



2025



ANNUAL REPORT





Greetings Friends,
Thanks to the support of our funders, donors, team members, and constituents, Our Kitchen Table has completed another remarkable year! OKT continues to help families grow food and make healthy food more accessible in neighborhoods experiencing food apartheid. With your support, OKT continues to share information on how to choose, grow and prepare foods that sustain health through the lens of food and environmental justice.

OKT amplified its reach through strategic partnerships with Trinity Health Produce for Health Initiative, Blandford Nature Center, New City Neighbors, and Baxter Community Center. These collaborations allowed our core team to deliver services across schools, neighborhoods, and community hubs.

Yours in equity,
Lisa Oliver-King



2025 RESULTS SNAPSHOT

Small but Mighty Impact



Growing Food, Growing Confidence

32 school families grew food at schools and in home gardens.

3 Educate to Elevate video cooking workshops shared healthy eating strategies online.



Food Access & Community Markets

OKT facilitated 73 workshops and events (31 of those via Trinity Health's Produce for Health) and connected with 1,130 community members.

245 patrons visited the Southeast Area Farmers Market.



Education & Capacity Building

22 families living in motels and vehicles participated in meal planning and preparation instruction in OKT's Brown Bag Pilot Strategy.



Removing Barriers to Participation

OKT provided gardening tools, cooking supplies, food plants, containers, and educational guides at no cost.

Momentum Looking Ahead

In 2025, OKT focused on depth over scale — laying the groundwork for expanded family-led food growing and peer education in 2026.



PROGRAM IMPACT & OUTCOMES (2025)

Resources that Removed Barriers

- 500+ tangible food-growing and cooking resources distributed at no cost.
- Plants, seed packets, containers, gardening tools, cast iron skillet, and crock pots.

Community Access and Visibility

Southeast Area Farmers' Market events expanded access to fresh food and nutrition education beyond the gardens.

Amplifying Reach through Strategic Collaboration

These collaborations allowed a small but mighty core team to deliver services across schools, neighborhoods, and community hubs.

- Trinity Health (Produce for Health Initiative)
- Blandford Nature Center
- New City Neighbors
- Baxter Community Center
- Friends of Grand Rapids Parks (Pumpkin Party)



2025 Organizational OKT Budget:

REVENUE:

• Foundations	\$61,000.00
• Corporations	\$3,400.00
• Donation	\$5,100.00
• Earned income	\$2,500.00
• Total Revenue	\$72,000.00

EXPENSES:

• Personnel	\$25,000.00
• Contractors (OKT/External)	\$15,200.00
• Supplies/Materials	\$26,975.00
• Office	\$1,500.00
• Phone	\$500.00
• Conferences/Trainings	\$625.00
• Printing	\$1,250.00
• Travel	\$500.00
• Business Insurance	\$450.00
• Total Expenses	\$72,000.00





PROGRAM FOR GROWTH

OKT food garden and cooking coaches taught food growing practices to students, school-based families, community members, and through community partner initiatives. Participants learned how to grow food gardens in container gardens and raised beds at schools and home. Food garden and cooking coaches made weekly home visits to garden sites. School food gardens were visited bi-weekly to support school volunteers and staff in maintaining and harvesting food for students, families, and neighborhood members.

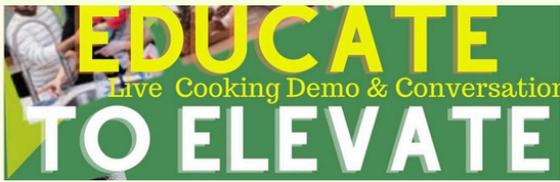
With the assistance of a farmer and herbalist, OKT supported garden preparation, maintenance, and winterizing. School families, school staff, and community volunteers worked on residential container gardens and raised-bed gardens along with school gardens within the Grand Rapids Public Schools Martin Luther King Jr. Leadership Academy and Kentwood Public Schools Glenwood Elementary.

OKT participants were also provided access to a registered dietician, who also facilitated nutritional education workshops and cooking demonstrations and grocery store tours. The dietician also supported OKT cooking coaches in creating recipes incorporating food from the gardens.

OKT's cooking coach demonstrated how to prepare meals and snacks that used the vegetables and herbs grown in the gardens. Demonstrations took place during workshops at Trinity Health Browning Claytor Clinic, school sites, community gardens, Southeast Area Farmers Market, churches, residential settings, and college student events.

OKT provided organic food plants and seeds from Blandford Nature Center, composted soil from Wormies, gardening tools, and instructional materials at no cost to participants.





Educate to Elevate

Virtual Healthy Eating Workshops

Zoom-based cooking demos led by OKT team members and/or a registered dietitian shared healthy, affordable, easy-to-make meals and conversations on healthy eating.

Resources for participants included:

- Support with growing food gardens.
- Lessons on growing by OKT food, garden, and cooking coaches.
- Access to a registered dietitian, farmer, herbalist, and neighborhood-based farmers market.

OKT provided virtual and in-person cooking demonstrations focused on nutrition education and:

- Deciphering nutritional labels and listed ingredients on processed food items for the purpose of creating healthier meals.
- Meal planning and preparation consisting of supplemental food items from the brown bag options and added food choices from individual and school gardens.
- Crockpot friendly meals using supplemental food items and food garden options from container gardens (herbs and greens).
- Learning about the food landscape including charitable food options such as pantries.

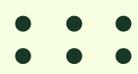
BROWN BAG PILOT STRATEGY

This pilot was an extension of the Program for Growth. At the request of GRPS Parent Action leaders, OKT developed and piloted a strategy called the Brown Bag strategy. This strategy supported school families experiencing non-traditional housing situations with meal planning and preparation by providing families a small transitional food garden (herbs and greens) and cooking tools that could be used in those settings. OKT began developing this pilot strategy by seeking to understand how to best serve families residing in local motels and personal vehicles with respect and without judgment.

OKT provided a modified version of its programming to complement the supplemental brown bag food items provided by local food programs supported by pantries and farms. OKT assisted families with meal planning and preparation.

Families also grew small transportable food gardens consisting of herbs and greens. This new strategy served school families living in non-traditional settings.





SOUTHEAST AREA FARMERS MARKET

The Southeast Area Farmers' Market (SEAFM) provides a wide variety of local produce, cottage kitchen foods, personal care items, crafts and ready-to-eat foods. Our vendors are primarily women of color, home growers and residents of OKT's targeted neighborhoods. In addition to providing access to healthy food, the SEAFM hosts meal preparation activities, workshops and guests from community organizations. The SEAFM accepts most food assistance programs.

In 2025, SEAFM was held at Joe Taylor Park in collaboration with Baxter Community Center, New City Neighbors, the SEAFM's produce anchor. SEAFM will resume at Grand Rapids Martin Luther King Park in 2026.



FOOD GROWING

GROW HEALTHY FOOD IN CONTAINERS!

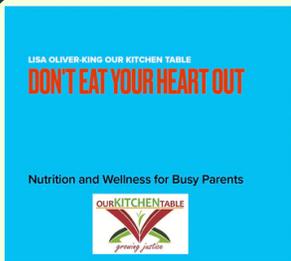
WORKSHOP

With funding assistance from Trinity Health, OKT's garden coach Belinda Henderson shared successful container gardening strategies for fall and spring food gardens in these free ongoing workshops.

OKT provided all supplies.



OKT met participants where they live, learn, and gather.



SHARING FOOD JUSTICE

Presentations to Agencies and at Events

Through engaging with a number of community events and presentations, OKT shared food justice basics along with healthy eating strategies with hundreds of area residents and community leaders.



OKTJustice.org

In addition, OKTjustice.org continues to share information relevant to bringing food justice to our communities and provides a host of food justice, food gardening, and healthy eating resources at no cost.

OUR KITCHEN TABLE



“What began as a small container garden through OKT has grown into pear trees in our backyard – and a vision to one day sell our harvest at the Southeast Farmers Market.”

Sherlynn James, OKT grower and mother of three.



Contact Us

MEDIA@OKTJUSTICE.ORG



Our Website

WWW.OKTJUSTICE.ORG



FACEBOOK

OUR KITCHEN TABLE
SOUTHEAST AREA FARMERS MARKET



INSTAGRAM

ourkitchentablegr
seafm_okt

OKT Core Staff Internal

Executive Director
Farmers Market Manager
Food Garden Coaches
Cooking Coaches

External

Registered Dietician
Farmer
Herbalist

DONATE!

OKT relies on grants and donations to fund its programming. To contribute, please visit www.OKTjustice.org/donate/ or mail your check to:
Our Kitchen Table
334 Burton St. SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49507

