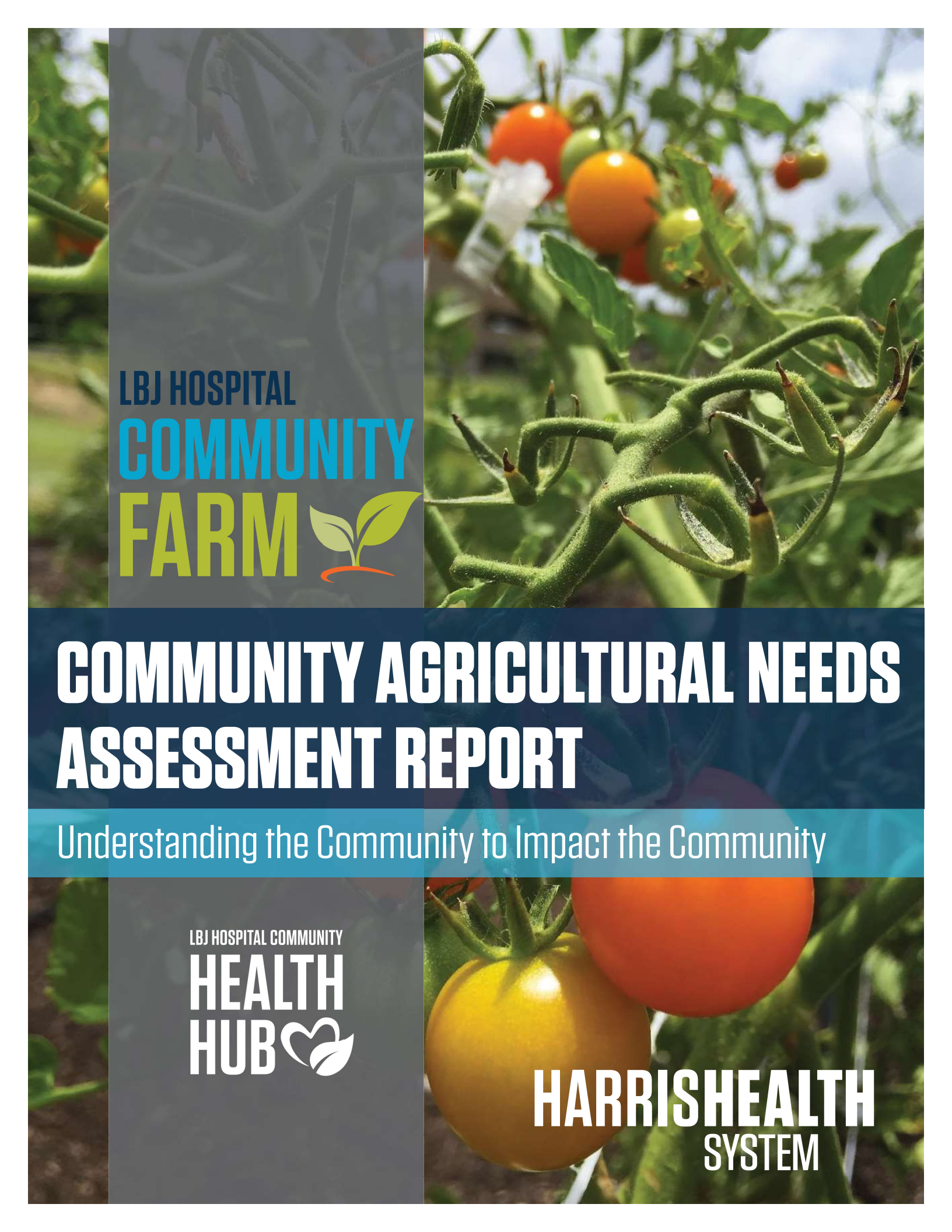




LBJ HOSPITAL
COMMUNITY
FARM 

COMMUNITY AGRICULTURAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT

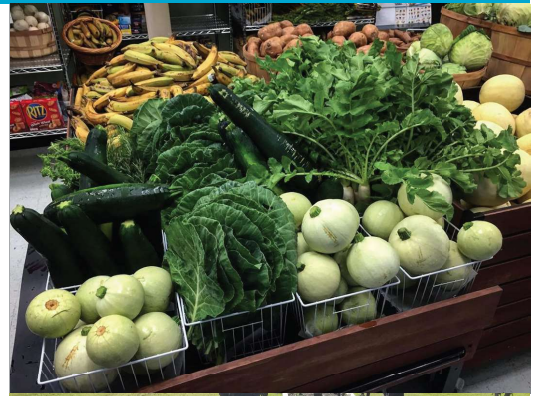
Understanding the Community to Impact the Community

LBJ HOSPITAL COMMUNITY
HEALTH
HUB 

HARRISHEALTH
SYSTEM

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Our Mission	1
Introduction	2
Neighborhood & Food Landscape	3
Neighborhood Landscape	3
Strong Neighborhood Foundations	4
Cultivating Relationships	5
Agriculture as a Transformational Engine	6
Assessment Approach	7
Health Equity	7
Strategy & Methodology	8
Critical Stakeholders	9
Progress & Preliminary Results	10
Focus Group Sessions	10
Surveys & Data Collection	11
Building Momentum	12
COVID-19 Crisis Response	13
Community Farm Goals for 2020	14
Production & Operations Plan	14
Initial Farm Programming Plan	15
Acknowledgments	16
Authors	17
Appendix	18



OUR MISSION

Our Mission

To be a tool that provides the patients and staff at LBJ hospital and the neighboring community with proactive solutions to promote a culture of health in Houston's NE Sector.

Our Vision

Establish LBJ Hospital as an integrated edible and agricultural campus that is a critical resource for the patients, staff, and neighbors of LBJ and create a replicable model for other public healthcare institutions.

Our Core Values

- + Respect farmers and farmland
- + Connect and empower community
- + Pursue regenerative land stewardship
- + Be hands-on always
- + Listen first, and collaborate
- + Act with conviction
- + Be data-centered and process-driven



INTRODUCTION

The LBJ Community Farm is an innovative upstream public health intervention that reaches beyond our hospital walls to engage wellness where it begins - our neighborhoods. It is a recognition of the role LBJ Hospital should play in supporting communities to remove the barriers to healthy lifestyles, especially through a robust local food system, and an acknowledgment that equitable change requires institutional and grass-roots efforts converging as mutual stakeholders. The LBJ Community Farm is the tip of the spear in Harris Health System's effort to transform how healthcare institutions engage in the real health epidemics our communities face that cannot be addressed by medical treatment alone. This project seeks to further the mission of Harris Health System to improve the health of those most in need in Harris County through quality care delivery, coordination of care, and education. This bold approach to healthcare advances Harris Health System's vision of becoming the premier public academic healthcare system in the nation.

The purpose of the LBJ Community Farm is to foster a culture of health in our community - staff, patients, and neighbors alike. By empowering individuals to make healthy choices in their lives, we can have a positive impact on overall community wellness. With two full acres of fresh vegetable and fruit production on the hospital campus serving as the foundation, the LBJ Community Farm will provide more than fresh food for our patients and community. The Farm promotes education and empowerment, acts as an ecosystem tool for demonstrating sustainable urban development, and, most importantly, is a safe gathering space for our community to share, learn, and grow together.

This Community Agriculture Needs Assessment (CANA) aims to begin understanding the culture, circumstances, and pursuits of the community within and external to LBJ Hospital. Through this process, we are creating a strategy that amplifies the community's work and contributes to meaningful change. By attending community meetings, collecting preliminary survey feedback, and hosting focus groups, the LBJ Community Farm Team has begun an initial assessment of the value the Farm could provide. While comprehensive data collection will take time, many foundational community partnerships have emerged from these efforts that will be vital in the continued efforts to gather feedback, input, and buy-in from local stakeholders. The work begun through this initial assessment will continue as the farm develops and will serve as the first step in the development of a long-term Vision & Strategic Plan for the LBJ Community Farm, supported by annual reports on the progress and impact Harris Health System is having through the Farm.



“

Eating is an agricultural act.

-Wendell Berry

”

NEIGHBORHOOD & FOOD LANDSCAPE

Neighborhood Landscape

There has been significant interest from many of the surrounding neighborhoods since the announcement of the Community Farm at LBJ Hospital. While conversations are on-going with all interested parties across the Northeast community, the LBJ Community Farm Team decided to begin our direct outreach by focusing specifically on the Kashmere Gardens and Trinity-Houston Gardens neighborhoods. Limiting the initial scope of the project to focus on the neighborhoods immediately adjacent LBJ Hospital enabled us to concentrate on their specific needs, engage earnestly, and dedicate our time to developing programs that will create purposeful and meaningful impact. The scope of our outreach will grow as the Farm's capacity to reach new communities expands. Utilizing lessons learned and grounding our outreach strategy in community experience, we are creating a strong foundation for the Farm Team to scale these programs for the greater Northeast community.

The Kashmere Gardens and Trinity-Houston Gardens neighborhoods have historically been underserved, enduring substandard access to transportation, lack of healthy food options, and inadequate economic and housing opportunities.

Experienced Inequities

Almost ¾ of all households have an income of less than \$45,000 with approximately 40% of children living in poverty. With predominantly African-American (+62%) and Latino (+30%) populations, these neighborhoods suffer many inequities not experienced by their majority white community counterparts, inundated with industrial and manufacturing facilities that produce high levels of pollution.

Cancer Cluster Discovered

Most recently, a study by the Texas Department of State Health Services discovered a cancer cluster in the Kashmere Gardens/Fifth Ward communities resulting from creosote contamination originating from the nearby Union Pacific railyard¹.

Hurricane Harvey Devastation

Compounding many of these challenges was the devastation wrought by Hurricane Harvey in 2017, with 3672 of 3717 (98.7%) houses in Kashmere Gardens and 3954 of 5899 (67%) houses in Trinity-Houston Gardens flooding during the hurricane. Many of these houses still have not been rebuilt, leaving families without housing options and with limited means to alter their situation.

These neighborhoods deserve to be treated with dignity and afforded access to the same resources as every other Houston community to support solutions to these challenges and inequities.



Trinity-Houston Gardens²

Households	5899
Estimated Number of Harvey Flooded Homes	3954
% Non-Hispanic African American Population	65.93
% Hispanic or Latino	31.03
% Household Income less than Houston Median Household Income	72.71
% Children in Poverty	37.41
% Persons in Poverty	26.55
% Households without a Car	10.88
Median Household Income	\$29,700



Kashmere Gardens³

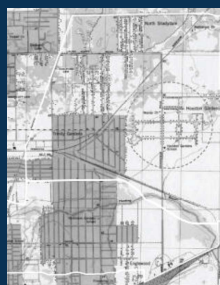
Households	3717
Estimated Number of Harvey Flooded Homes	3672
% Non-Hispanic African American Population	62.78
% Hispanic or Latino	34.42
% Household Income less than Houston Median Household Income	78.35
% Children in Poverty	42.09
% Persons in Poverty	31.21
% Households without a Car	21.58
Median Household Income	\$27,732

NEIGHBORHOOD & FOOD LANDSCAPE

Strong Neighborhood Foundations

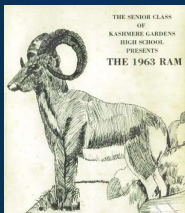
The Kashmere and Trinity-Houston Gardens communities contain rich histories and vibrant cultures that have far too often gone overlooked. These communities have faced many challenges as well, but to focus on the challenges instead of the tremendous assets they also possess endangers a real opportunity for building a grassroots movement to revitalize the health of the communities. Coalitions cannot be built without context, and the conviction of the communities cannot be gained unless we, too, elevate and celebrate their uniqueness and show how they align with our health movement. Together, with a shared understanding, we can move from a destructive narrative to one of pride that catalyzes meaningful change.

History & Culture of TRINITY-HOUSTON & KASHMERE GARDENS

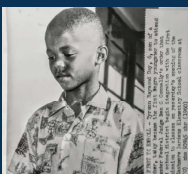


Houston Gardens was established in 1937 under the New Deal by the Suburban Resettlement Administration, a program that provided home ownership opportunities to the poor and landless during the height of the Great Depression. This was the only development of its kind in Houston⁴.

Kashmere High School students participated in a massive city-wide boycott of classes, 9,000 students in total, to protest the delayed integration of schools⁴.



Kashmere Gardens led the fight to integrate schools.



Tyronne Day at Kashmere Gardens Elementary in 1960

Kashmere Gardens becomes the first City of Houston certified Super neighborhood in 2001 under Mayor Lee Brown and councilwoman Carol Mims Galloway.



Northeast Super Neighborhood Alliance began 2019 with its first official meeting.

In 2020, the City of Houston proclaimed February 4th Kashmere Gardens Day in recognition of "their historic contributions to Houston socioeconomic, education, and beautification growth."



In August of 2019, the first Northeast Community Farmers Market was hosted at Kashmere Gardens Elementary to offer fresh produce to the community.



Established in the 1960's the Kashmere High School Stage Band, known as Thunder Soul, became the first all Black



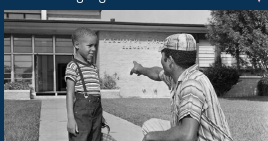
stage band to rise to prominence not only in the nation but across the globe. Their monumental success was celebrated across the community when in 1972, led by Conrad "Prof" Johnson, Thunder Soul made history by winning the title of "Most Outstanding Stage Band in the Nation" at the highly prestigious All-American High School Stage Band Festival in Mobile, Alabama⁵.



In 2010, the documentary Thunder Soul, produced by Jamie Foxx, was released reuniting band members to pay tribute to their legendary band leader, Conrad "Prof" Johnson⁶.



In 1965, Jaqueline McCauley graduated from Kashmere High School and became the first Black female admitted to Rice University⁴.



These communities have been leaders in civic engagement and anti-segregationist movements

NEIGHBORHOOD & FOOD LANDSCAPE

Cultivating Relationships

The process of engaging a community is a challenging undertaking. Understanding LBJ Hospital's role as a foundational institution in Northeast Harris County is vital to framing the Farm's outreach. While the hospital provides a number of services to the community, our primary obstacle to community engagement began with the absence of direct and personal connections within the neighborhood. The Farm Team initially encountered significant skepticism among members and leaders. With the backing of the LBJ Hospital executive leadership, however, we invested a significant amount of time and resources towards cultivating relationships with community leaders and members. We view the farm as integral to developing LBJ Hospital not just as a place of treatment for community members but as an active participant in the community.



LBJ COMMUNITY FARM OUTREACH BEST PRACTICES

The Farm Team developed a list of best practices we consider essential for fostering long-lasting relationships with our community partners. Our best practice has been to continuously show up to meetings and events, not to present our own mission, but rather to listen to our neighbors and hear their concerns. Developing collaborations is a mindset and long-term process built upon by actions. Trust is essential to creating change and will serve as the foundation for our collective progress and collaboration.

Listen First (...and Second)

Always listen. We lack the direct perspective and experiences of the community and it is not appropriate to speak first. Listen attentively to the feedback we receive when we do speak and ask questions to clarify and ensure you understand their comments.

Start by Giving, Not Asking

Ensure that we do our best to first give of ourselves before asking anything of the community. We must continually show that we are an asset and advocate.

Trust is Earned

Be forthright - acknowledge your limitations and uphold your commitments. Honest, consistent effort builds lasting relationships. Trust is earned over time, not overnight.

Show Up

Being present is the most important first step to building relationships within the surrounding neighborhoods. Attending a broad scope of civic and community meetings is the best and only way to get a proper understanding of the priorities and challenges of the residents and stakeholders.

Never Assume

It's critical to know what you don't know. We want to ensure that our initiatives and efforts are built on direct communication and engagement with the community. Always ask.

Bigger than Us

It's important to understand the priorities and larger needs of the community in the context of our work. The farm should work to contribute wherever and however possible to the needs voiced by the community.

NEIGHBORHOOD & FOOD LANDSCAPE

Agriculture as a Transformational Engine

Wellness begins at the intersection of environment, economics, education, healthcare, and food access. However, the disparate relationship between our food and healthcare systems has fostered a decades-wide chasm contributing to the current state of health inequities. These inequities are intensified by how social determinants of health uniquely impact communities. Therefore, cross-sector collaboration is needed to successfully dismantle systemic barriers and transform the state of community health. Regenerative agriculture is uniquely poised to help confront and reform the systemic obstacles to community wellness, operating at the intersection of ecology, food production, social justice, and scientific innovation. Farms, as community gathering spaces, can harness this opportunity to unite individuals, organizations, and businesses across diverse backgrounds to affect change economically, regulatory, and socially. By addressing the social determinants of health in a comprehensive and collaborative way, we can begin to build a new reality for community wellness. Harris Health System, in pioneering this innovative new health paradigm merging regenerative agriculture with upstream healthcare interventions, will emerge as a leader and set the standard for the healthcare industry to follow.

Culture & Social Context



IDENTITY & PRIDE

Community farming provides a space that neighborhoods can take pride in and reinforces community empowerment and self-determination

SUSTAINABILITY



Regenerative agriculture helps improve environmental quality, decrease pollution, and address systemic environmental injustice

Physical Environment



SAFE GREEN SPACE

Productive agricultural spaces serve as safe green spaces for community members to enjoy, share, and get outdoors, improving biodiversity and habitats for local wildlife



CULTURE THROUGH FOOD

Food is the backbone of culture and is the focal point of how we gather together, celebrate, and connect whether through barbecues, family dinners, festivals, or pancakes breakfasts

Community Development

Production

BUILDING A NEIGHBORHOOD FOOD SYSTEM

The value of agriculture goes far beyond the fruits and vegetables that are grown, providing unique opportunities, especially in an urban setting, to engage education, employment, health, sustainability, and more. Building a neighborhood food system with agriculture at its core provides communities with resources to improve the economic, cultural, social, and environmental challenges facing our underserved communities. Altering the systems that make up the foundations of our communities is essential in moving upstream to address health where it begins - our neighborhoods.

Programming

Distribution



HEALTH EDUCATION

The farm provides space for educational opportunities in cooking, nutrition, health, and more with tools to improve health and continuing clinical education for medical and healthcare professionals



EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING

Farming offers direct employment and job training opportunities through vocational training, apprenticeships, and internship programs



YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Farming offers opportunities to engage youth in food production, science, entrepreneurship, and more, providing a positive space for learning and exploration

Education



IMPROVE FOOD ACCESS

Local farmers markets provide healthy foods directly to neighborhoods lacking access and support the development of small community food businesses

Socioeconomic

ASSESSMENT APPROACH

Health Equity

Our intention for this report is to gain a deeper understanding of Kashmere and Trinity- Houston Gardens food culture within the context of health equity models. This approach sets the foundation for us to begin crafting a strategic plan for how the LBJ Community Farm will successfully develop patient and community programming to aid in food access challenges and economic development within the local food system.



World Health Organization

“ Equity is the absence of avoidable, unfair, or remediable differences among groups of people, whether those groups are defined socially, economically, demographically or geographically or by other means of stratification. “Health equity” or “equity in health” implies that ideally everyone should have a fair opportunity to attain their full health potential and that no one should be disadvantaged from achieving this potential⁷. ”

To do this, we sought the expertise of Harris Health System’s public health workers and based the framework we developed on established reports and previous strategic initiatives across Harris County, expanding on the findings of those reports in the context of regional food system diversification. In particular, the **Harris County BUILD Health Partnership** and **Healthy Living Matters** coalition were instrumental as roadmaps for our assessment and determining how regenerative agriculture could enhance future public health interventions by Harris Health System.



This assessment is intended to grow and evolve with the farm, not remain static, in order to guide program development and ensure the project stays true to the intentions and ambitions of the community we serve as well as our internal mission and vision for the farm.

Hogan & Rowley R4P Framework⁸

Repair

Repair past or historical damage/harm/setbacks

Remediate

Remediate, or reduce the impact of existing stressors that diminish outcome goals

Restructure

Restructure policies, procedures, job descriptions, meeting agendas and other institutional structures to remove the production and sources of inequity

Remove

Remove the institutional sources and vestiges of racism, classism, sexism, and other “isms”

Provide

Provide culturally and socioeconomically relevant health/education/clinical services to all populations so that they can achieve equity in outcomes, and further provide structural supports to ensure that all populations have the tools and resources to carry out educational/clinical recommendations



ASSESSMENT APPROACH

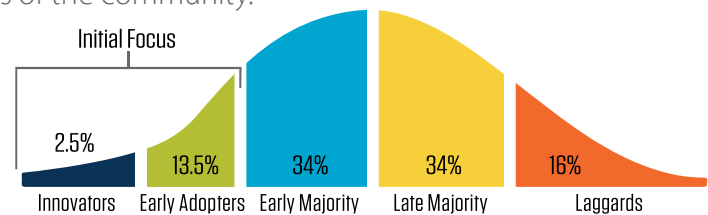
Strategy & Methodology

Our objective for this first round of data collection was to understand the food culture of the community in order to create programming on the farm that would be compelling and meaningful. We sought feedback through surveys developed in partnership with the Population Health Team and curated community focus groups.

Feedback Acquisition Strategy

When developing our data acquisition approach, the Farm Team referred to the Theory of the Diffusion of Innovation, a theory on how new ideas are adopted. Still in its infancy, the LBJ Community Farm would most efficiently attract feedback by focusing on the “Innovators” and “Early Adopters” within the community. Buy-in from these community members would allow the farm to build a network of critical stakeholders from which to reach various segments of the community.

Developed in partnership with the Population Health Team, the Surveys and Focus Groups are designed to help us better understand the food culture of neighboring communities.



SURVEY QUESTIONS

We are interested in exploring what factors influence your food choices. Please read each question carefully. It is important that you complete this by yourself.

Where do you typically get your food from? Please list all places/types of places.

How do you typically get there/travel there?

What kinds of food do you purchase most? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Fresh produce
- ☐ Frozen produce
- ☐ Canned produce
- ☐ Fast food
- ☐ Food and drinks with added sugar
- ☐ Fresh meat
- ☐ Whole grains
- ☐ Restaurant food
- ☐ Boxed meals
- ☐ Other (please specify)



Where do you typically consume most of your food?

Do you have other people that you rely on for making your food choices or that you share food responsibilities with? (Please check yes or no)

If yes, then who?

ASSESSMENT APPROACH

Critical Stakeholders

The LBJ Community Farm Team sought to identify critical stakeholders within the community that have been intimately involved with the challenges surrounding food and health and bring a unique perspective that can inform how the farm can best serve the neighborhood. The leaders from the agricultural and civic community formed a strong foundation from which to begin engaging and gathering valuable information.



Nathan Hawethorne | Seeds of the Soil

Nathan Hawethorne is the Executive Director of Seeds of The Soil (SOTS), an agricultural educational farm located within the Historic Fifth Ward area of Houston. SOTS runs its base of operations from three adjacent lots averaging 4,000 sq. ft each. In addition, SOTS builds and helps maintain gardens with K-12 public, private, and charter schools teaching S.T.E.A.M. focused education through firsthand agricultural experience.



Jeremy Peaches | Fresh Life Organic FLO & RST Bio Science

Jeremy Peaches is the founder of Fresh Life Organic FLO farms and President of RST Bio Science sustainable agriculture consultants. Jeremy graduated from Prairie View A&M University with a degree in Agriculture in 2015. He is a young agri-prenuer that has worked with numerous farmers, local, state, and federal organizations.



Tim Hammond | Big City Gardener

Tim Hammond is an entrepreneur and the founder of Big City Gardener which initially began as a landscaping company helping install raised garden beds but has pivoted to educating people how to grow their own food. Tim, a graduate of the University of Houston, shares his talents, expertise, and passion for gardening through Instagram, growing his audience to over 43k followers.



Trinity Gardens Super Neighborhood #48

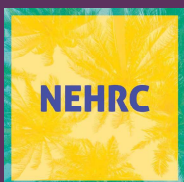
Trinity-Houston Gardens is where two great historic communities meet. It was established under the New Deal by the Suburban Resettlement Administration, a program that provided home ownership opportunities to the poor and landless during the height of the Great Depression. In recent years the community retains its large lot size filled with backyard gardeners and barns for the many cowboys that still practice their craft. The community offers something for everyone with its mixed use housing developments in many price points. It hosts beautiful park space where families can be found riding horses and bikes.



Huey-German Wilson (NEHRC), Ken Williams (NEHRC), Dominick Lee (market manager), Keith Downey (NEHRC), and Christin Bowens (market coordinator)

Kashmere Gardens Super Neighborhood #52

The Kashmere Gardens Super Neighborhood meets monthly and the group is informative, proactive and involved, and promotes community engagement. Members and its officers advocate for the needs of their neighbors, sharing information with their institutions such as schools, churches, and community centers. Kashmere Gardens Super Neighborhood works with residents, elected officials and neighboring grass root leaders to help address food insecurity, inadequate transportation, proper drainage, and environmental injustices to help the Kashmere Gardens Community become more resilient.



Northeast Houston Redevelopment Council (NEHRC)

NEHRC is a working board comprised of community leaders, Huey German-Wilson, Keith Downey, and Kenneth Williams, in Trinity- Houston and Kashmere Gardens Super Neighborhoods that acts as a platform to share best practices in the planning and economic development of the historically underserved communities of Northeast Houston. During Hurricane Harvey the group coordinated efforts to bring resources to the residents of Northeast Houston. Post Harvey they have continued that work by developing strategic partnerships and programs to help residents get their homes repaired and get back on their feet.

PROGRESS & PRELIMINARY RESULTS

Focus Group Sessions

The following highlights reflect the experiences, concerns, and ambitions surrounding food access and the LBJ Community Farm as expressed by agriculture experts and community leaders.

FOOD LEADERS FEEDBACK SUMMARY

November 21, 2019

- Understand the deep systemic issues underlying this conversation, learn the community's motivations, and listen to the community members who have been doing the work.
- It is important to share and equitably distribute resources intentionally to ensure those resources actually get where they are needed.
- Collaborate to build effective networks that connect organizations for resource sharing.
- It is vital to just get people to the space. Bring the community out to the farm by developing engaging opportunities. Allow them to gravitate to the aspects of the farm they most appreciate.
- Partner with institutions that are also invested in regional food system development.



Tim Hammond, Tommy Garcia-Prats, Nathan Hawethorne, Rebecca Verm, and Jeremy Peaches

- Develop training for clinical staff to help them better understand functional nutrition. Make it valuable for both clinicians and patients.
- Ensure external communities' eyes on the project.
- Document the project digitally and through social media.

COMMUNITY LEADERS FEEDBACK SUMMARY

Kashmere Gardens Super Neighborhood Presentation
January 14, 2020

Presented at the Super Neighborhood meeting prior to the City of Houston Complete Communities Action Planning working group.

Attendance: Approximately 100 community members

- Nature-Based and Green Infrastructure - to increase biodiversity, mitigate flooding, and ensure safe spaces for families to enjoy.
- Emergency Preparedness and Emergency Mobility Planning - especially as it relates to the flooding issues around LBJ and the Huntington Bayou areas.
- Economic Resilience and Recovery - to incorporate opportunities like locally-owned grocery stores, bring funding back to the community, and develop more trade education opportunities.
- Neighborhood Resilience Hub/Lily Pad- to meet critical care needs during crisis and provide community development opportunities after crisis.
- Vacant Lot Development Opportunities - to combat food desert challenges, stop illegal dumping, and prevent displacement of citizens.

Trinity-Houston Gardens Super Neighborhood Presentation
January 28, 2020

Presented at the monthly Super Neighborhood meeting.

Attendance: 10 community leaders + 5 community members

- Community concerns focused on illegal dumping, flood mitigation, and other environmental issues.
- Discussed efforts by Impact 5th Ward regarding creosote contamination in 5th Ward.
- Community opportunities discussed included vocational studies (ex. welding) at HCC North Forest, Career Day at Kashmere Gardens HS, adult to youth mentor programs, and Recycling in Schools youth edu program with Solid Waste Management.
- Discussed food access programs that previously existed but no longer do.



Trinity-Houston Gardens Super Neighborhood Council Meeting

PROGRESS & PRELIMINARY RESULTS

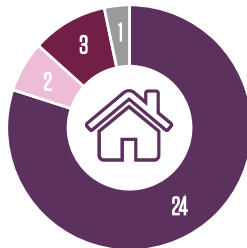
Surveys & Data Collection

The data gathered in these preliminary survey results guides our understanding of underlying challenges to social determinants of health as they impact Kashmere and Trinity-Houston Gardens.

COMMUNITY MEMBER SURVEY FEEDBACK

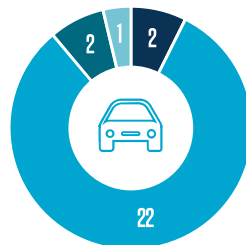
Food pantry at Trinity Gardens Church of Christ; NE Community Farmers Market at Kashmere Elementary school
January - March 2020 | Survey Results: 27 survey total

Where do you typically consume most of your food?



Home Restaurant Work Friends

How do you typically get there/travel there?

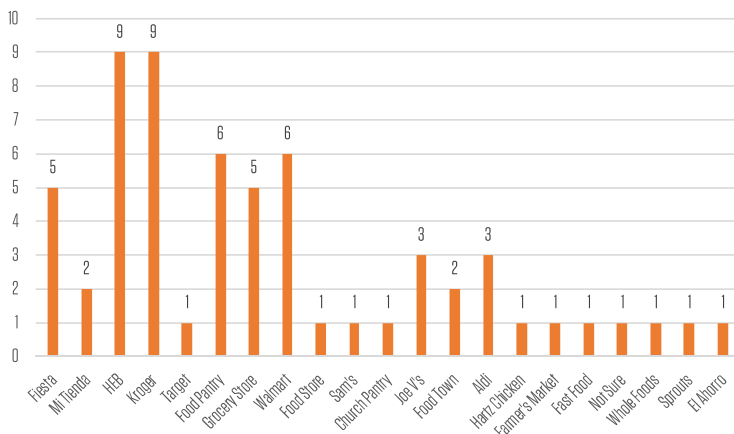


Car/Truck Friend Bike Bus

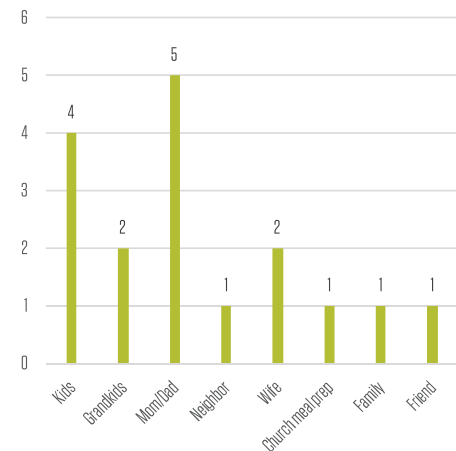
Do you have other people that you rely on for making your food choices or that you share food responsibilities with?



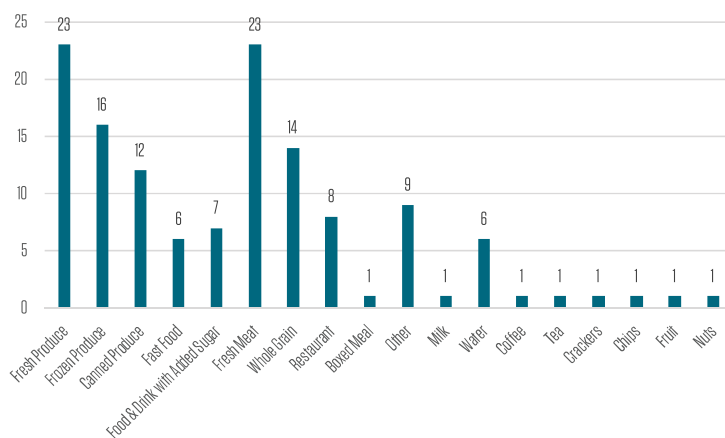
Where do you typically get your food from? Please list all places/types of places.



If yes, then who?



What kinds of food do you purchase most? (Select all that apply)



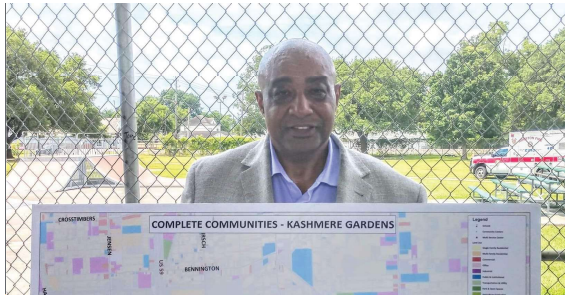
It's important to note that these surveys were distributed at places where community members were already seeking out healthy food options.



PROGRESS & PRELIMINARY RESULTS

Building Momentum

Over the last 15 months, the LBJ Community Farm has worked diligently to establish a foundation of trust with our community. By showing up consistently and following through on our responsibilities, we are demonstrating our commitment to the community and the work of this farm.



“ A Community Farm at LBJ would mean so much to our neighborhood that is food insecure. Nutrition is the full recovery to many of our ills. It can be used with any treatment. It is our best medicine. ”

Keith Downey | President Super Neighborhood 52



Clinical Staff Farm Education

Farm to Fork, Clinical Events, & Other Staff Engagement

27 hrs

16 hrs

Volunteer Mornings On the Farm

Opportunities for hospital staff to help on the farm



While still a work in progress, the LBJ Community Farm Team has worked diligently to begin impacting our community, from hospital staff and patients to local residents and nonprofits, even reaching beyond to influence positive change through collaborations with city and countywide initiatives.

Membership & Leadership Roles

Houston Food System Collaborative
Member of Executive Committee

City of Houston Complete Communities
Member of Kashmere Gardens Support Team



Recognition & Awards



2019 Innovation Challenge Award
by the American College of Physicians

2018 Harris Health Innovation Award
by the Harris Health System

Funding & Grant Awards

Farm Startup Funding
Donation from Jerry Gresham
November 2017 **\$100k**

TMC Health Policy Grant
Funding Round 1 Award
December 2018 **\$150k**

TMC Health Policy Grant
Funding Round 2 Award
June 2019 **\$275k**

River Oaks Garden Club
Enabling Garden Grant Award
March 2020 **\$10k**

THANK YOU TO ALL OF THE INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANIZATIONS THAT HAVE SUPPORTED THE DEVELOPMENT OF THIS INITIATIVE



Produce Harvested

2019
540 lbs

Distributed via Super Neighborhood partners to vulnerable seniors

2020
1,350 lbs

250% Increase between 2019 & 2020

Distributed to the Strawberry Clinic & the Frontline Worker Care Program

Media & Publications

"CULTIVATING A FOOD FARMACY"

TMC Pulse

Britni R. McAshan
June 28, 2019

Univision's Latino Mix Houston

Angelina Rouget
May 6, 2020

TMC TEXAS MEDICAL CENTER

TMC NEWS

HEALTH

Cultivating a food farmacy

Harris Health System is fighting food insecurity with fresh produce



Rebecca Venn harvests tomatoes on the community farm outside of LBJ Hospital in Northeast Houston.

COVID-19 CRISIS RESPONSE

Rising to the Challenge

Over the past 15 months there have been challenges for the LBJ Community Farm to overcome, but none so great as the current COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic uprooted society and embedded a new reality of constant uncertainty- uncertainty for our health, uncertainty for our economic security, and uncertainty for the road ahead. The challenges facing vulnerable communities prior to the pandemic have now been exacerbated beyond comprehension. While there are ongoing concerted relief efforts, the severity and widespread nature of this coronavirus pandemic places unprecedented strain on these mechanisms and it is unclear how long and to what extent they will suffice. Unfortunately, this virus has shown not to be the great equalizer across communities, but instead the great magnifier of systemic inequities.

In response to this unprecedented challenge, we mobilized farm resources to expedite the cultivation expansion timeline. We increased our production capacity from $\frac{1}{4}$ acre to $\frac{3}{4}$ acre just prior to the Stay Home Work Safe order issued by Harris County. By Fall 2020 the Farm will expand to a full acre of vegetable production and begin stage two expansion with an additional acre of orchard production bringing our total operating capacity to 2 acres. In this way, we are better preparing ourselves to rise to serve the evolving needs of our community, through food access and solidarity, during the course of this pandemic.



Directly from Farm to Food Pharmacy

The LBJ Community Farm now supplements the fruits and vegetables distributed by the Strawberry Clinic's Food Pharmacy to patients working to manage chronic disease. On average the clinic receives 150-180 pounds of fresh vegetables such as onions, collard greens, carrots, nopales, radish, lettuce, and herbs for distribution. We are working with the operations team for the Strawberry Clinic Food Pharmacy to scale up production in order to serve the next two Food Pharmacies opening at Acres Home Clinic and LBJ Hospital.



LBJ Frontline Worker Care Packages

As a way to show our support of and appreciation for our frontline healthcare workers throughout the COVID-19 response, the LBJ Farm implemented a weekly drawing for farm care packages that include 3 or 4 vegetables fresh from the farm, as well as a half-dozen eggs, honey, and coffee from local Houston businesses. Directors submit the names of staff members for the weekly drawing and all names will remain in the drawing until they are selected. We have so far distributed over 50 care packages to staff out of the approximately 400 names submitted, and we will continue to distribute them until all staff receive their share.

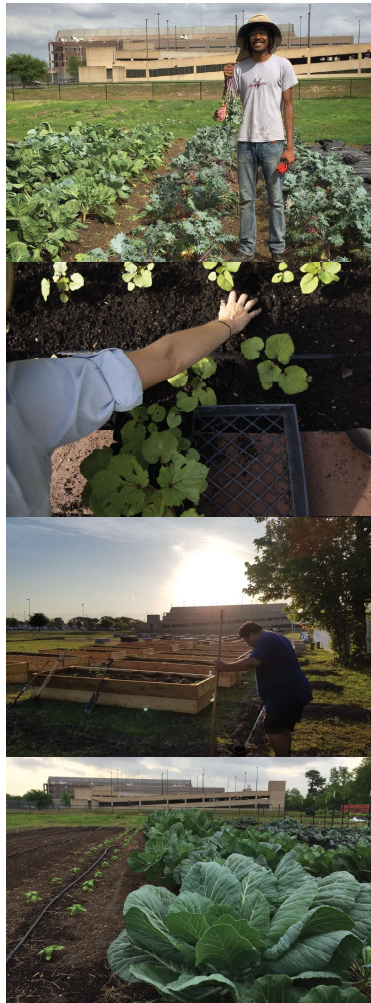
Northeast Community Farmers Market at LBJ

In partnership with the Northeast Houston Redevelopment Council and Urban Harvest, the LBJ Community Farm now hosts a drive-through market every 1st and 3rd Saturday of the month, from 9 AM to 11 AM. Operated by Urban Harvest, the market offers prepackaged boxes of local vegetables from the Common Market. There are \$10 and \$20 boxes available for purchase. The market also accepts SNAP and Double Up Bucks benefits which allow those customers to purchase the same vegetable boxes at a 50% discount.



COMMUNITY FARM GOALS FOR 2020

Production & Operations Plan



PRODUCE SAFETY

- Conduct yearly soil testing protocols
 - Routine analysis twice annually to chart improvements to soil health
 - Heavy metal and toxicity testing as needed, (ie. after a catastrophic event)
 - Initial protocol completed February 2020 determined no discernable quantities of heavy metals or toxins in soil
- Meet compliance for GAP & GHP (Good Agricultural & Good Handling Practices) and FSMA (Food Safety Modernization Act) requirements
 - Complete construction of concrete pad and post-harvest pavilion
 - Purchase necessary post-harvest equipment to ensure proper health and safety standards for cleaning, storing, and distributing produce

FARM EXPANSION

- Remediate soil zone (25' x 180') trenched for drainage during parking lot construction
 - 3 seasons of cover crop and occultation (April 2020 - January 2021) to rehabilitate damaged soil for production
- Increase overall production area by 300% from 2019 cultivation
 - Total fruit, vegetable, and herb production to expand from ½ acre to 2 acres
 - 1 acre in row crop vegetable production
 - 1 acre in integrated perennial and fruit tree plantings
 - Grow crop yields from 100 - 150 pounds to 300 - 500 pounds weekly
- Construct the shade house (30' x 36') for propagation and transplant seeding
 - Improves crop yield efficiency and enables year-round production
 - Supports community outreach initiatives



- Build enabling garden with \$10,000 grant awarded by River Oaks Garden Club
 - Integrate ADA accessible and PT engaging vegetable planters to expand the existing community garden
 - Incorporate educational edible landscaping to create an inclusive environment for all to appreciate and utilize
- Establish large scale compost system through integrated bokashi and worm composting systems
 - Use for educational purposes as well as community composting services
 - Model to demonstrate scalability for hospital cafeteria composting

COMMUNITY FARM GOALS FOR 2020

Initial Farm Programming Plan



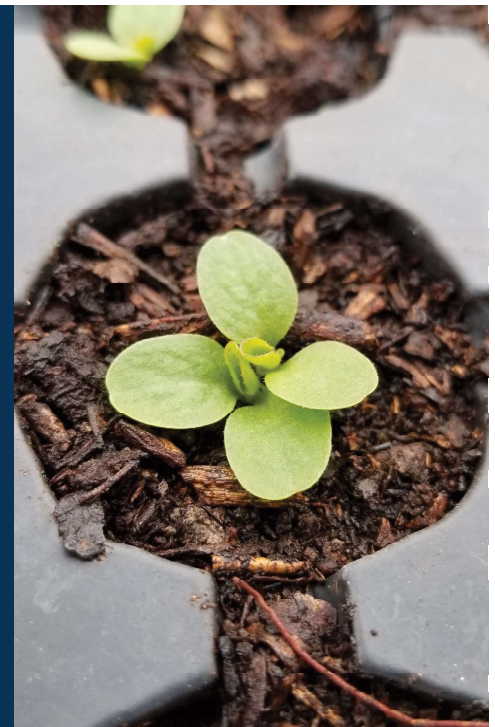
- Expand Food Pharmacy operations from Strawberry Clinic (began April 2020) to include Acres Home Clinic and LBJ Hospital by Fall 2020
- Continue LBJ Frontline Worker Care Package program throughout pandemic response
- Northeast Community Farmers Market every 1st & 3rd Saturday each month
 - In partnership with NE Houston Redevelopment Council and Urban Harvest
 - Accepting SNAP + Double Up Bucks to facilitate community access to fresh fruits and vegetables
 - Post-pandemic, shift from drive-thru market to full farmers market
- Establish regular volunteer opportunities*
 - Volunteer mornings on market Saturdays
 - Open farm hours set one morning and one afternoon weekly
- Develop Foster the Farm program to provide education and workshops to staff and clinicians on the benefits of local agriculture, especially fresh fruits and vegetables, for the wellbeing of their patients and themselves*
- Curate monthly community events in conjunction with Kashmere and Trinity-Houston Gardens Super Neighborhoods*
- Begin extending outreach to the greater Northeast Houston community and their integral institutions, including but not limited to the super neighborhoods of Acres Homes (6), the Greater 5th Ward (55), Settegast (50), Pleasantville (57), East Houston (49), and East Little York-Homestead (47)
- Collaborate with Houston's greater agriculture community and HHS's coalition partners to pursue policy and regulatory recommendations that will strengthen the economic and social potential of our regional food system

*Pending ability to reopen post-pandemic, gradual scalable expansion to these programs.

Where We Grow from Here

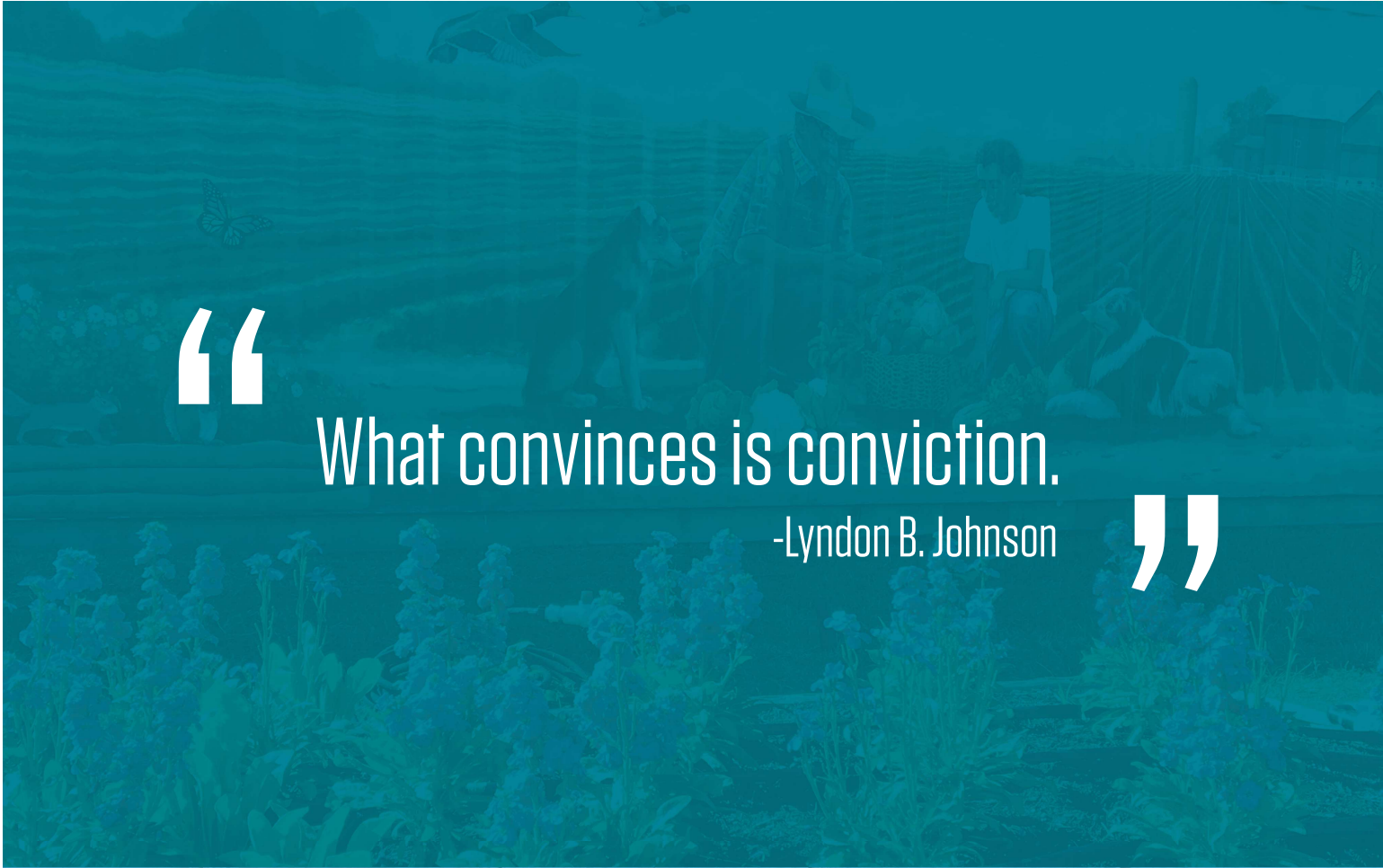
The very existence of the LBJ Community Farm by Harris Health System is a testament to the power of innovative thinking and perseverance. Our work will continue to challenge the status quo in order to pursue proactive solutions for transforming health culture. Our harvests will grow to build a fully integrated agriculture campus that serves the critical needs of our patients and the greater LBJ community. We will be rigorous in our self-evaluations to ensure we stay data-focused and process-driven in order to create a persuasive, replicable model for public and private institutions alike to integrate agriculture into their strategies. We will demonstrate that agriculture is more than just the products of the labor, but that it is also a transformative engine of community development and resiliency.

If the last two months are any indication, we certainly have a long and steep road ahead navigating the new reality of a post COVID-19 world while continuing to challenge and transform the systemic barriers to health inequities. But, building on the foundation of community trust and resilient partnerships, we will endure and surmount this challenge. We will continue to show up, listen, and collaborate with our community and together we will build a new lasting culture of health for Houston.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Numerous people played important roles and contributed to the development and crafting of this report and we would like to acknowledge them here. First, we would like to extend a tremendous thank you to the Trinity-Houston Gardens and Kashmere Gardens Super Neighborhood Councils, especially their presidents Ms. Huey German-Wilson and Mr. Keith Downey, and Ken Williams the vice president of the Trinity-Houston Gardens Super Neighborhood council, who have been invaluable partners in our work, giving generously of their time, talents, and experience to assist the Farm Team in connecting with the various leaders, stakeholders, and community members in their neighborhoods. Particular gratitude is owed to Alan Vierling, the former executive vice president and administrator of LBJ Hospital, for his inspiration and perseverance in developing this concept and launching the farm. Thank you to the Population Health Team of Denise LaRue, Erika Lyles, and Maria Llanes for their hard work in helping to create the CANA surveys and supporting the Farm Team to collect meaningful data from the community. Thank you to Dr. Hilary Ma, Chief of Service of the MD Anderson Cancer Center Oncology Program at LBJ Hospital, who has been a leader in the development of this project. Thank you to Karen Tseng whose expertise and guidance in public health has grounded the mission and vision of the farm. Special thank you to Michelle Seitzinger, the Head of the LBJ Health Hub, for her ardent support of the LBJ Community Farm Team and without whom this project would not be possible. Finally, thank you to Patricia Darnauer, executive vice president and administrator of LBJ Hospital, who has been a tremendous advocate of our work and champion of this initiative.



“

What convinces is conviction.

-Lyndon B. Johnson

”

AUTHORS



Rebecca Verm, Lead Farmer at LBJ Hospital

Rebecca Verm is a farmer and educator who endeavors every day to increase local food access in her native city of Houston, TX. She is the Lead Farmer for Harris Health System at LBJ Hospital's Community Farm. She also sits on the Executive Board of the Houston Food System Collaborative and serves as the Gulf Coast Regional Director for the Texas Organic Farmer and Gardener Association. Prior to joining LBJ, Rebecca worked as the Farm Director at Blackwood Educational Land Institute, in Hempstead, TX, where she designed and implemented their production farm and curated new curriculum for their educational programs. Rebecca also owned and operated her urban farm, Sown & Grown, in Houston's Settegast neighborhood from 2013-2016. She is a student of permaculture, biodynamics, and regenerative agriculture. She believes that by utilizing agricultural practices grounded in ecological principles and by empowering her community with the knowledge of these practices, we will cultivate resilience both on our farms and in our society.

**HARRIS HEALTH
SYSTEM**



Tommy Garcia-Prats, Founder & General Manager of Small Places, LLC (Consultant)

Tommy Garcia Prats brings ten years of experience in farming having worked on and managed some of the most innovative farms in the hemisphere. Returning to his hometown of Houston, Tommy started Small Places, LLC in 2014 with his two brothers, Dan and Mark, after seeing a desperate need for healthy options and a dearth of good farming examples in the Houston area. Their urban farm, Finca Tres Robles, located on 1.25 acres in the Second Ward just east of downtown, works to serve the East End neighborhoods in which it operates. Tommy is an active member of his community, serving as Business Liaison and then President of the Second Ward Super Neighborhood Council Board (#63). A student of systems thinking, Tommy understands that you can't solve a problem by creating another one and finds in agriculture a unique way to expand his edges and those of his community. As a native Houstonian, Tommy feels strongly about farming in his hometown, bringing attention to the need and value of agriculture and focusing on how we can creatively address health issues throughout our city.



Daniel Garcia-Prats, Founder & Director of Operations of Small Places, LLC (Consultant)

Daniel Garcia-Prats is a social-entrepreneur and engineer with a B.S. and M.S. in Mechanical Engineering from Santa Clara University with experience as a manufacturing engineer with a medical device startup in Silicon Valley and locally in the oil and gas industry. In 2014, he joined his brothers Tommy and Mark in founding Small Places, LLC and launching Finca Tres Robles, their 1.25-acre working farm. Producing over 20,000 pounds of produce each year, this unique agricultural space provides healthy foods, classes, field trips, job training, and a green gathering space to improve health outcomes in the surrounding neighborhoods. Utilizing his experience with Six Sigma and Lean methodologies, Daniel has focused on establishing the operational and organizational infrastructure to create a replicable and scalable model for community focused urban agriculture that can impact communities across Houston. He has become an active social entrepreneur in the Houston startup scene and believes that businesses providing social good should be the expectation, not the exception.



APPENDIX

Citations

1. Douglas, Erin. "Cancer Cluster Identified in Neighborhood near Union Pacific Rail Yard's Contamination." *HoustonChronicle.com*, Houston Chronicle, 6 Dec. 2019, www.houstonchronicle.com/business/article/Cancer-cluster-identified-in-Houston-neighborhood-14885972.php.
2. "Trinity / Houston Gardens." *datahouston.org*, Rice University Kinder Institute HCDC Dashboard, 2018, <https://www.datahouston.org/neighborhood/K047.html>
3. "Kashmere Gardens." *datahouston.org*, Rice University Kinder Institute HCDC Dashboard, 2018, <https://www.datahouston.org/neighborhood/K004.html>
4. Rogers, Susan. "Kashmere Gardens and Trinity | Houston Gardens: Briefing Book." University of Houston Community Design Resource Center (CDRC), 2018, https://issuu.com/skrogers/docs/ccdi5-kashmeretrinity_briefing_book
5. "Kashmere Stage Band." *thundersoulmovie.com*, Snoot Entertainment, 2010, <https://thundersoulmovie.com/kashmere>
6. "Thunder Soul (2010): Storyline" *imdb.com*, IMDb, 23 Sept. 2011, <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1611180/>.
7. "Health Equity." World Health Organization, World Health Organization, 5 Oct. 2017, https://www.who.int/topics/health_equity/en/
8. "Harris County BUILD Health Partnership Case Study: Restructuring the local food system to make it healthy, sustainable, and community-supported." The BUILD Health Challenge, 2018, <https://buildhealthchallenge.app.box.com/s/9phjuji1qgwq2sgwp53eqv7j6j6jt71d>

Additional Resources

- "Healthy Living Matters: Connecting Policy to the Future"
Harris County Public Health & Environmental Services
- "The BUILD Health Challenge: Case Study"
Harris County BUILD Health Partnership
- "Community Food Assessment Toolkit"
U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Economic Research Service
- "Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food"
U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)
- "The Economics of Local Food Systems: A Toolkit to Guide Community Discussions, Assessments, and Choices"
U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)
- "The Power of Produce: Healthy Food Incentives Empower Families, Support Farmers and Lift Up Communities"
Center for Healthy Food Access at The Food Trust
- "Vacant Lots to Vibrant Plots: A Review of the Benefits and Limitations of Urban Agriculture"
Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future



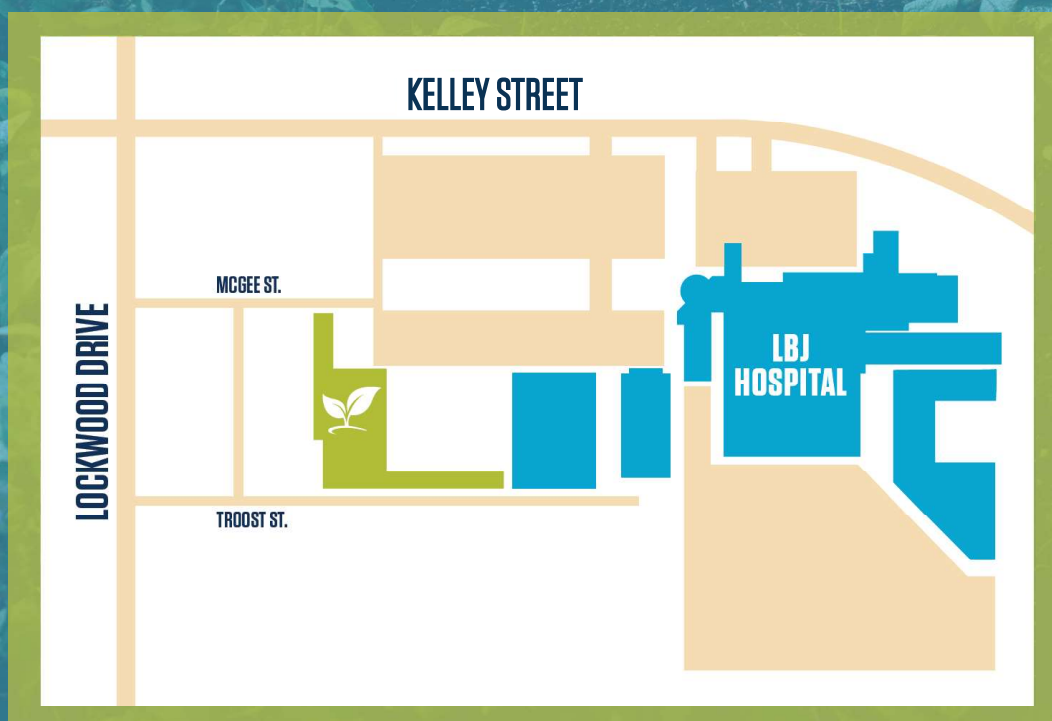
Help keep our farm growing.

Join us on the farm.

You or your organization can volunteer to foster and support the farm. We plant and cultivate all year long.

Make a donation.

Your gifts can help sustain our farm for years to come.



To learn more about the Health Hub at LBJ Hospital,
email LBJfarm@harrishealth.org

HARRISHEALTH SYSTEM