



## Impact Report 2019

# We are who we are **because of you.**

We are making a notable difference for local kids and their families, and your help means the world to us. Here's how your investment has advanced the health and well-being of children and families in our region.



# A move toward mindfulness.

KC Healthy Kids recently secured funding from the Health Forward Foundation and the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation to provide workshops on trauma-informed care.

With their support, we're partnering with Dr. Nancy Osborn, a licensed counseling psychologist, to develop and deliver workshops for early care and education centers participating in our Healthy Kids Bright Futures project over the next two years.

“With trainings, tools and technical assistance offered by Healthy Kids Bright futures, center staff and families can learn how to see children through a new lens, a lens that helps them recognize signs of trauma and respond in a positive way,” said Rhonda Erpelding, director of Healthy Kids Bright Futures.



While grant funding is critical in helping us deliver programs, we rely on donations to grow our general operating fund. Those unrestricted funds give us more flexibility and allow us to be more innovative and effective.

## A New Perspective

A trauma-informed approach helps families and educators reframe their thoughts about a child's behavior. When a child acts out, it's not because there is something wrong with the child, but because something harmful or life-threatening has happened to them.

This perspective makes it easier for adults to be consistently nurturing, to respond with compassion, and to help the child be more calm and cooperative.

“We want to make sure children have the tools they need to manage traumatic events and that they have more opportunities to develop resilience,” says Dr. Osborn. “Early care centers are the perfect place for KC Healthy Kids to begin this work.”



“KC Healthy Kids is already working on issues like food insecurity, which impacts people's physical health but also is a form of trauma. That's just one example of why we feel it makes sense to advocate for trauma-informed policies and practices in early care centers. That way, centers become a place where families can focus on their mental health too,” says Danielle Robbins-Gregory, president and CEO of KC Healthy Kids.

The theme of this report was inspired by “Built for Greater Things,” a spoken word piece created by 200 kids and the poetry slam team from Lincoln College Preparatory Academy at the Champions for Health Youth Summit on March 7, 2019.

# Kids and their communities are asking us to invest in their mental health and **we're more than ready.**



**Find the  
unity  
in your  
roots...**

At our youth summit in March, a high school poetry team asked kids in the audience what community means to them. Their answers show they value and need strong support from their communities. And their words—we're too afraid... breathe in and out...keep your ears wide open...we all want somewhere to fit in... remember to be grateful... fighting to build a kinder world—which were put together in a moving poem, tell us they are looking to find inner peace in a chaotic world.

Community stakeholders in mental health and children's services said pretty much the same thing in a brief survey we conducted earlier this year. They said there's a definite need for more education and advocacy that supports kids' mental health.

## 2019

### Major Grant Awards

We regularly team up up with our community partners when seeking grant funding, and prioritize multi-year awards.

This ensures sustainability of our projects and strengthens our entire network.

**\$749,722**

Kansas Health Foundation  
For Kansas Food Action Network

**\$300,000**

Health Forward Foundation  
For Good Food Policy

**\$177,780**

Kauffman Foundation  
For Trauma Informed Care

**\$150,000**

Hartwig Family Foundation  
For Operations and Programs

**\$83,495**

USDA  
For Farm to School Academy

## Champion's for Health

With Champions for Health, students have improved their surroundings by speaking directly to local policy makers and school leaders. They are leading projects like these that make it easier to be healthy and mindful at school:

- Playground renovations
- Walk to school days and park clean-ups
- Intergenerational cooking classes and school gardens
- Buddy benches to help kids make friends
- Yoga and mindfulness lessons during the school day



# Where **community** is a **garden**



to **intertwine** with thy **neighbor...**

## KC Voices

As a partner in the KC Voices collaborative, KC Healthy Kids provided policy, marketing and arts programming expertise. The collaborative was established to lift up the voices of residents in low-income, racially diverse neighborhoods in bi-state Kansas City, illustrating stories about how food policies such as the Farm Bill and Child Nutrition Act shape our communities, our opportunities and our plates.

Partners included Community Health Council of Wyandotte County, Health Forward Foundation, Historic Northeast-Midtown Association, KC Healthy Kids and UMKC's Center for Neighborhoods, with funding by Health Forward Foundation and Convergence Partnership.



## Farm to School Academy

During the 2018-2019 school year, 20 schools in 12 districts participated in The Farm to School Academy. The academy supports farm to school programs to increase children's consumption of healthy, local food. In addition to assisting schools with all aspects of managing farm to school programs, the academy provided training to 100 educators, food service staff and farmers.



### Shop by Bus

We published "Better By Bus," a report recommending ways to improve grocery shopping by bus in Kansas City Missouri and Kansas City Kansas, particularly for residents of food deserts and those without reliable cars. Our policy team also developed maps to make it easier to find out which stops have grocery stores nearby.



and love thy  
**soul, body,  
and mind.**

### Splitlog Farm & Orchard

Splitlog Farm & Orchard provided fresh, locally grown produce to three schools in KCK Public Schools in August 2019. M.E. Pearson, Whittier and Stony Point North served the cherry tomatoes, regular tomatoes and leafy greens to about 1500 students!



### Healthy Kids Bright Futures

For our Healthy Kids Bright Futures project, we've put together a team of partners who wrap their expertise around families and early care centers to make sure children birth to three get off to the best start possible. Since fall 2018, 150 children per quarter received developmental screenings and assessments that showed 63 children were on track, 45 should be monitored and 62 needed referrals. Educators received focused coaching in specific areas based on their own classroom's needs.

