

Thornton Street Farm by the Numbers - 2022

8th - Year of farming

The call to start farming the land was a way to literally put a stake in the ground and ensure community members were benefiting from this plot, keep it in green space and protect it from being developed into housing. Haley House was invited by Hawthorne Youth & Community Center (HYCC) and neighbors to partner in this effort in 2015, brought on a full time Farm Manager in 2018, and the farm continues to grow and evolve!



71 - New community garden beds

In late 2021, our goal was to break down the original 50+ raised beds for community gardens to be able to replace them in 2022 thanks to the City of Boston's Food Sovereignty Grant. YouthBuild Boston sent an amazing cohort to demo the old beds and create a design for the new garden beds. Each day - rain or shine, and sometimes in freezing temperatures! - the crew came eager to learn and build. 71 new beds were built and placed over leveled ground on fresh landscape fabric. We then, with the help of volunteers, filled all beds with a soil/compost mix - meaning we moved a total of 71 yards of soil/compost in just 2 weeks! All beds are currently in use by individuals, families or neighborhood groups and so many gardeners have expressed deep gratitude for the rebuild and redesign of their community garden.

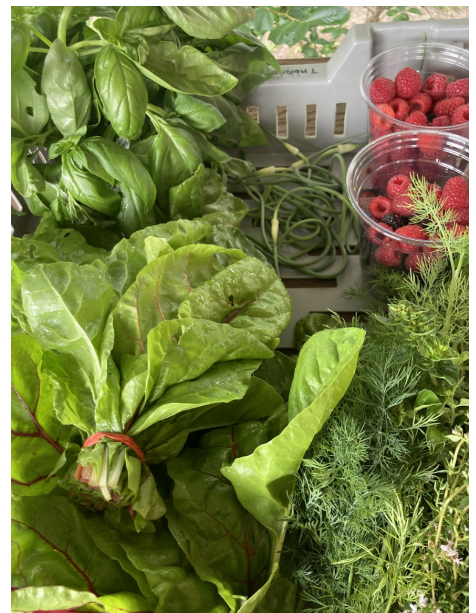


1 - Brand new compost area

Compost earns its title of 'black gold' as being the most important medicine for any place where food is grown. We create dark, rich, stable compost on site and this is the only fertilizer used at the farm. In 2022 we were able to rebuild an effective and beautiful new compost area with YouthBuild Boston and started our compost piles from scratch.

3rd - Year for the Highland Park Senior Produce Distribution Program

This program launched in the height of the pandemic in 2020 and it received so much positive feedback, we've kept it as our main produce distribution method at the farm. Over twelve weeks, we packed over half – 55% – of our total produce grown at the farm into over 500 bags for our neighborhood seniors. Seniors shared that the program was an "immense life saver!", "its effect caused me to cook healthy meals weekly" and that the "biggest benefit was the enthusiastic teen farmers delivering and connecting with the Highland Park community."



20 - % of produce distributed to Haley House's other in-house programs

20% was distributed into the Take Back the Kitchen, LiFT and Soup Kitchen programs. As always, fresh herbs, hearty greens and other mixed crops were used creatively and lovingly by talented chef instructors in the TBK classes, hard working Live-Ins and volunteers in the Soup Kitchen, and community members in LiFT creating shared meals.

14 & 10 - Teen & Junior Farmers working at the farm

From May to October, we worked intensively with 14 teenagers and 10 8-12 year olds in a newly launched 'Junior Farmer' program. These Junior Farmers were eager kids that looked up to the work of the teens and asked 'can we have jobs too?!' All these young farmers brought a unique perspective on how they wanted to be involved, but also came with a wide-open willingness to help wherever needed and truly kept the farm running through the season.

6 - Main community partner groups & schools

This year we worked extensively with YouthBuild Boston, Nathan Hale School, Paige Academy, Roxbury Roots Montessori, Beat the Streets and We Are Better Together - all hyper-local community groups and schools. We focused on scientific learning, art projects, hands-on experiences including planting, watering, trellising, harvesting, pruning, weeding and seed saving, healing and restorative work on the land, and of course taste-testing everything we could!

12 - Free, family-friendly activity days

We hosted twelve free, family-friendly activity days this season, hosted by the teen farmers, and integrated guest facilitators. These activity days provided materials and instruction for garden-related projects and education, including herbal medicine, floral arranging, a hot sauce competition, pumpkin-painting, pesto making demonstration, natural art, and more. The events were open to the public, although mostly attracted Highland Park residents and proved to be a community meet-up spot for many families. Although we hosted



an hour-long workshop, we often had kids, teens and families stay for hours on end, enjoying lunches with Chef Fulani's Kitchen, working extensively on art projects and having the freedom to run around and through all the farm paths. This casual, but structured program helped to create an outdoor, safe, family-friendly, free and educational community hub.

2023 - Our next great farming season!

The farm runs on the big hearts and hard-working hands of many people. Please stop by as we begin the next season and reach out to us with any questions, thoughts, and feedback. Email farm@haleyhouse.org and/or call 617-236-8132, Ext. 47 anytime!

