!

## COMMUNITY COLLABORATION OPPORTUNITIES BLOOMING

More than 10,000 fruit, veggie, and herb seedlings grown by Fit4Kids flourished in community gardens, schoolyards, nonprofits, and homes across the region. With selections such as Cherokee Purple Heirloom tomatoes, chamomile, collards, and Armenian cucumbers, there was ample variety for every taste.

OMARI AL-QADAFI, A VALUED PARTNER AND FOUNDER AND DIRECTOR OF THE RICHMOND FOOD JUSTICE ALLIANCE SHARED,



“

The seedling donations were great! This year we used the luffa plants Fit4Kids donated to populate our trellises...they provided shade and they grew so prolific that they became the topic of discussion frequently. Next year we hope to use them again.”





# OUR COMMUNITY OF SUPPORTERS

Fit4Kids owes its success to the invaluable contributions of time, money, resources, and connections from individuals like you, funders, community members, program participants, and partner organizations. Your generosity is deeply appreciated, and we are eager to acknowledge those who have made a significant impact this year.



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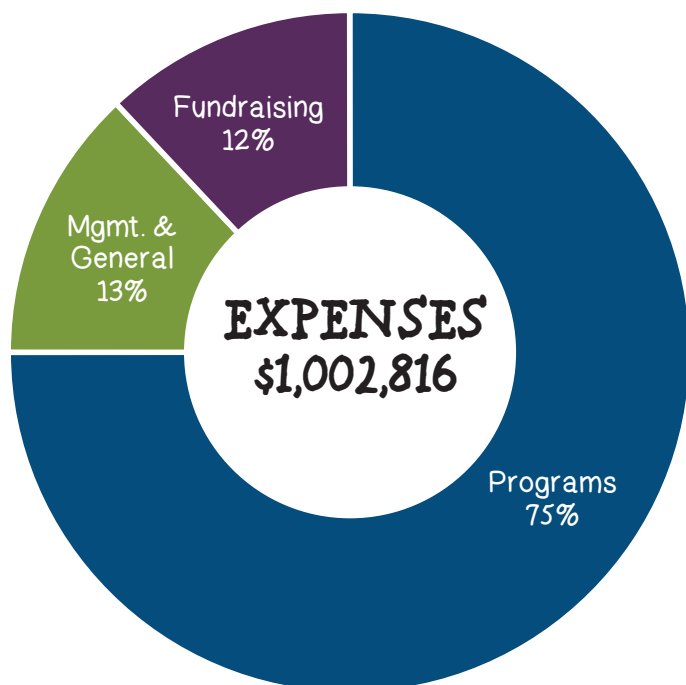
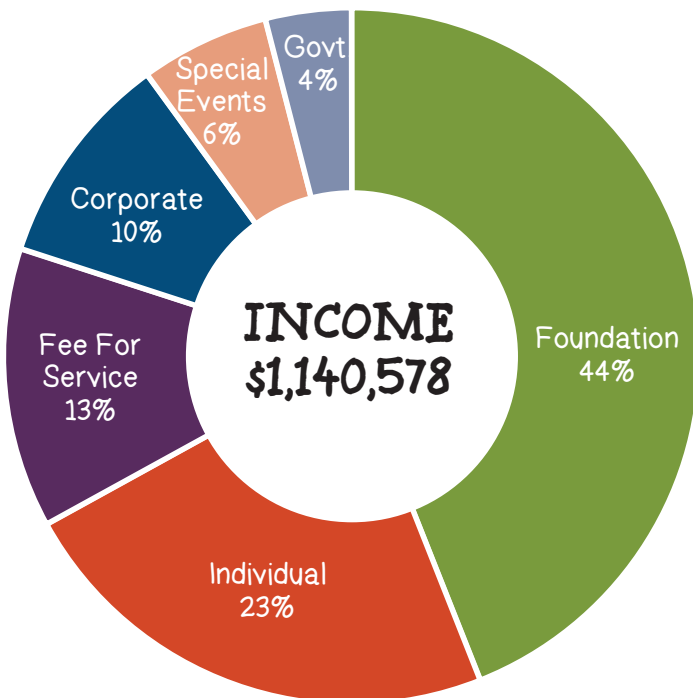
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