

INSPIRING CHANGE

ROOTS

SINCE FOR LIFE 2017

IMPACT REPORT 2021 & 2022



ABOUT US

Roots for Life is a grassroots volunteer organization founded in 2017 by two mission-driven social entrepreneurs in Washington, DC. The organization's mission is to educate and empower communities in food insecure areas of Washington DC to thrive by working together to eradicate food deserts and food insecurity. Roots for Life focuses on stamping out food deserts in Wards 4, 5, 7, and 8, where food insecurity prevails. The collective is run by skilled volunteers and community partners. Roots for Life provides participants with the tools and the knowledge to access healthy, nutritious food.

OUR MISSION

To educate and empower communities to thrive nutritiously by eradicating food deserts and food insecurity.

OUR VISION

A thriving community where fresh nutritious food is readily accessible and no one needs to go hungry.



WHY ROOTS FOR LIFE?

Food-insecure areas make up about 11 percent of the total Washington DC area. The District's poorest neighborhoods have the highest rates of hunger and diet-related disease. Roots for Life targets Wards 4, 5, 7, and 8 because they are most affected by poverty and subsequent health-related issues, due to living in a designated food desert.

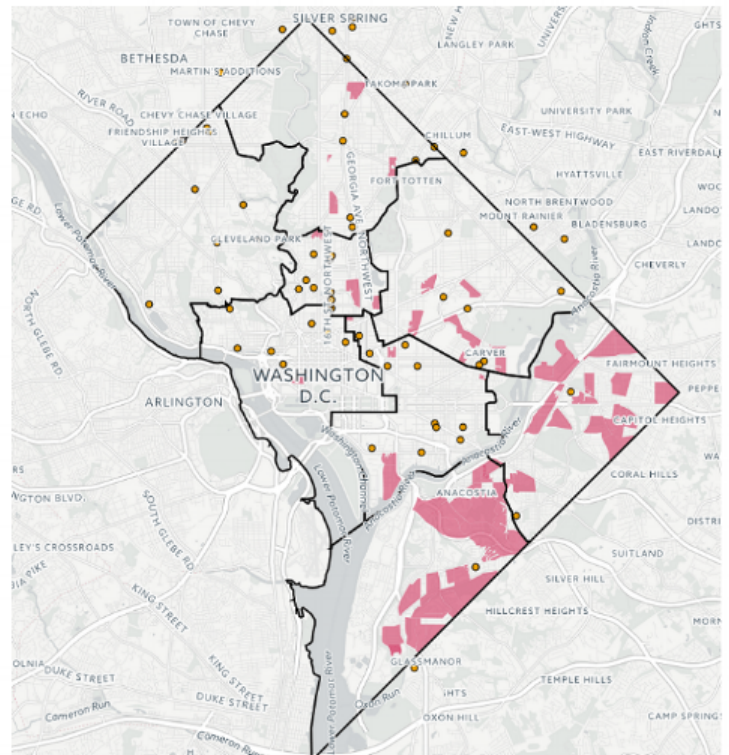
The lack of healthy options has had a profound adverse effect on the health of many residents in these wards: the prevalence and mortality associated with diabetes are highest in District Wards 4, 5, 7, and 8, where rates are higher than the city-wide rate. While 50% of youth live in Wards 7 and 8, less than 10% of the District's grocery stores are located there.

Food insecurity is not only a public health concern, but also a human rights issue. A lack of healthy, nutritious food is linked to numerous health problems, high incidence of early death, and poor educational outcomes. This is particularly true for vulnerable populations. This food access crisis threatens to exacerbate the already glaring disparities in health outcomes for vulnerable people, including low-income people, children, older adults, and immigrants.

This population is also more likely to be Black or Hispanic, to have children in the home, or do not have a college education. They are also more likely to be renting a homes, not have health insurance or Medicaid, and are more likely to be receiving SNAP benefits. Initiatives such as Roots for Life are necessary to equip participants with the tools and the knowledge to access healthy, nutritious food.

Food deserts in D.C.

Areas of limited food access in the District (in red) based on grocery or supermarket location, household income, and transportation access.



Source: D.C. Policy Center

OUR PROGRAMS

Crops in the Kitchen

Through our Crops in the Kitchen Program, we work on a continuum for healthy eating and health education:

1. **Participation cooking classes with nutrition education** - Our interactive class taught by local chefs and nutritionists teach participants how to cook a variety of produce and learn their nutritional benefits. Participants receive recipe cards and available produce.
2. **Welcome Home Baskets** - We provide residents transitioning from temporary housing to permanent housing with a basket of kitchen and cooking essentials to equip them with tools to cook healthy meals.
3. **Community Fridge** - to allow for 24-hour access to nutritious food.
4. **Health Coaching Sessions** (monthly) - to support and mentor program participants.



Countertop Crops

Through our Countertop Crops Program, we work on food sustainability:

1. **Conduct Container Garden Workshops and Distribute Kits** - Participants learn to grow vegetables and herbs in countertop containers. These classes focus on sun, soil, fertilizer, drainage, containers, and seeds or seedlings.
2. **Distribute Seeds** - We provide a variety of seeds to individuals, community, and school gardens to support growing foods organically.
3. **Monthly Ask a Gardener calls/virtual sessions and monthly blogs** - To support gardeners at every level.



OUR 2021 IMPACT



Through 2021, our team of dedicated volunteers worked together to accomplish the following:

- Hosted a **microgreens workshop** with Roosevelt High School, in order to teach students how to grow and incorporate microgreens in their diet.
- Collaborated with a nutritionist to create a **K-5 health curriculum**.
- Spearheaded a seed donations initiative to support Countertop Crops, receiving over **200 seed donations** from four partners, including Hudson Valley Seeds; West Coast Seeds; Garden Trend; Nature & Nurture. We supported community partners with a wide variety of seed types so they can grow nutritious, delicious vegetables and herbs.
- Started the **Welcome Home Basket Program**, providing support to vulnerable individuals making the transition from temporary to permanent housing.
- Acquired **five new community partners**, including H Street Farm/Cultivate the City; HBCU Alumni Alliance; Bold Fork Books; Good Foods Market; The Brooks.
- Held a **“Gathering in the Gardens Event”** in October, with **90 registered attendees**.
- Started working on a **community fridge project** with George Washington University student organization and the Food Recovery Network.

OUR 2022 IMPACT



Through 2022, Roots for Life continued to grow our impact. Together, our dedicated team of volunteers:

- Participated as a contributor for the **Alliance to End Hunger** to present thoughts and ideas to prepare for *White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health* in September 2022.
- Met with **10 local organizations and businesses** to introduce our organization and discuss potential partnerships/collaborations.
- Distributed **25 Welcome Home Baskets** since launching our program in November 2021.
- Distributed **200 seed packets** to six community gardens and four school gardens.
- Participated in *Earth Day 2022* at Bruce-Monroe Elementary School distributing nutritional information and seeds to over **100 attendees**.
- To date, through our participation cooking classes and cooking demonstrations at Farmers Markets, we have reached **approximately 700 residents**. With the continued generosity of our supporters our scope and impact will grow.

OUR IMPACT-TO-DATE



Because of our generous donors, we have:

- Taught 20 participation cooking classes with 300 attendees.
- Participated in three farmer's markets and community events doing cooking demonstrations reaching approximately 400 attendees.
- Distributed 25 Welcome Home baskets since November 2021.
- Distributed 200 seed packets to community and school gardens.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

DONATE

Become a recurring or one-time donor: Your gifts make our work possible. Visit us [online](#) to learn about the impact of your donation and to give. You can also contribute gifts-in-kind to sustain Roots for Life; visit our [Amazon wishlist](#) to learn more about items that can make a difference to food security in Washington DC.

VOLUNTEER

Volunteer to support one of our activities, from making Welcome Home Baskets, to leading a cooking demonstration - your skills are vital to sustaining the impact of Roots for Life. Please get in touch with us [here](#) if you would like to volunteer your skills and time to support the growth of Roots of Life.

SPREAD THE WORD!

Raise awareness about the importance of food security: Follow us on [Facebook](#) or [Instagram](#), and help us spread the word about the impact of our work!

PARTNER

We work with our partners to meet our mutual organizations' goals. Partnerships range from collaborating on cause-marketing campaigns to employee-giving campaigns to volunteering and everything in between. Visit us [here](#) for more information.

THANK YOU!