

A close-up photograph of a bowl filled with various fresh vegetables. In the foreground, there are several ripe red tomatoes, a large sweet potato, and some green bell peppers. Behind them, there are ears of corn with their husks partially removed, and some leafy greens like kale. The background is a soft, out-of-focus grey fabric.

FIT & FOOD CONNECTION

PLANTING PURPOSE:
Cultivating 10 Years of a Healthier St. Louis

2025

ANNUAL REPORT



OUR MISSION

The Fit & Food Connection offers people living in food and fitness deserts access to free nutritious food, physical activities, educational workshops, and personal coaching to encourage and support healthy living.

OUR VISION

We envision a world where people in underserved communities all have strong minds and healthy bodies.

LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As I reflect on this past year, I am struck by both the weight of the challenges we faced and the depth of perseverance that carried us through. This year asked more of all of us. It required patience, creativity, and a deep commitment to one another. And still, our community showed up.

In moments when systems felt strained and uncertainty felt close, you chose connection. You chose care. You chose to invest in health, in nourishment, and in the belief that our communities deserve to thrive. That choice continues to inspire me every day. This past year, we also had the honor of celebrating a powerful milestone for The Fit and Food Connection. In 2025, we marked 10 years of cultivating healthier communities. Ten years of planting seeds that have grown into spaces of wellness, belonging, and transformation. Ten years of advancing a vision where access to health is rooted in dignity, equity, and justice.

Reaching this milestone invited both reflection and celebration. We looked back on the journey, on the lives touched, on the relationships built, and on the lessons learned through both growth and challenge. We celebrated the community that has shaped this work every step of the way.

We did not arrive here alone. We arrived here because of you.

Because of community members who continue to return to move their bodies, nourish their families, and care for one another. Because of partners who believe in the work and stand beside us. Because of supporters who invest their resources, their time, and their trust. Because of a team that leads with heart, integrity, and purpose. As we look ahead to the next 10 years, we do so with clarity and vision. We are committed to deepening our impact, expanding access to holistic health, and continuing to shift narratives around food, wellness, and community care in Northern St. Louis. We are building toward a future where health is sustained, where nourishment is abundant, and where every individual and family has what they need to live fully and freely. Our vision remains rooted in solidarity. We know that our work is interconnected with broader movements for justice, equity, and collective wellbeing.

Thank you for walking with us through this milestone year and over the past decade. Thank you for your belief in this work. Thank you for continuing to show up.

With Deep Gratitude and Solidarity,

Gabi Cole

GABI COLE

Executive Director
Fit & Food Connection



OUR COMMUNITY COMMITMENT

The Fit & Food Connection is *committed* to addressing the lasting effects of **systemic disinvestment** and unequal resource distribution in St. Louis, particularly within

The St. Louis Promise Zone



By offering access to **nutritious food, physical activity programs, and holistic wellness solutions**, the Fit & Food Connection is fostering *sustainable change*, enabling individuals and families to build healthier, more resilient lives, while contributing to the revitalization and long-term growth of the Promise Zone communities.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2025?

In St. Louis, access to the resources necessary for a long, healthy life varies greatly. In addition to broader economic and environmental disparities, many of neighborhoods in the St. Louis Promise Zone face limited availability of healthy food and affordable opportunities for physical activity. This lack of access contributes to higher rates of chronic health conditions such as heart disease, obesity, and diabetes, ultimately decreasing life expectancy.

GOVERNMENT CUTS TO AID FOR OUR STL NEIGHBORS:

SNAP CUTS

SNAP covers 1 in 10 Missourians

Nearly 7/10 SNAP participants are kids, older adults or people with disabilities



AS OF JULY 4TH 2025

Congress passed the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, which included **\$186 billion** cut over the next decade to the federal SNAP budget. Millions of individuals are expected to lose access to SNAP and even more are expected to be **affected by the indirect effects** of program cuts and **rising food costs**. This is the largest cut ever made to SNAP, **reflecting** a nearly **20% funding decrease**.

\$2.4

BILLION TOTAL COST OF and SNAP cuts would be the equivalent of 17% of state fiscal year 2026 projected general revenue.

Food banks, pantries, and other social service organizations will not be able to fill all of the gaps left by SNAP cuts. When SNAP goes away, the need for food resources does not. These individuals must turn to other organizations, such as food banks, pantries, and social service organizations, which have finite and limited resources.



MAY 16, 2026 *DISASTER*

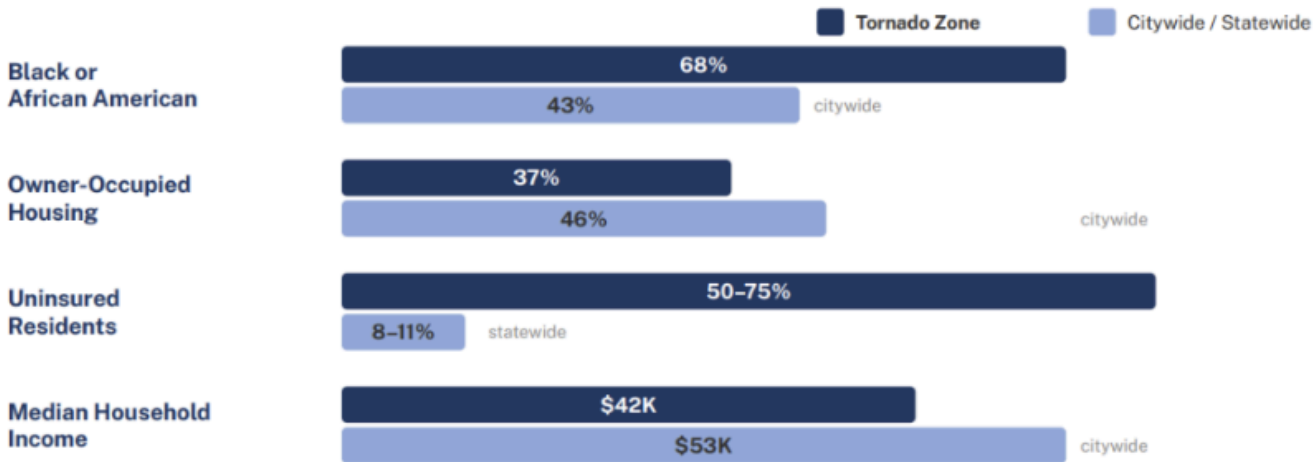
May 16, 2025, tornado path was 23.3 miles long and one-mile wide at its widest width. It impacted 16,000 residential, commercial, and industrial buildings along its path, and damaged many electricity distribution poles and lines, causing 200,000 customers to lose power. In St. Louis, 5,000 buildings were damaged, resulting in \$1.6 billion of property loss, 38 injuries, and 5 fatalities. This was the largest weather disaster in the state of MO since the 2011 Joplin Tornado.

<https://actionstl.org/tornado> 85-96% of residents in the impacted communities are Black Median household income is \$41,000 Only 14% of renters and 42% of homeowners surveyed reported having insurance when the tornado struck.

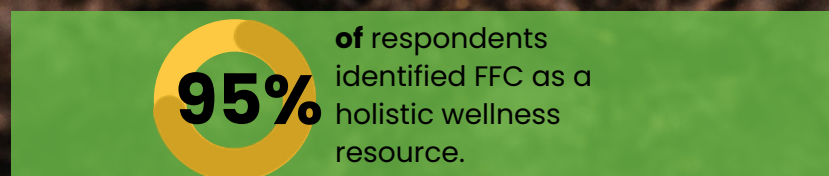
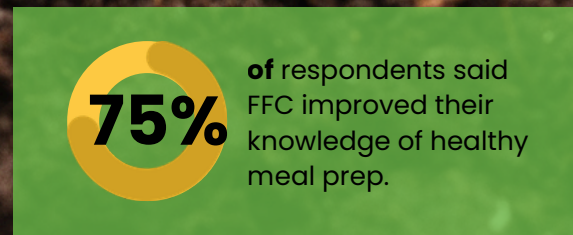
How we showed up:

- Distributed 4,025+ food items, 1,000 lbs of fresh produce, and whole chickens during Thanksgiving distributions.
- Hosted two-part annual food drive with 20+ community drop-off locations.
- Distributed over 10,000 lbs of food in Q4.
- Over 650 lbs of produce grown in our garden..
- Provided tornado relief food assistance, cash payments, and conducted post-tornado community surveys to assess changing needs.

Who Was Impacted?



OUR 2025 IMPACT





WHAT THESE NUMBERS MEAN

By surveying residents and program participants, we gain valuable insight into food access, nutrition habits, and overall wellness improvements—helping us refine our services, expand resources, and ensure we’re meeting the needs of the community. These voices directly shape our work, ensuring that food distribution and wellness programs are not just provided, but truly making a difference in people’s lives.

Understanding the real impact of Fit & Food Connection’s programs starts with listening to the people we serve.

COMMUNITY IMPACT

Behind every number is a story of growth, access, and...

- A family gaining reliable access to fresh fruits, vegetables, and healthy meals to support healthier living and greater food security.
- A participant building confidence, strength, and healthier habits through movement and wellness programming that supports long-term well-being.
- A household learning practical nutrition and wellness tools that make healthy choices more accessible and sustainable.
- Community members giving their time and talent through volunteer service, strengthening our collective commitment to health and connection.
- A stronger, more connected community built on trust, shared purpose, and access to supportive health resources.



FIT & FOOD CONNECTION: 2025 Financial Overview

A Year of Strategic Growth & Community Investment

In 2025, Fit and Food Connection continued to strengthen its financial foundation while expanding its impact across the St. Louis region. Our financial activity reflects a balanced approach—investing in programs that directly serve the community while building the infrastructure needed for long-term sustainability.

Revenue Summary

Fit and Food Connection generated revenue through a diverse mix of contributed and earned sources:

- Individual Contributions: \$150,000
- Grants & Foundations: \$170,000
- Events & Campaigns: \$20,000
- Program Revenue & Earned Income: \$6,000

Total Revenue: \$346,000

Key Insights

Individual and institutional giving remained the backbone of our funding, with notable growth in community-based fundraising efforts and giving campaigns.

JOIN US ON THE PATH *FORWARD*

As we look toward the future, The Fit and Food Connection remains deeply committed to cultivating communities where health, nourishment, wellness, and dignity are not limited by race, zip code, income, or circumstance. We are committed to listening to and building alongside the communities we serve, honoring the wisdom, strength, and leadership that already exist within our neighborhoods. The lessons, relationships, and resilience cultivated over the past decade continue to guide our vision for what is possible. Together, we will deepen our impact, strengthen community power, and invest in sustainable solutions that allow individuals and families across generations to not only survive, but truly be well for generations to come.

Our commitment is rooted in care, justice, sustainability, and solidarity. As we move into the next chapter of this work, we will continue planting seeds for healthier communities, strengthening community power, and building a future restoration where everyone has the opportunity to live well.

2025



THE 2025 FIT & FOOD CONNECTION FAMILY

STAFF & FOUNDERS

- **GabiCole**, Executive Director & Co-Founder
- **Joy Millner**, Co-Founder & Advisor
- **Jessica Carter**, Director of Programs
- **Megan Sobolewski**, Program Associate
- **Imani Harris**, Director of Organizational Affairs

BOARD MEMBERS

- **Cameron Murkey**, Board Chair, Development Committee
- **Lei Deng**, Board Vice Chair, Development Committee
- **Madt Mallinckrodt**, Board Treasurer, Finance Committee
- **Rodneca Skinner**, Board Secretary, Finance Committee, Events Planning Committee
- **Scott Gill**, Finance Committee
- **Shante Smith-Daniels**, Development Committee
- **Danny Profumo**, Development Committee, Food Assistance
- **Aisha Muhammad**, Board Member
- **Kesha Kent**, Board Member & Community Leader
- **Kara Hughes**, Board Member, Nutritionist and Health Leader



Partner and Supporter Acknowledgements:

BJC Healthcare, UMB Bank, Schnucks, PepsiCo, The Integrated Health Network, St. Louis Cardinals, NISA Investments, Madt Mallinkrodt, Joy and Robert Millner, Jess and Andy Millner, Jillian Tedesco, Karen Guevara, Stiefel, The Legacy Center, St. Peter's Church- Ferguson, Vituity Cares, Black Kids Do Yoga, Empowered Thriving Communities and all our in-kind donors, vendors, and volunteers!

Final Message: This work is made possible by the dedicated staff, passionate volunteers, committed board members, partners, and supporters who share our vision of a healthier St. Louis. As we look ahead, we invite you to create and celebrate **The Art of Whole Wellness** with us. This year has shown us that community is the thread that connects people, resources, and opportunities for better health. Every gift, partnership, and act of support helps strengthen that connection and expand our impact. Together, we are weaving a healthier, more equitable future for St. Louis.

Thank you.

