

2023 ANNUAL REPORT



MATTAPAN
FOOD AND FITNESS
COALITION

Promoting health, wellness, and an active lifestyle for the Mattapan community!



TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|----|------------------------------|
| 03 | About MFFC |
| 04 | Executive Director's Message |
| 05 | Our Strategic Plan |
| 06 | Mission and Vision |
| 08 | Meet Our Team |
| 09 | Our Impact by Focus Areas |
| 15 | Other Achievements |
| 16 | Program Stories & Interviews |
| 20 | MFFC Partners |
| 21 | What's Up for 2024 |
| 22 | Get Involved |

ABOUT Mattapan Food and Fitness Coalition MFFC

Mattapan residents face significant health challenges, including diabetes, obesity, and hypertension rates higher than other Boston neighborhood.

In 2006 our founder, Vivien Morris, created MFFC as a grassroots organization to provide health solutions for the community, driven by the community. Speaking with Mattapan residents, Vivien and the initial MFFC group identified 5 core issues: environmental inequities, lack of access to healthy food, lack of youth engagement opportunities, feeling unheard, and limited physical activity opportunities.

These findings led them to create 5 focus areas to address each issue and bring community-advocated solutions to Mattapan.

- **Food Access and Nutrition Education**
- **Community Empowerment**
- **Youth Development**
- **Physical Activity**
- **Built Environment**

Today, we run community programming in our focus areas, supported by volunteers. As a volunteer-based organization, each program is defined by the passion that our volunteers have for their neighbors and for Mattapan.

Because of our deep work with individuals, some of our 2023 accomplishments are only learned through conversations and are not seen. The various experiences that individuals have gathered from their time with us all differ but point towards the impact of individual empowerment.

Taking that into account, this report features testimonials from staff, volunteers, and residents, who share their experience with MFFC and their role in bringing a positive health change to Mattapan. Each testimonial serves as a reminder that our work is for each and every person; Mattapan grows as you grow.

www.mattapanfoodandfit.org



7,000 residents served annually, with special programming focused on our seniors, youth, and families with children.

Our Values

Equity & Antiracism: We build agency among community residents to address the historic impact of systemic and institutional racism.

Health + Wellness: We advocate alongside the community for policy, system, and structural changes that promote healthy behaviors. We provide and create resources to promote healthy interactions between community members

Community Ownership + Empowerment: We empower residents to voice their needs and wants, build a sense of agency over their health, and create a community they deserve to live in.

Relationship Building Grounded in Trust: We commit to building meaningful relationships with the community and collaborating with partners to create a thriving and healthy Mattapan founded on integrity and trust.

Respect: We honor and recognize that the community's thoughts, feelings, and diverse backgrounds are invaluable and essential to working toward a healthy community.

Youth Power: We believe in the limitless potential of young people and choose to invest in them as the key to a healthier future for our communities and world.



A MESSAGE FROM

Executive Director

SHAVEL'LE OLIVIER



Mattapan Food and Fitness Coalition (MFFC) is proud to share the impact of our work in 2023, focusing on food access, nutrition education, physical activity, transportation advocacy, youth development, built environment, and community empowerment. **Highlights of our achievements include:**



3,400

residents served at
Mattapan Sq.
Farmers Market.

Food Access and Nutrition: Through initiatives like SNAP/HIP awareness, our farmers market, and community-run gardens, we increased access to fresh produce, promoted nutrition education, and supported local food systems.

Physical Activity Promotion: We launched two walking challenges, fostering community engagement and promoting active lifestyles.



Over 2 Million

walking steps
accumulated by
residents.

Transportation Advocacy: Collaborating with community organizations, we advocated for access to the Blue Hills, engaging elected officials and raising awareness about this valuable resource.

Built Environment and Community Empowerment: We supported initiatives like the Edgewater Food Forest and the Neponset River walking path, empowering residents to shape decisions affecting their lives.



\$4,500

raised throughout
the Black Lives
Green Spaces
Campaign.

As we celebrate our accomplishments, we recognize the resilience of our community. However, our work continues, driven by our commitment to ensuring every individual has the opportunity to live a healthy and fulfilling life.

We extend our deepest gratitude to our dedicated staff, volunteers, partners, and supporters for their unwavering commitment. With a new mission and vision and a strategic plan in tow we will continue to build a healthier, more equitable Mattapan for all!

OUR Priorities & Financials STRATEGIC PLAN

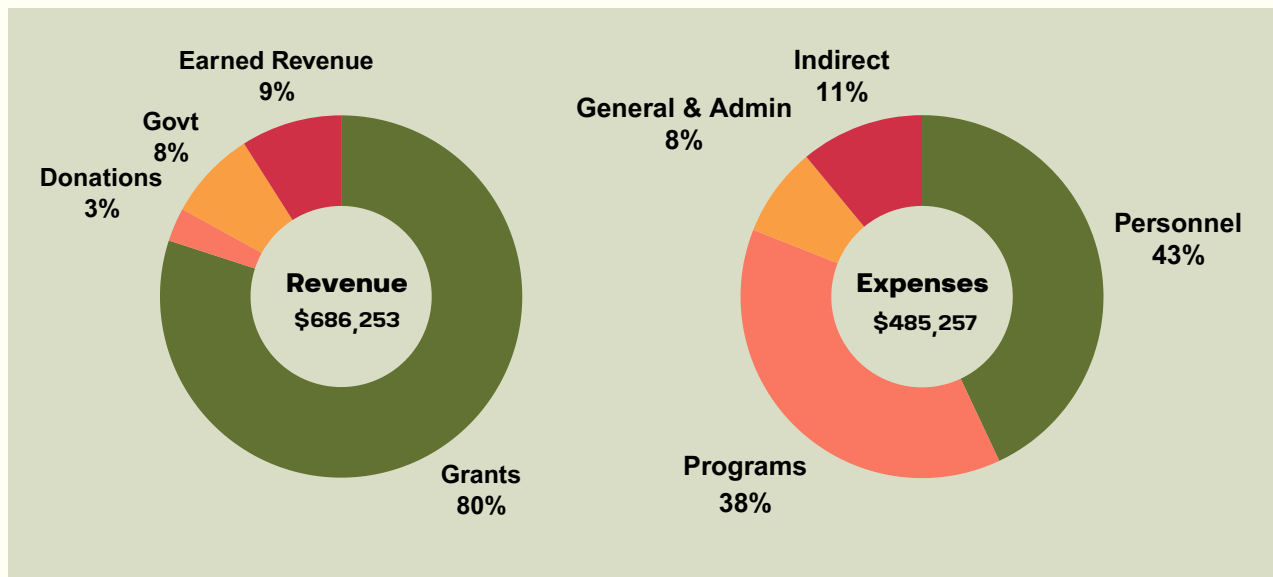
Key Strategic Priorities

MFFC is completing our 3-year strategic plan. Take a look at our key strategic planning priorities and goals below.

- Community Engagement**
 Developing community participation, knowledge, and leadership are the founding principles of MFFC.
- Organizational Effectiveness**
 We aim to create long-term stability for MFFC by increasing its capacity to communicate its story, fundraise, hire, and partner.
- Create Access**
 MFFC developed signature programs and partnerships that create access to healthy food and increase community engagement.
- Advocacy**
 We continue to be a trusted voice that partners with Mattapan residents.

Financials

Third Sector New England, Inc., is responsible for all financial management. While we maintain an internal advisory board, TSNE provides us with a fiscal board.



PREVIOUS

2023 Mission & Vision Statements

MISSION & VISION



Last year we embarked on a journey to envision what our organization can look like in three years through strategic planning. This work led us to reflect on our mission and vision statements.

While our previous mission statement was strong, it did not fully capture the depth and reality of our work within the Mattapan community. Our previous mission statement took a broader and more comprehensive approach, but we noticed that our work was more targeted at the individuals and the value of intergenerational work.

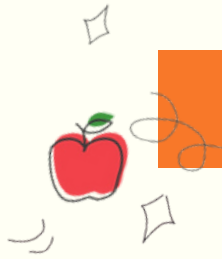
Previous Mission Statement:

To promote health and healthy behaviors by improving the nutritional and physical activity environments for Mattapan residents and residents of surrounding communities.

Previous Vision Statement:

Mattapan will be one of the healthiest communities in Boston, with easy access to affordable and healthy food. Our streets will be clean, safe, and pedestrian-friendly. Residents of all ages and abilities will take regular advantage of the abundant and inviting play spaces and recreational opportunities.





OUR NEW

2024 Mission & Vision Statements

MISSION & VISION

New Mission Statement:

MFFC builds intergenerational leadership within Mattapan's Black and Brown community to advocate for equitable access to healthy foods and opportunities for physical activity.

New Vision Statement:

Mattapan is a healthy and thriving community.

Why?

Our decision to change our mission statement was not taken lightly. Our impact at MFFC is focused on providing individuals with the resources and opportunities to establish tangible change. We acknowledge that wider health improvements begin in the hands of the individual and that the links between the individual, society, community, and policy are all interconnected. For systemic change to manifest itself within Mattapan, we must empower the individual. Our targeted focus on deep work with the individual grants us the opportunity to enact greater change in Mattapan, for years to come. It is important to note that our change in mission and vision statement does not reflect a change in our impact in Mattapan, it simply reflects our work more accurately.

Our vision statement demonstrates our long-term goal to ensure that public resources are equitably distributed across Boston. We envision Mattapan residents receiving the benefits and resources that they deserve.



MEET MFFC is a majority volunteer organization OUR TEAM

Staff



Shavel'le Olivier
Executive Director



Vickey Siggers
Food Access Manager



Karleena "Kay" Savage
Active Living &
Environment Coordinator



Shawntell Usher-Thames
Youth Development &
Transportation Advocacy
Program Manager



Lesly Adame
Food Access
Coordinator

Advisory Board



Vivien Morris
MS, RD, MPH, LDN Founder &
Board Chair



Sonia Carter
MS, LDN



Theresa Jordan
MPA



Robyn Gibson



Shari Campbell

OUR By Focus Areas IMPACT



Food Access & Nutrition

We increase the exposure of healthy, affordable, and accessible produce and food and what to do with them.



Youth Development

Our Vigorous Youth's mission is to support MFFC's mission and vision through food access programming, transportation education and advocacy, and professional and personal development workshops.

Physical Activity

We engage the community in alternative ways to get their bodies moving without traveling far.



Built Environment

We advocate for changes that promote community cohesion increased physical activity and healthy eating options through the activation and creation of green spaces (parks, open fields) and blue spaces (water).

Community Empowerment

We give residents the tools + education to advocate for the resources needed for their community.

YOUTH

2023 Program Achievements

DEVELOPMENT



MFFC hired Shawntell Usher-Thames in June to fill the role of Youth Development + Transportation Advocacy Program Manager. During her time with us she has worked with **10** members of Vigorous Youth.

The Vigorous Youth Summer Achievements

- Brainstormed designs for a cookbook to provide residents with various ways to find local produce and meat at lower costs or no cost at all.



Members of Vigorous Youth take a group photo at **Mattapan Square Farmers Market!**

- Shared their street design ideas through the Blue Hill Avenue Transportation Action Plan.
- Surveyed residents about their experience with Houghton's Pond and the Blue Hills in an effort to advocate to the MBTA to include a bus stop at this locations to increase access for Mattapan.
- They conducted research by surveying residents on their perspectives toward biking in the community.

www.mattapanfoodandfit.org



70

residents served at their own **Farm Stand** in front of the Mattapan Community Health Center



\$400

raised & supported at the **Mattapan Sq. Farmers Market**



Our youth-led event, **Mattapan on Wheels (MoW)**, was a success, with 75 attendees and 31 volunteers who contributed 126 volunteer hours!

FOOD ACCESS 2023 Program Achievements & NUTRITION

We completed the
17th season at the
Farmers Market!



Family Van visited Mattapan Square Farmers Market and offered 28 free health check-ups for shoppers!

Mattapan Square Farmers' Market

- Throughout the season, 30+ volunteers, 4 interns, and 7 farmers worked to make the market a success.
- Over 35 engagement activities, including tabling sessions, reached over 430 residents, raising awareness about vital food assistance programs.
- Through the Summer Eats Program, we provided a total of 160 meals to children every Saturday in July and August.
- Collaborative demonstrations and activities, such as Container Gardening and produce preservation, promoted healthy living to 180 residents.

Other Food Access Work

- At the Mattapan Branch Library, we served 600 Summer Eats meals, Monday–Friday, for kids who didn't have accessible meals at home.
- Black Organization of Nutritionists and Dietitians of Color, an MFFC partner, reached 64 residents through their Cooking with Confidence program and provided healthy eating workshops at the Mattapan Square Farmers Market.

www.mattapanfoodandfit.org



3,400

residents served, at the
Mattapan Square Farmers
Market



7,258

coupons redeemed



\$36,290

given to our Farmers



Shoppers line up to purchase locally grown produce from Mattapan Square Market vendors!

PHYSICAL 2023 Program Achievements ACTIVITY

Mattapan Walks Challenges

- Our first walk challenge was the RESET Challenge. We saw 38 community members register and awarded 5 participants with \$50 Amazon e-gift cards.
- Our second walk was the 2-part BINGO Challenge. A total of 20 residents signed up and we awarded 4 with \$25 Amazon e-gift cards.

Community Fitness Events

- We hosted 5 fitness event series: 3 Boss Chick dance cardio classes and a bootcamp class, Mattapan Public Library Neponset Greenway Trail walk and fitness class, 5 Mattapan Square Farmers Market fitness classes, and Project Breath with Iyengar Yoga Association of New England.



Active Living and Environment Coordinator Kay Savage leads Mattapan on Wheels participants in stretches before the annual bike ride.



2,323,463

steps accumulated during our
Mattapan Walks Challenges



Jenn Brandel (bottom left) and community residents pose for a selfie after a Walk Challenge.

Hear from a resident:

Jenn Brandel moved to Mattapan 8 years ago and began participating in our walk challenges after hearing about them through a group of neighbors. A memorable moment for her was the sense of connection: “A group of us were so different; we crossed age, space, race, and ethnicity, but we were all neighbors and were walking through our neighborhood.” In a broader sense, Jenn mentioned that “there’s this hopefulness that gets communicated when we come together and set a goal and mutually support the health of each other and our community.”

COMMUNITY

2023 Program Achievements

EMPOWERMENT

Scan the QR codes to see the survey data we gathered

Transportation Advocacy

- We supported communities affected by the Redline Shutdown from October 12–29.
- Planned meetings with transportation advocacy organizations to promote accessible signage through inclusion of residents' native languages, clear imagery, and emphasizing alternative routes.

Blue Hill Ave Transportation Action Plan

- We supported the Blue Hill Avenue Action Plan, which involved over 23,000 Boston residents
- We partnered with a graduate group from Harvard University on their Project Look Out campaign to bring awareness to pedestrian safety in Mattapan.
- Surveyed for resident sentiments regarding safety and various forms of transportation as a first step to resolving distracted driving.

Attitudes and Perceptions Towards Biking in Mattapan Poll

- Collaborating with students from UMASS and Northeastern, we crafted surveys and implemented outreach strategies to understand biking perceptions and attitudes in Mattapan.
- Top identified barriers to biking include dense traffic and fear of collision with a car. We plan on using this data to start addressing safer means of alternative transportation.
- Shavel'le and intern Zee Brown launched the Transportation and Arts Day to support resident outreach, collecting 80 survey responses.

www.mattapanfoodandfit.org



23,000

Boston Residents supported with the BHA Action Plan through work of community organizations like MFCC



Blue Hill Ave Transportation Survey



Attitudes and Perceptions Towards Biking in Mattapan Poll



Participants smile together during our annual Mattapan on Wheels bike ride.

MATTAPAN
FOOD AND FITNESS
COALITION
2023 MFCC Annual Report

BUILT

2023 Program Achievements

ENVIRONMENT

We supported the grand opening of the **Edgewater Food Forest**, a project initiated in 2021

Our work with the environment is often at the intersection of physical activity and food access. We partner with the Edgewater Neighborhood Association, Edgewater Food Forest, Kennedy Community Garden, and Woolson St. Community Garden to provide several neighborhoods with environmental-related programming.

Edgewater Neighborhood Association & Edgewater Food Forest

- We supported the grand opening of the Edgewater Food Forest, a project initiated in 2021
- Completed upgrades to the Kennedy Community Garden, re-constructing 23 garden beds.
- Continued collaborative efforts with Neponset River Watershed Association NepRWA for Clean-up days along the Neponset River.
- Maintained our partnership with the Department of Conservation and Recreation, planning the community-led redesign of Kennedy Playground and the implementation of signage, ultimately building a safe path for biking and running along the Neponset River.

Woolson St. Community Garden

- Collaborated with MIT students to test a mobile kitchen concept for gardens.
- Partnered with UMass Boston Art Union to organize garden clean-up activities and plan future art projects.
- Laid the groundwork for the 10 Year Celebration in October 2024!



Community members come together to pull off another successful Neponset River Clean-up day over the fall season



The tiny library at Woolson St. Community Garden. Everyone is welcome to bring books to trade!

OTHER

2023 Program & Staff

ACHIEVEMENTS

Programming

- Completed our two year strategic plan and unveiled our first annual report.
- The Vigorous Youth program has been revitalized, aligning with our commitment to nurture Mattapan's future leaders.
- Revised our mission and vision statements to better reflect our impact and goals.
- Collaborating with Northeastern University, we developed evaluation tools for our Vigorous Youth program and the Mattapan on Wheels event to collect tangible data about our community impact.
- Provided a space for GrowBoston's food priority surveys at our farmers market, reaching over 200 shoppers.
- \$4,500 raised from the Black Lives Green Spaces Campaign, over 80 people attended

Staff

Strengthening our team has been a priority!

- We integrated our first Development Consultant to help build a foundation for fundraising.
- We're on the path to **hiring 3 new positions**: Development Manager, Marketing and Communications Coordinator, and Community Engagement Program Manager.
- We are rethinking our recruitment and onboarding processes for volunteers and members, and the structure of our advisory board. More details to come.



hired Shawntell Usher-Thames as our
Youth Development and
Transportation Advocacy Manager



Lesly Adame, the Food Access Coordinator, smiles at the market. She coordinates market volunteers and organizes events during the market season alongside Vickey



Vickey Siggers, MFFC's Food Access Manager, embraces friend during an eventful Saturday morning at Mattapan Square Farmers Market

THE MARKET'S

Vivien Morris - Mattapan Square Farmers Market

STORY



“The first major project of MFFC 18 years ago was to have a farmers market,” recalls Vivien Morris, a founder and chair of MFFC. To combat the lack of food options in Mattapan, Vivien and the initial MFFC group identified a farmer’s market with local farmers and community leadership as a solution: “At the time, we had one small grocery store... and it had been closed down several times by the Public Health Department.”



Vivien Morris (far left) pictured with community residents and MFFC advisory board members at one of the first Mattapan Square Farmers Market.

Over time, the market evolved into more than just a place to purchase fresh produce. Vivien notes, “The market became a very important center for community members to come together, share information, and as a space for youth to gather.”

Reflecting on memorable moments, Vivien emphasizes the power of the bonds fostered within the community. “Our relationship with the city of Boston has always been a positive one and has grown with the city working more closely with us and supporting the market.” Our enduring collaboration with the city, its organizations, and its residents, underscores the significance of partnership in effecting meaningful and long-term change.

Vivien concludes by expressing her hopes for the future: “The Mattapan community has been both a very positive space, but also a space that has had to struggle with so much, especially with economic inequity issues,” noting that, “if we could find ways to extend the market even longer, that could be a positive in the community as we all become more connected with each other.”

As we reflect on the past year, we extend our gratitude to our community for enabling us to serve as a trusted area for congregation and resource accessibility. We look forward to future seasons and the memories that will be created within the community!



VOLUNTEERS 2023 Contributions & STUDENTS

Our volunteers included students from surrounding colleges and universities, staff from corporate and community organizations, and residents from around Massachusetts.

Weixue Wang, a junior PR major at Emerson College, joined MFFC over the fall 2023 semester. With MFFC, she has volunteered on PR writing, publishing feature stories, news releases and opinion audits.

Throughout her work with MFFC, Weixue has worked closely with our founder Vivien, our Executive Director Shavel'le, and board member Robyn, "I heard more about their work and I felt so much passion from them. They don't see their contributions to MFFC as work but as them helping their family." Weixue noted that the positive energy from the MFFC team is reflected in all aspects of the organization and motivated her in her projects, "Vivien never feels like we're too young to handle the work that we do, and that energy is reflected in the organization."

Providing youth with opportunities to practice their passion and learn new skills keeps MFFC young and vibrant, according to Weixue.

Weixue's individual volunteer work has a major impact. Using her PR skills, she helps us broadcast our mission and reach more community members, "My writing is for the public. Once it is published, it will allow more people to see what MFFC is. MFFC is not only an organization, it's a story. I deliver the story to other people to let them know about MFFC's purpose and goal." Weixue has been a wonderful asset to MFFC and she is an example of just one of many volunteers that work with us year-round. Each volunteer brings their skills and experiences and lightens up MFFC and the greater community.

Thank you, Weixue!

www.mattapanfoodandfit.org



Over 100
volunteers to help our mission



Over 2,000
volunteer hours contributed

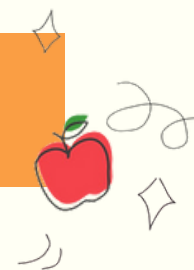


THE YOUTH'S

2023 Vigorous Youth Reflections

Sarah Rosas

STORY



Meet Sarah:

We asked Vigorous Youth member Sarah Rosas about her 2023 experience with MFFC

Sarah's favorite memory from 2023 was the September Memphis Conference, National Organizations for Youth Safety, which focuses on transportation and youth advocacy, where she had the opportunity to participate in workshops. During this conference and general program activities, Sarah noted that she learned a lot about being open-minded, a skill that lasts a lifetime.

Her active role in both the program and the community is meaningful to her. Something she wishes that others knew about the Vigorous Youth is that, "We actually have a purpose and motive. Some people might think that we just do small projects and don't pay attention, or that we're just volunteers, but that's not the case at all."



Vigorous Youth
Sarah Rosas crafting during a youth project.

Sarah notes that she's gained and improved upon various skills, such as time management, money-handling, and leadership. "We don't feel forced to do work and there's no tension. We learn on our own." Sarah has found immense value in the youth program, making each project count as a valuable learning experience.

We feel confident passing on Mattapan to youth like Sarah, whose determination will guide us in establishing the positive change we seek.

Thank you, Sarah!

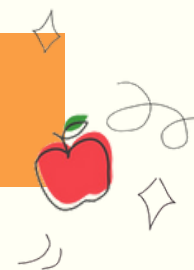


THE YOUTH'S

2023 Vigorous Youth Reflections

Felice Buchanan

STORY



Meet Felice:

Our youth volunteer at the Mattapan Square Farmers Market almost every weekend. It was here in this bustling environment that Felice Buchanan recognized that she was learning useful skills for her future, as well as forming some of her favorite memories from the Vigorous Youth program.

At the Farmers Market and the Farm Stand, Felice stepped into leadership roles: “I was bagging and in charge of receipts, which taught me to talk more and advocate for myself.” Felice mentioned that working with MFFC is especially rewarding, as she takes on an active role in encouraging people to eat healthy diets. Looking toward the future, Felice is excited to do all the workshops we have planned, especially the bike education workshop, “I’m excited for that, but I’m not excited to go up and talk.”



Vigorous Youth
Felice Buchanan poses at
one of the Mattapan
Square Farmers Market.

When asked what advice she would give other adolescents who may be considering joining the program, Felice says, “Just be yourself. I feel like the program is a good starter for people who are interested in working with the community, farming, biking, and learning about entrepreneurship.”

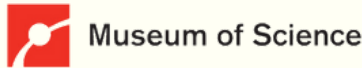
Felice is just one of our many youths and we’re grateful for the opportunity to work with her. From skills such as learning resume writing, to facing intimidating situations like public speaking, we’re excited for our continued journey with Felice, a current and future leader of Mattapan.

Thank you, Felice!





WE THANK OUR PARTNERS!



Boston Food Forest



WHAT'S UP

Promoting health, wellness, and an active lifestyle for the Mattapan community.

FOR 2024



Community Health & Wellness

- Empowering residents to take control of their nutrition in partnership with the Boston Organization of Dietitians and Nutritionists of Color
- Training community residents to educate their peers on community resources such as Blue Bike passes and food assistance programs including SNAP/HIP, WIC, and the Summer Eats program.
- Continuing our support to the Edgewater Neighborhood Association to build a walking path and the Healthy Neighborhood Studies team as they take on action projects contributing to the overall health of our community.
- Supporting community advocacy efforts on projects such as the Blue Hill Ave Transportation Action Plan, Cummins Highway, and access tthe Blue Hills via public transit



(left to right) Executive Director Shavel'le Olivier and MFFC founder Vivien Morris



MFFC Staff

- Onboarding a part time communications manager to bring awareness to health opportunities
- Implementing our strategic plan and discussing ways to meaningfully involve volunteers.
- Expanding our approach to youth development, including an assessment of recruitment strategies, current program structure, and expanding our emphasis to providing public health career tools for youth.

HOW YOU CAN Your support is greatly appreciated! GET INVOLVED

DONATE

We ask you to donate any amount you are capable and comfortable in giving. Your donation will help improve the lives of Mattapan residents.

To donate visit:

www.mattapanfoodandfit.org/fundraising

PARTNER

MFFC values partnerships to support the health of the Mattapan community.

To partner, contact us:

info@mattapanfoodandfit.org

VOLUNTEER

Our volunteers help make MFFC events possible and our organization run.

To volunteer, contact us via our website:

<https://www.mattapanfoodandfit.org/volunteer>

Follow Us

 [mattapanfoodandfit](https://www.instagram.com/mattapanfoodandfit)

 [mattapan food and fitness coalition](https://www.facebook.com/mattapanfoodandfitnesscoalition)

 [mattapan food and fitness coalition](https://www.linkedin.com/company/mattapan-food-and-fitness-coalition)

 [mattapanfoodfit](https://twitter.com/mattapanfoodfit)

Thank You!

Thank you to every single community resident!

Our residents are the experts of the community we live in and they are our most valuable partnership. Mattapan residents are the center of our organization and each of our programs. We ensure they are reflected in our leadership team and we employ community residents to work with our programs! Thank you for partnering with us in Mattapan and trusting us as a reliable source of education and opportunities.



Thank you to our community partners!

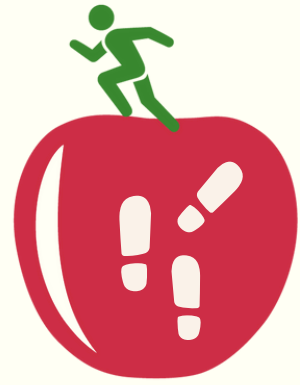
Community partnerships are paramount in reaching more residents, providing more resources, and broadening our scope of educational initiatives.



Residents Icon



Farmers Market Icon



Steps Icon



Garden Icon



Coupon Icon



Volunteer Icon



Hours Icon



Money Raised Icon



Hired Icon



Staff Icon