



TOGETHER WE GROW!

CELEBRATING TEAMWORK AND OUR
AMAZING FIT AND FOOD COMMUNITY

THE FIT AND FOOD CONNECTION FALL NEWSLETTER | 2023



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LETTER TO OUR READERS FROM OUR **URBAN GARDEN COORDINATOR**

As the crisp autumn leaves begin to paint our landscapes with vibrant shades of red, orange, and gold, we find ourselves once again at the threshold of a new season, a season of change and transformation. Fall is a time of reflection and appreciation—a moment to pause, take in the beauty of nature's grand finale, and express our heartfelt thanks.

Our community garden has yielded bountiful crops this year, thanks to the dedication of our volunteers and the support of our partners. The produce has been shared with a generous number of community members in North St. Louis County and City, ensuring that fresh, nutritious food reaches those in need. Even though, the growing season is wrapping up, Fit and Food's Fall Wellness Series begins; a 6-week fitness class every Wednesday evening at St. Peter's Church in Ferguson to offer a safe and fun place to enjoy a workout. If you are interested call 314.312.2746 or visit our website. We eagerly anticipate accompanying you on your path to well-being.

We sincerely appreciate your ongoing support, trust, and collaboration.

Best regards,

Drew Foster

Urban Garden Coordinator

FIT AND FOOD HAPPENINGS

CHECK IT OUT!

FARM TO TABLE FUNDRAISER

On Saturday, October 7th, the Fit and Food team welcomed a crowd of supporters, community members, family, and friends to our expanding garden on St. Louis Avenue for an afternoon of delicious garden-fresh bites, great music, and community support.

It was a gorgeous and supportive afternoon as we worked together to build our new sunflower sculpture. Attendees were invited to sponsor and install petals. Through this call to action, we surpassed our fundraising goal within an hour and are so grateful to those who participated!



Attendees at the Farm to Table Fundraiser



Farm to Table Fundraiser at Fit and Food Organic Garden

Funds raised will be put toward our capacity-building efforts to improve and expand our programming. We look forward to growing this event year after year, and we hope to see you next October!



Thanks to our sponsors!

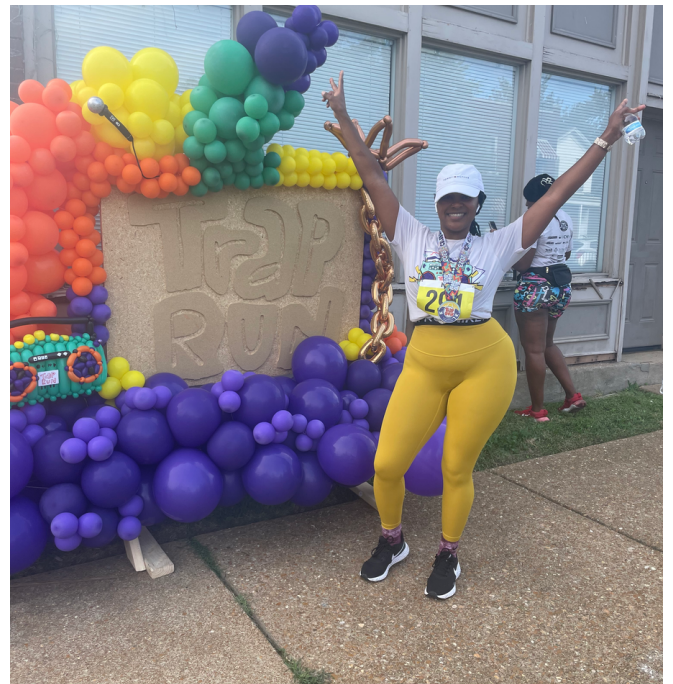
TRAP RUN

On Saturday, September 9th, Fit and Food staff and board members gathered at The Northside Trap Run for a hip-hop themed 5k walk/run and festival that “empowers North St. Louis neighborhoods and unifies grassroots, civic, educational, commercial, and residential efforts to bridge the city’s north-south divide.”

We ran, walked, connected with the community, and hosted a booth at the festival to share our mission. We met so many great people with a shared vision of a healthy and vibrant STL, and we look forward to participating again next September!



FAFC's Vice Chair - Lei, Executive Director- Gabi and Board Chair - Cam at our station at TrapRun 2023



Staff celebrating completion of the race with a photo-op

[Check out their 2023 recap reel](#) to see what makes this such an incredible event and be sure to join us there next year!



Gabi and Drew enjoying the race

CORPORATE VOLUNTEERS

in the garden

This growing season, we are working with many corporate groups to keep the garden weeded, watered, and expanding.

We are so grateful to our partners at Purina, Enterprise Holdings, Bayer, Schnucks, Busey Bank, Maryville University, NISA, and others for choosing us for their volunteer hours.

Know a company that may want to chip in? Email our Fundraising Director Rebecca at rebecca@fitandfoodconnecton.org!



Corporate visitors at the organic food garden

Fit and Food really enjoys bringing the community together, which we do a lot being 95% volunteer-based and we are always looking for amazing individuals who are drawn to our mission and are passionate about helping us thrive.

As the Fit and Food family continues to grow, we are able to reach even more people in our community when we work together, making the biggest impact!



Corporate visitors helping plant crops

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

WELLNESS PROGRAM

SUMMER WALKING GROUP

Throughout the sunny months of June and July, our community members came together at Fairground Park to kickstart their Saturdays by participating in our morning walking group.

This group was led by Fit and Food's Program Manager, Shaknoteya Jones, and included a mixture of energy-boosting movement stops, healthy snacks, wellness trivia, and encouraging community support.



Steps Toward Connection Group Fitness Class



Participants really enjoyed the 1-mile walk around the trail and connecting with other community members while working on their personal wellness goals.



A walk in the park with the Fit and Food Programs Team

KIDS CLUB IN THE GARDEN

Every year we host our Kids Club in the Garden during our peak garden season to provide the opportunity for kids to enjoy some outdoor fun, in addition to getting exposure to gardening and gaining knowledge about garden fresh produce, learning to identify healthy foods, how to plant, water and maintain a garden.



FALL PROGRAMMING

MORE WELLNESS OPPORTUNITIES

GARDEN HARVEST + FOOD PANTRY

The summer months provided a bountiful harvest, of cucumbers, zucchini, tomatoes, peppers, a variety of greens and more from our organic garden located on St. Louis Ave. The produce is used in our bi-monthly Food Access Program. In addition to our fresh produce from our own garden, in the month of August we acquired a new produce partnership that has been helping to provide a fresh mix of healthy produce that is distributed directly to our community members through our healthy food pantry and delivery service. Thanks to the ARCHS Farm to Table Program, this new collaboration is helping Fit and Food distribute over 800 lbs of healthy groceries to our community members at each food pantry!



Fresh produce brought to you by The Fit and Food Connection in partnership with Area Resources for Community and Human Services (ARCHS)

FALL SERIES HEALTH SCREENING + WELLNESS SERIES

On Wednesday, October 4th, our Fall Health Screening had such a great turnout! This health screening was the first session in our Fall Wellness Series. Community members who attended were able to receive valuable health information such as weight, blood pressure, and their A1C in addition to receiving 1-1 support from medical professionals who volunteered from the Washington University Living Well Center. They helped participants understand their health stat results and provided assistance in navigating their personalized health goals to help prep for the rest of the wellness series.



WHAT'S AHEAD IN PROGRAMMING

WHAT'S COMING UP

SCAN THE QR CODE TO CHECK
OUT ALL OF OUR UPCOMING
PROGRAMS & TO REGISTER



FALL WELLNESS SERIES

During this Fall Wellness Series, we have a new volunteer group fitness instructor, AJ Harrison. She brings a fun new way to move with her Retro-Fit class. Retro-Fit includes high-rep, low to medium impact cardio movements such as high-knees, low-kicks, standing abs, and stretching rotations which share similarities with other class styles, such as Pilates and Boxing. Our group fitness classes are always designed to fit all age groups and fitness levels. We encourage you to join us!

Classes are being held on Wednesdays at St. Peter's Church from 6-7PM, now through November 15th located at 1425 Stein Rd. Ferguson, MO 63135. Get registered today!

COOKING DEMONSTRATIONS

In August and September, we collaborated with the Department of Health and LinkMarket to put on a six class series of cooking demonstrations. Participants gave great feedback in that they enjoyed trying some new plant-forward recipes and that they would try to replicate on their own with the bag of healthy grocery items they received during these demonstrations.



Here are some of the topics discussed:

- Foods that Help to Keep You Hydrated
- Quick and Easy Nutrition: Crafting a Perfectly Balanced Bowl
- Healthy Swaps for Your Sweet Tooth & More!

COMMUNITY MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Take a look at what a few of our community members are saying about our Fit & Food Wellness Programs!

"I liked that I have learned about nutrition and different exercises I can do to improve my walking and my balance, it's been excellent." - Reena



"This series made me realize that I don't have to spend hours in the gym to see and feel results, and this series has most definitely made me feel it and I've enjoyed it. Especially because we were shown modifications, they helped with our form to make sure we were doing it correctly and were given encouragement, thankful for you putting on the class." - Pam

"I loved working with the walking group because it held me accountable. Others were waiting on me, so there were no excuses not to move. It was an excellent motivator." -Veronica



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

JORDAN BORAWSKI



Hello! I am a senior at Saint Louis University studying biology on the pre-med track. I enjoy staying active, being outside, and going out with friends. I chose to volunteer with The Fit and Food Connection because it aligns with my values of eating well and living a healthy, balanced lifestyle. Through my one year of service, I have enjoyed interacting with other volunteers and building connections with the Saint Louis community members I deliver to. I am very passionate about social justice related causes as I am part of the Martin Luther King Jr. Scholarship program at SLU. I like to think that the work I am doing through this organization is making a difference for communities in need.

VOLUNTEER NEEDS

Did you know that the most current Volunteer Opportunities can always be found on our website? Whether you're a new or existing volunteer visit fitandfoodconnection.org/volunteer to get started. New volunteers can fill out our volunteer application and existing volunteers can sign up for their next project whenever best suits their availability. Note: There is still time to volunteer in the garden through the end of October, and we're always looking to add to our team of volunteers to assist with sorting food and delivering a route at our healthy food pantry.

FIT AND FOOD CORNER: YOUR HOLISTIC WELLNESS RESOURCE

MOTIVATIONAL THOUGHT

The last 3 months of the year are upon us. This is a wonderful time to process what the last 9 months have been like for you and your loved ones. When reflecting on things be sure to practice gratitude. What are you thankful for? Who are you thankful for? Spend a few minutes to yourself and write a gratitude list.

This is a great way to keep your spirits lifted and to acknowledge all of the things that can and will go well for you. Happy Fall!

STRESS RELIEF TIPS

We are in the midst of the seasons of darker days. It can be hard to wake up in the darkness and get going with your day in a healthy, centered, and motivated way, and you may find yourself slipping into a wellness slump. We're here to help with that!



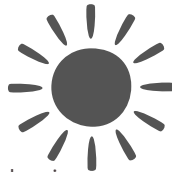
Here are 5 tips to ease you into fall & relieve some stress

1



One of the best things to do for stress is to identify the causes of your stress and cut those things out

2



Get outside and enjoy some sunshine

3



Eat a balanced diet and don't forget to get daily exercise.

4



As the season changes comfort foods are all over the place...try not to overindulge. Enjoying these things in moderation can present you feeling sluggish and keep you feeling food



FIT AND FOOD CORNER : YOUR HOLISTIC WELLNESS RESOURCE

Building Healthy Eating Habits

- Cut out fads/dieting - fads/ diets can be okay in the short-term, however, to maintain and keep up the benefits you need to build healthy habits and make changes that are realistic and sustainable
- Incorporate colorful foods into your diet – chances are if the food on your plate is all one color, you are missing a chance to indulge in a meaningful, fulfilling and nourishing meal.” Foods like dark, leafy greens, oranges, and tomatoes—even fresh herbs—are loaded with vitamins, fiber, and minerals.”-CDC
- Prepare meals as a family – when making a meal incorporate family time into it. This allows for the meals to be special and adds a positive mindset around eating. Preparing meals as a family also allows for time to educate children about the importance of eating healthy
- Grab a cookbook – Cookbooks can be found at your local library or even a local thrift shop. Add one new healthy recipe a week to the menu.

FROZEN RASPBERRY GREEK YOGURT BITES



For 24 Serving you need:

Ingredients

- 32 oz tub of plain Greek yogurt
- 1/2/ cup of chia seeds
- 1 quart of raspberries
- 16 oz of dark chocolate chips
- 1/4 cup of honey or Blue Agave
- 3 tbsp of Coconut oil

Directions:

1. Rinse and clean your raspberries
2. In a large mixing bowl, mash the raspberries with a fork until no big chunks are present
3. Mix the yogurt, honey/agave, chia seeds into the bowl with the berries.
4. Refrigerate for 30 minutes
5. Take a spoon and make about 24 two-inch dollops of yogurt onto parchment paper-lined baking sheets
6. Place your yogurt dollops into the freezer for 4 hours.
7. Once your yogurt bites have set in the freezer for 4 hours, in another bowl, add dark chocolate chips, and coconut oil
8. Microwave for 30 seconds & stir
9. Repeat step 6 as many times as needed until chocolate is completely melted
10. Using a pair of tongs, dip each bite into the melted chocolate and place back on baking sheet
11. Once all yogurt bites are covered in chocolate. Freeze for an additional 30 minutes.
12. Store in a freezer bag in the freezer and enjoy as you desire.