



## SUMMER 2020

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## COVID-19 RESPONSE

With the St. Louis community's help, The Fit and Food Connection has been able to feed families affected by the COVID 19 pandemic.

With an outpouring of over \$80,000 for our Food Assistance and Delivery Program, we have been delivering food to 74 families a week and that number keeps growing! Thanks to the generosity of St. Louisans, The Fit and Food Connection is providing food assistance to 50 percent more families than we were before the pandemic.

Gabi Cole, Co-Director and Co-Founder of Fit and Food Connection, fills her car several times a week with nutritious food that helps feed pregnant mothers, mothers with young children, families and seniors in North St. Louis City and County.

The deluge of support also reached Fit and Food Connection bins set up at post offices where generous donors dropped off much-needed non-perishable food for our families in need. Local foundations also stepped in to provide additional funding so that Fit and Food Connection could get food supplies to families more quickly.

So much teamwork between the community and our partners enables Fit and Food Connection to help more families. Gabi expects to take another six families off of the waiting list and into the Food Assistance and Delivery Program by the end of June.

"We are so grateful for everyone's help in making sure that nutritious food is available to those in need," Gabi said.



FIND US AT  [FITANDFOODCONNECTION.ORG](http://FITANDFOODCONNECTION.ORG)



THANK YOU SAINT LOUIS



# FIT AND FOOD HAPPENINGS

## MAKE-A-WISH PARTNERSHIP

Our wellness professional Joy was asked to speak by the Make a Wish Foundation staff. On Wednesday, June 24th, Joy gave a virtual presentation to the staff of the Make a Wish Foundation. Joy spoke about holistic wellness, but per their request, spent time discussing the importance of exercise and demonstrated exercises to do both at home and the office. Joy led a relaxing, deep breathing session and incorporated some upper body stretches. Joy's seminar touched on the importance of reducing stress, getting lots of sleep, thinking positively, practicing good nutrition habits and incorporating exercise for overall wellness. After the



session, attendees felt energized and excited to start moving more to receive both the mental and physical benefits of exercise. Both The Fit and Food Connection and the Make a Wish Foundation work hard to create smiles! We were so happy to partner with a wonderful organization.

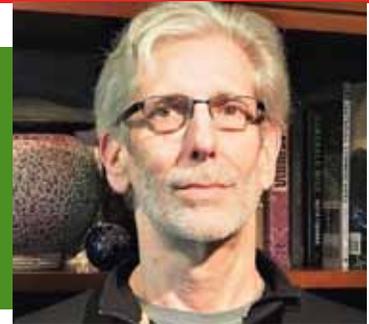
## NEW BOARD MEMBERS

**The Fit and Food Connection is proud to announce the addition of three new board members.**



Reshaunda Thornton is a registered and licensed dietitian. She has a son, John Edwards and an easy-going pup named Cress. She enjoys exercising, running, crafting healthy meals, reading, volunteering at her church, and spending time with close friends. Reshaunda volunteers because she wants to use nutrition as a vehicle to help people live healthy and happy lives. Reshaunda will be involved in our marketing and community engagement committees.

Matd Mallinckrodt is currently retired but does the bookkeeping for several clients. He also owned several small businesses over the years. He believes Joy and Gabi started "something wonderful here", when they founded The Fit and Food Connection. He is happy to play a part in supporting our organization by volunteering. Matd will be involved in our finance committee.



Edda Berti has a background in journalism and sociology. She finds the work at The Fit and Food Connection to be "remarkable" and she wanted to be part of an organization that helps our community understand the importance of exercise and healthy food habits. Edda says, "I was very excited when I found The Fit and Food Connection. It makes me feel reinvigorated, not only for the positive impact of these activities in our community but because it brings back memories of my mother preparing food that was full of life, colorful, healthy, and tasty for our family and the whole neighborhood." Edda will be involved in our development committee.



## IN THE MEDIA

With the recent pandemic, The Fit and Food Connection reached out through a variety of platforms to spread the outreach of its programs. Co-Founder and Co-Director Joy Millner spoke with Dena Ladd on the launch of Missouri Cures first podcast series. During the show, Joy spoke about how The Fit and Food Connection is feeding and helping people during the crisis.

Joy and Gabi both spoke with Reshaunda Thornton on her podcast, The Dietitian Against Diets. Reshaunda is a long-time partner and current board member of The Fit and Food Connection. The three of them spoke about the non-profit organization's work and their efforts to keep clients fed and healthy during the Covid-19 outbreak.

Also, Joy took part in a discussion on Venture Café St. Louis that was broadcast worldwide. She spoke about Nutrition Tips to Surviving the Pandemic. In the broadcast, Joy gave some simple nutrition suggestions, such as setting health goals, eating several small meals daily, reading nutrition labels, and checking portion sizes before eating.

## VIRTUAL PILATES DAY

Earlier this year, Pilates practitioners worldwide united to spotlight the joy experienced through Pilates in health, community and quality of life. St. Louis' low-income families have borne the brunt of the economic impact of COVID – 19. That is why St. Louis City Fitness donated 50% of proceeds from this virtual event to The Fit and Food Connection. Funds raised through this virtual event help feed families on the food pantry waitlist, provide fitness equipment for in-home workouts and provide organic garden plots for families in need. As a mostly volunteer organization providing free wellness programs and services, Fit and Food Connection appreciates partners like St. Louis City Fitness. We rely on the community to come together and help us create healthy smiles and incredible confidence in our food and fitness journeys.



**St. Louis City Fitness is a wellness facility staffed with professional, highly qualified trainers that offer a variety of personalized fitness programs.**

## VIRTUAL WELLNESS RETREAT

Our spring fundraiser, Spring Wellfest, was cancelled due to COVID-19, yet that didn't stop our amazing volunteers from thinking outside the box to find an alternative way to raise the funds that were still so badly needed. We came together to host The Fit and Food Connection's very first, Revitalizing Virtual Wellness Retreat! The funds raised during this virtual fundraiser went directly to helping us support our healthy food pantry and wellness programs! Each day Fit and Food Connection held two unique Health Hours, one in the morning and one in the evening. They included relaxation activities, healthy eating tips, and fun virtual fitness activities you could do at home to help you live your best life. The week concluded with a Friday Night Virtual Mixer to help us remember what it feels like to be part of a positive community after a long period of social distancing. Throughout the week, participants were able to bid on fabulous auction items in our Online Auction. Thank you for all who participated! Together we are creating life-changing opportunities to build a healthier community!

## NORTH COUNTY INC. AWARD

The Fit and Food Connection and Co-Founder Gabi Cole were recently awarded North County Incorporated's 2020 Special Recognition Leadership Award. This award is given to individuals or organizations that have a positive impact on North County St. Louis. Recipients are honored for their work in the areas of community service, business development, sustainability, leadership, public service and partnerships. Way to go Gabi!

# DONATE AND HELP TODAY



Become a member of our  
**Healthy Giving Club** at  
[fitandfoodconnection.org](http://fitandfoodconnection.org):

- ✔ \$25 buys 2 jump ropes to keep a family active!
- ✔ \$50 provides fitness equipment for a family's home workouts!
- ✔ \$100 provides a grocery shopping trip for a One-on-One Coaching Client!
- ✔ \$150 pays for a group fitness class for 20 people!



EMPOWERING  
PEOPLE IN NEED TO GET  
HEALTHY

## Save these 2020 Dates!

### Wellness Program

- **Stepping Your Way Out of Quarantine**- Thursdays, June 4- July 16 from 5:00-6:00 PM at The World's Fair Pavilion In Forest Park: 1904 Concourse Drive St. Louis, MO. 63130
- **Traditional Mat Yoga Series**- Fridays, August 14-October 2 from 9:30-10:30 AM at Bridgeton Trails Library Branch-3445 McKelvey Rd. Bridgeton, MO 63044
- **Annual Tennis Clinic** - Sundays, July 19- August 16 from 6:00-7:30 PM at St. Vincent's Community Center: 7335 St. Charles Rock Road St. Louis, MO 63133
- **Mat Pilates Series**- Thursdays, October 1-November 5 from 5:30-6:30 PM at Indian Trails Branch: 8400 Delport Dr. St. Louis, MO 63114

### Food Access Program

- **Prepping to Success: Meal Prep & Cooking Demos**- July 25, Aug. 29, Sept. 26, June 27, July 25, Aug. 29, Sept. 26, Oct. 24, Nov. 14, & Dec. 12 from 11:00 AM-12:00 PM at St. Peter's United Church in the Kitchen & Hall Area: 1425 Stein Road Ferguson, MO 63135
- **Kid's Club In the Garden**- 1st & 3rd Tuesday of June-August from 11:00 AM-12:00 PM at Project Sunflower: 4846 St. Louis Avenue, St. Louis, MO 63115
- **Food Assistance Program**- Every Sunday from 1:00 PM-3:00 PM at Believer's Temple: 2115 Chambers Rd, St. Louis, MO 63136

### Special Programming & Events

- **Grocery Store Shopping Tours**- Aug. 22- Aldi on 702 N. Kingshighway St. Louis, MO 63108 & Nov. 7-Save-a-lot on 6840 Page Ave. St. Louis, MO 63133 from 11:00 AM-12:00 PM
- **One on One Programming** - Ongoing availability (Please contact us for more details if you are interested)

# WELLNESS PROGRAM

## ONLINE PROGRAMMING

As much of our world has moved virtually over the past few months, so has The Fit and Food Connection, which has offered online programming since April 1. We are so grateful to be able to connect with our clients and other members in the community in this way! Our programming is currently being held on Facebook, in a social learning group separate from our page. We have been hosting LIVE fitness and nutrition classes every Monday and Wednesday. We are still going strong!

Here  
is what  
some of  
our clients  
have to  
say:

Great information thank you!

Enjoyed the topic once again. Always learn something new.

I am so glad I got the notification about this class. I really got a workout.

Thanks so much for posting this! These exercises are most helpful!

Looking forward to class. Thank you!

This was so helpful and informative!!

If you haven't joined us yet for our online programming, there's no better time than now! All of our wellness resources are archived within the group, so you can get started at any time. A variety of classes are being offered, including bootcamps, Pilates, nutrition talks, cooking demos & MORE! Join the group at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/217011736184348>

## TENNIS SERIES

Fit and Food will still be hosting their 6th Annual Tennis Clinic as a 5-week series this summer every Sunday from July 19-August 16! Volunteer fitness instructor, Kirk Schlueter, will be teaching participants of all tennis levels, techniques and how to practice this fun sport. You'll be sure to break a great sweat when playing this fun sport!

Classes are from 6pm to 7:30pm at the St. Vincent Community Center, 7335 St. Charles Rock Rd., St. Louis MO. Tennis rackets and balls will be provided.

This program is free but is limited to 8 participants in order to follow COVID-19 public health precautions.



# FOOD ACCESS PROGRAM

## FOOD ASSISTANCE & DELIVERY

Food Assistance: Our program continues to grow with 10 new volunteers to help sort food and deliver orders to participants. Every Sunday afternoon, five Fit and Food Connection staff members sort healthy food items and practice social distancing by separating parcels for each volunteer driver to pick up outside. The food is placed on a cart outside so the driver picks up that day's route and delivers it to the family's doorstep. We've been able to feed up to 74 families this spring thanks to the community's support in the midst of COVID -19.

All interested volunteers and supporters please connect with Gabi Cole, at [gcole@fitandfoodconnection.org](mailto:gcole@fitandfoodconnection.org).



## ORGANIC GARDEN



Thanks to our proud supporters at the Missouri Department of Agriculture and St. Louis Blues for Kids, we were able to fully renovate our Project Sunflower Organic Garden in North City and host a series of Kid's Club programming this summer.

We have a new greenhouse and shed with solar panel lighting, security camera, and fencing. We have certified trainers, local farmers, and nutrition experts coming to work with children in the garden for Kid's Club. Due to COVID -19 and social distancing, we will only have room for a small group of eight kids and an instructor.

## GARDEN KIDS CLUB SERIES

Join Fit and Food for the 2020 Kids Club in the Garden series on the 1st & 3rd Tuesdays of June-August from 4:30-5:30 PM, featuring various nutritional, educational and fitness activities led by wellness guest speakers. Please fill out this [Google Registration Form](#) ASAP to enroll your child in this special summer series:

<https://forms.gle/HQbt5SPZuEiWX8yQA> .

We look forward to teaching your children gardening 101, while following the public health safety procedures!



# SPOTLIGHTS

## CLIENT SPOTLIGHT

Hopping on a bike can lift your spirits, give you much-needed exercise, and get you where you want to go. Thanks to our partnership with St. Louis BWorks, almost four dozen shiny yellow bikes have been given to some of our St. Louis area families who participate in Fit and Food Connection programs.

St. Louis BWorks, a non-profit organization operating since 1988, offers various programs to help young people pursue their dreams. The programs revolve around bicycles, personal computers, and creative writing.

One of our clients Jessica Robinson, said that the bikes are going to be a huge help. She was previously in a domestic violence situation, and when she had to hurry and leave, she could only take what she could carry. She ended up leaving her bike behind that she used to ride daily for exercise and



transportation. She is really looking forward to adding that activity back into her daily routine.

Joy Millner, Co-Director of The Fit and Food Connection said, “We are so appreciative and excited about this donation from BWorks. Now people can be outside, reduce stress and exercise!”

## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Hi, my name is Mallory and I am the payroll coordinator and a member of the Finance Committee for The Fit and Food Connection. I moved to St. Louis after graduating college to pursue my career as a tax accountant. I live in South City and currently work in international tax at PricewaterhouseCoopers. I love getting to use my skills to support the people and operations that help make The Fit and Food Connection such an amazing organization. I have had the opportunity to witness the organization grow from its first employee to five employees in just 2 years’ time. I cannot wait to see how the organization continues to grow and impact so many lives in our community.



Over the last month, I have also started to help with the food assistance program. Every Sunday, we help package and deliver healthy meals for families. I am so thankful for the opportunity to personally meet and connect with the people The Fit and Food Connection are helping daily.

# FIT AND FOOD CORNER

## THE PUSH-UP

The push-up is an incredible total body strengthening move that doesn't require any equipment or even much space.

- 1) Start in a high plank position
- 2) Lower your body
- 3) Push back up to position 1

Repeat this movement for 10-20 reps and rest before the next set or hold a high plank for one minute and every 5 seconds or 10 seconds during the minute do one push up. Rest and then repeat 2-3x.

From: <https://greatist.com/fitness/how-do-perfect-push#breathing>

1



2



## STRESS RELIEF AND SLEEP

The importance of sleep is irrefutable. Our bodies need sleep to recover from our busy lives. Research shows people who go to bed and wake up at the same time everyday lead healthier and happier lives.

Create a better sleep cycle by setting an alarm for going to bed as well as for waking up.

Source: <https://www.cbc.ca/life/wellness/how-and-why-waking-up-at-the-same-time-everyday-can-improve-your-health-1.4357391>

## NUTRITION

### Healthy Taco Salad Options:

To enjoy a healthier taco salad try some of these suggestions:

Use 93% fat free turkey instead of beef and utilize vegetables and beans as a healthy filler.

Make your own healthy salsa dressing:

¼ cup prepared salsa

¼ cup non-fat plain Greek yogurt

Stir the two together and drizzle over taco salad.

Source: <https://www.wellplated.com/skinny-taco-salad/>

## POSITIVITY

### THINGS TO REMEMBER

- YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE PERFECT
- HAVING A BAD DAY IS OK
- SMALL STEPS ARE ALSO PROGRESS
- ASKING FOR HELP IS STRENGTH
- PEOPLE LOVE AND APPRECIATE YOU