

SUN VALLEY KITCHEN + COMMUNITY CENTER

# IMPACT REPORT 2023 REPORT





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**VIVA! Streets**  
LIVEABLE  
COMMUNITIES  
FOR ALL  
CITY OF CHICAGO  
DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING  
AND DEVELOPMENT

**YOUR FRIENDLY NEIGHBORHOOD BIKE RIDES**  
THE BIKE WEDNESDAYS  
WEDNESDAY, 7:00 AM - 8:00 AM  
BICYCLE TOURS  
WEDNESDAY, 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM  
BICYCLE TOURS  
WEDNESDAY, 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM  
BICYCLE TOURS

**SAFE PLACE**

**Food Pantry**  
COMMUNITY  
COUNCIL OF CHICAGO  
1000 N. LAUREL ST.  
CHICAGO, IL 60642  
MONDAY - FRIDAY  
10:00 AM - 2:00 PM  
SATURDAY  
10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

**PIZZA NIGHT**  
COMMUNITY  
COUNCIL OF CHICAGO  
1000 N. LAUREL ST.  
CHICAGO, IL 60642  
WEDNESDAY, 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM  
THURSDAY, 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM  
FRIDAY, 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM

**OPEN**

# LETTER FROM OUR FOUNDER



**GLENN  
HARPER**

Founder

Founded in 2014, Sun Valley Kitchen + Community Center has made a significant impact in Sun Valley!

Take a moment to see what we've accomplished since the beginning.



Dear Sun Valley Community + Supporters,

As I look back on our time together, one of the most rewarding aspects has been witnessing the resilience and unity within our neighborhood. Despite numerous challenges, we have created a community worth celebrating. In 2023, we navigated obstacles and achieved significant successes.

I invite you to explore the highlights and growth at Sun Valley Kitchen + Community Center, and join us as we celebrate the milestones that made this year an unforgettable chapter in our shared story.

With heartfelt gratitude,

**790K**

lbs of food distributed

**6K**

participants engaged

**88K**

meals served





Sun Valley Harvest Festival  
© Hillary Thomas Photography 2023

# ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

## VISION

Sun Valley Kitchen + Community Center (SVK+CC) is a community hub centered around food, where people of all backgrounds and incomes thrive, connect, and support each other. SVK+CC provides a consistent presence and continuity to a changing Sun Valley community.

## MISSION

We strive every day to serve children and families with food and love. We work tirelessly to provide support and care for our community.

## WHAT WE DO

SVK+CC provides stability to youth, individuals, and families, and the overall community, by being a consistent presence, building individual relationships, and adapting to the changing context of the neighborhood. SVK+CC meets people where they are and treats everyone with respect and dignity. Food serves as a catalyst and conduit for community building in all of SVK+CC's programs. SVK+CC offers programming for youth, individuals and families, and the community.

We infuse all programming with five core values: **Nourish, Enrich, Educate, Unite, and Employ**. These values guide our support for the community, aiming to achieve positive outcomes for youth, individuals, families, and the community as a whole, in line with SVK+CC's vision. Additionally, SVK+CC operates a restaurant, The Sun Valley Kitchen, which serves as the social enterprise arm of our operations. This enterprise generates funds for the organization while offering employment, workforce development, and mentorship opportunities for adults and youth.





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# SUN VALLEY NEIGHBORHOOD

## OVERVIEW

Located just south of Mile High Stadium, Sun Valley is one of the lowest-income neighborhoods in Denver. It is bordered by Colfax Avenue and the Broncos Stadium to the north, Federal Boulevard to the west, 6th Avenue and a light industrial district to the south, and the South Platte River to the east. The neighborhood's fragmented street grid and concentrated poverty create a sense of isolation from economic opportunities and local amenities. As a result, Sun Valley has become one of Denver's poorest areas, with 80% of its residents living in poverty.



## SUN VALLEY REDEVELOPMENT

In 2016, the Denver Housing Authority (DHA) was awarded a \$30 million Choice Neighborhood Initiative (CNI) Implementation Grant from HUD. This grant supports DHA in implementing the Sun Valley Neighborhood Transformation Plan. The plan involves replacing 333 public housing units with over 960 mixed-income housing units across four phases. Initially, this led to the removal of DHA townhomes and the displacement of families. However, as of 2023, many familiar faces have returned to the neighborhood, moving into new DHA housing developments like Greenhaus, Gateway, and Thrive. Over the next five years, construction will continue in the neighborhood as the redevelopment process advances through its phases.



Before DHA Redevelopment (2016)



During DHA Redevelopment (2023)





Sun Valley Neighborhood  
© Hillary Thomas Photography 2023

# THEORY OF CHANGE

## COMMUNITY CONTEXT

The Sun Valley neighborhood is at an inflection point due to redevelopment. Over the past five years, the area has experienced destabilization, resulting in the displacement of residents throughout Denver. Residents are increasingly concerned that their needs and wellbeing will not be prioritized in the redevelopment process.

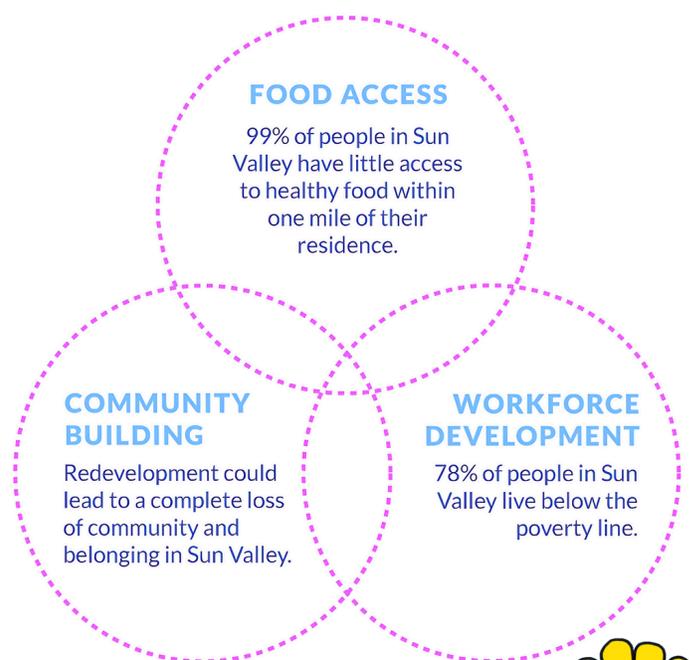
## WHO WE WORK WITH

SVK+CC serves community members in West Denver, including youth, individuals, and families. Our programming is specifically designed to support historically underserved communities, actively engaging individuals from all demographics in our efforts. We are particularly focused on building social cohesion among the residents of the rapidly-changing Sun Valley neighborhood. We believe that tailoring programs to the needs of our residents and ensuring widespread access will support Sun Valley's youth and residents, a community that has historically been underserved.

## AREAS OF IMPACT

Sun Valley community members and individuals from surrounding neighborhoods, including youth individuals, and families, have limited access to fresh food in their neighborhood and few employment opportunities. The redevelopment has the potential to unite or create divisions among a previously insulated and tight-knit community.

To achieve this goal, we have identified three key investment areas: **Food Access, Community Building, and Workforce Development.**



1260

SUN VALLEY  
KITCHEN



No-Cost Grocery Program  
Photo courtesy of Denverite

# 2023 IMPACT

**2,081**

individuals served through our No-Cost Grocery Program

**536**

youth served by our programming

**144,753**

pounds of food distributed to Sun Valley residents

**121**

first-time No-Cost Grocery Program participants

**\$554,610**

in funds awarded through grants and foundations

**32,284**

meals served to Sun Valley residents

**\$54,649**

in funds donated by individual contributors

**520**

volunteer hours contributed

**\$28,369**

wages allocated to youth employees







## TACKLING FOOD INSECURITY THROUGH THE NO-COST GROCERY PROGRAM.

At SVK+CC, we believe that access to fresh, nutritious food is a right, not a privilege. Our grocery program offers participants the opportunity to attend twice a week, alongside their neighbors, in a judgment-free space. Children and adults receive prepared hot meals to-go, along with fresh and healthy food options.

Through our partnership with Denver Food Rescue, we provide fresh produce, bread, dairy, and other items donated by local grocery stores. In 2023, we welcomed 121 new participants to our program, distributing over 144,000 pounds of produce and over 14,000 meals to Sun Valley residents.





Youth Employee at No-Cost Grocery Program

© Hillary Thomas Photography 2023

# EQUIPING YOUTH WITH ESSENTIAL LIFE SKILLS.

In 2023, SVK+CC's Youth Employment & Professional Development Program employed 10 youth from Sun Valley. Through this program, SVK+CC equips our youth employees with life skills, professional development training, and vital health resources. This program focuses on workforce development, training, mentorship, food safety training, time management, goal setting, and other personal and professional development activities.

In 2023, our largest initiative, the No Cost-Grocery Program (NCGP), was primarily led by youth employees, serving over 280 meals weekly to over 60 households. In addition to the NCGP, our youth employees also prepare 300 meals weekly for our community partner, the Sun Valley Youth Center.



**“Many families can’t afford food. Some people require multiple bags for a week. They really do need the help. There are people who are homeless who have no access to anything and I feel we really help them.”**

**- SAM, YOUTH EMPLOYEE**





# EMPOWERING KIDS IN THE KITCHEN.

In 2023, we revitalized our Kids Cooking Class as part of our Youth Enrichment Program, designed to introduce third through fifth-grade children to new environments, cultures, and activities. These weekly classes, led by an instructor and supported by volunteers, emphasize the preparation of healthy and nutritious meals in a safe and supportive setting.

Our goal is to equip children with the skills and knowledge to confidently prepare their own healthy meals. In 2023, we taught 12 youth in our kitchen.

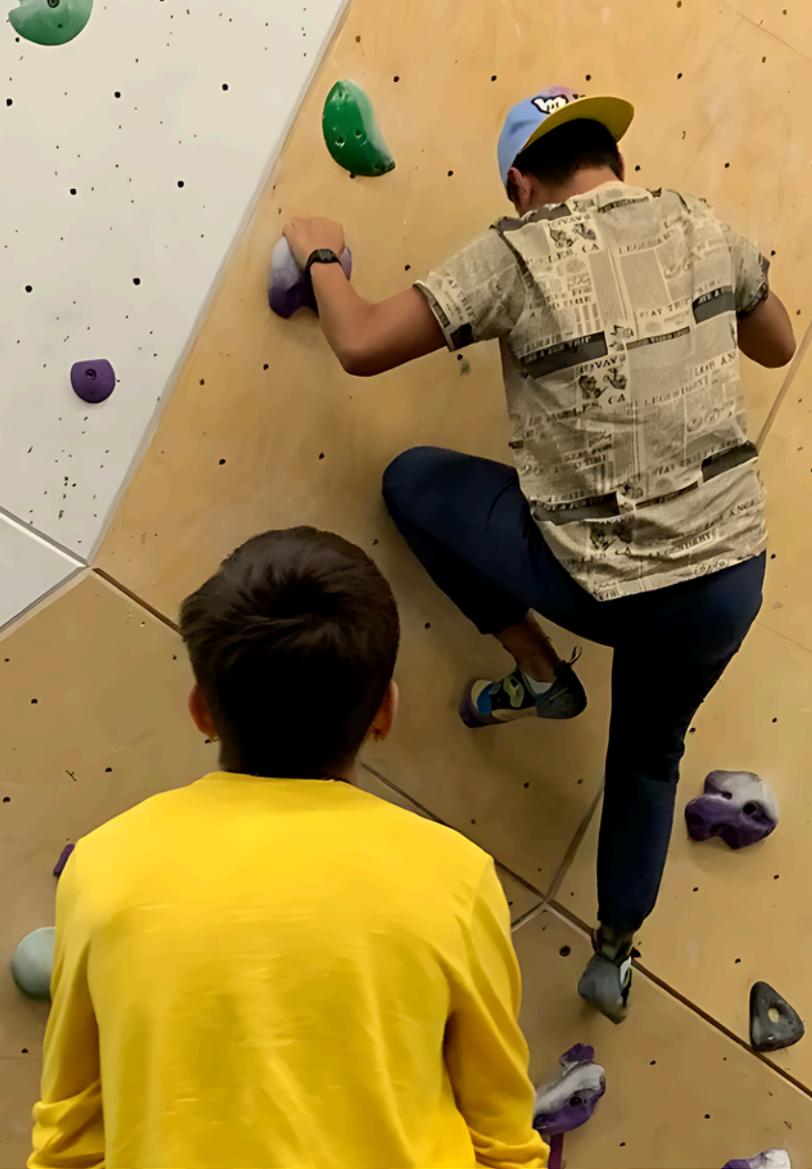


“ [My sons] are learning about timing, attention, care, and understanding ingredients. These small details undoubtedly help to enhance their creativity. They feel more confident using kitchen tools, and they love tasting foods from different cultures.”

– ANA, PARENT







## BUILDING STRONG ATHLETES THROUGH WESTSIDE ATHLETICS.

Our Youth Athletics program provides weekly sports performance training sessions followed by a meal. These sessions offer youth the chance to develop essential skills such as agility, speed, and strength, which are applicable and crucial across all sports. Beyond the field, we nurture the holistic development of athletes by offering life skills coaching, promoting mental performance awareness, facilitating mentorship opportunities, providing educational support, and more.

In 2023, we introduced new programming, including running training, and immersive field trips, allowing youth to experience other sports such as rock climbing.





# EXPANDING HEALTH RESOURCES TO SUN VALLEY RESIDENTS.

In 2023, SVK+CC opened the Health & Wellness Center under Dr. Sofia Chavez's leadership, offering free health services to Sun Valley residents. The center provides diverse modalities, including auricular acupuncture, chair yoga, aromatherapy, herbal remedies, meditation, and a monthly herbal wellness workshop to enhance overall well-being.

Dr. Sofia Chavez also supports the community by connecting individuals with various health and wellness resources and providing health referrals.



**“Every time I come and I'm stressed, I relax for a while during the therapy, and I leave in a better mood. Every time I leave, I have better energy.”**

**– HEALTH + WELLNESS PARTICIPANT**







## REOPENING THE KITCHEN TO SERVE THE COMMUNITY.

Sun Valley Kitchen, a social enterprise restaurant by SVK+CC, offers employment opportunities to residents and youth in Sun Valley, showcasing local chefs from the Chef Entrepreneurship Program. Initially opened in October 2018, Sun Valley Kitchen temporarily closed during the COVID-19 pandemic and joyfully reopened in 2023.

Sun Valley Kitchen's menu is a testament to the community we serve, a fusion of diverse culinary traditions harmoniously combined to create a wonderful array of fresh and delicious dishes.



**VIEW OUR MENU:**





Local Chef at the Sun Valley Viaduct Night Market

© Hillary Thomas Photography 2023

# SHOWCASING SUN VALLEY AT THE VIADUCT NIGHT MARKET.

The Viaduct Night Market emerged as a community concept for an international market destination under the West Colfax viaduct. Local chefs from our Chef Entrepreneurship program sell their cuisine alongside artists, merchants, and food businesses from Denver's westside. The market celebrates diverse cultures, activates underutilized public spaces, and creates opportunities for local businesses and entrepreneurs, leading to a more resilient and thriving community.

In 2023, SVK+CC hosted the 3rd annual Sun Valley Viaduct Night Market, welcoming over 2,000 attendees and featuring local Sun Valley chefs.

**EXPERIENCE THE EVENT HERE:**



**“What is usually a deserted space underneath a viaduct surrounded by passing traffic and an empty Empower Field, turned into a colorful, vibrant and illuminated court with vendors, music, food and people.”**

**—DESIREE MATHURIN, DENVERITE**







## BUILDING COMMUNITY THROUGH FOOD.

Through the Sun Valley Food Access Collaborative, a coalition of organizations founded by SVK+CC, and dedicated to improving food access and equity in Denver's Sun Valley neighborhood, we launched the annual Sun Valley Harvest Festival.

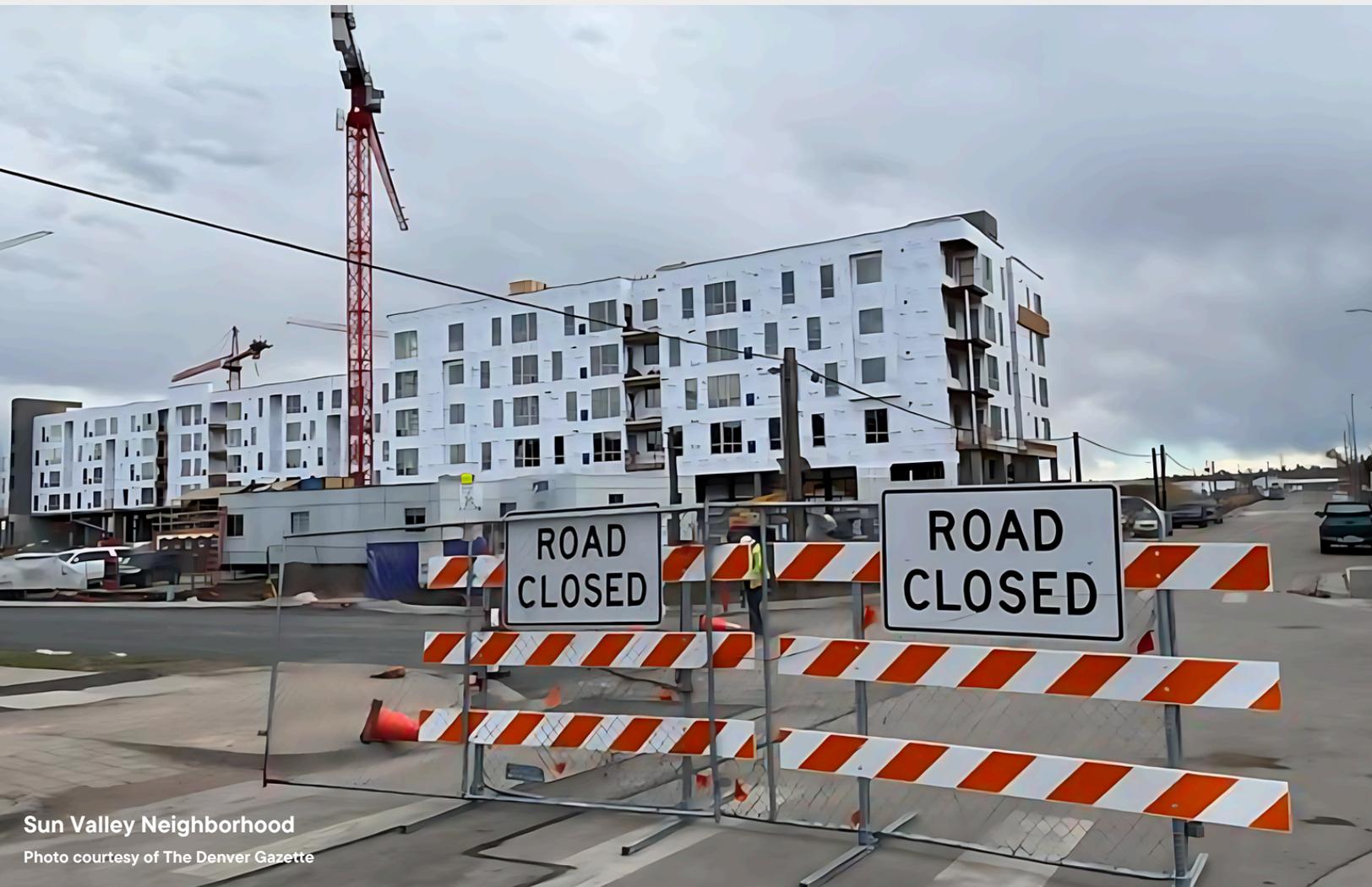
This event focuses on sharing food resources and enhancing community access. Highlights include resident-led cultural culinary experiences, free food distributions, and family-friendly activities. The Sun Valley Kitchen + Community Center provided over 200 free meals to attendees.

.Additionally, we foster community connections through our Community Pizza Nights, a weekly event serving Sun Valley residents and homeless individuals with pizza, salad, and juice. Pizza Night began as a way to connect with our community during COVID, and it has been an overwhelming success. In 2023, SVKCC's Community Pizza Nights served 3,914 individuals.





Sun Valley Neighborhood  
Photo courtesy of Collective Colorado



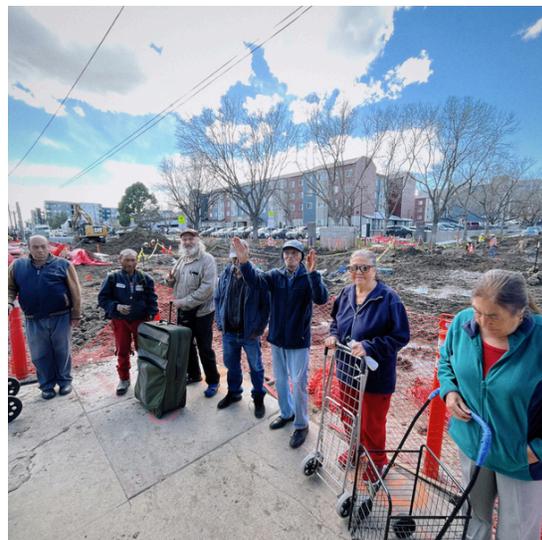
Sun Valley Neighborhood  
Photo courtesy of The Denver Gazette

# CHALLENGES + GROWTH

## THE COMMUNITY IMPACT OF THE REDEVELOPMENT

The ongoing redevelopment in Sun Valley created significant challenges for our participants and residents over the years. Relocated bus stops, disrupted water services, obstructed access due to detours, and torn-up sidewalks have forced residents to navigate difficult pathways through the neighborhood. This disruption has made daily life more challenging, impacting access to essential services, food, safety, and mental well-being.

Despite these obstacles, our outreach has expanded, attracting new neighbors who have learned about our services. In 2023, we celebrated the strength, unity, and resilience of our community as we faced these challenges together.



Participants of the NCGP navigating the line amidst ongoing construction on Decatur street.





Sun Valley Neighborhood  
© Hillary Thomas Photography 2023

# FUTURE OUTLOOK

## EXPANDING SERVICES FOR NEW HOUSING RESIDENTS

As Sun Valley welcomes new mixed-income housing, Sun Valley Kitchen + Community Center will expand its services to support all residents. We will enhance outreach programs, offer additional workshops, and facilitate social events to foster a supportive and inclusive community.

## NAVIGATING MIXED-INCOME COMMUNITY DYNAMICS

The transition to a mixed-income community brings both opportunities and challenges. Sun Valley Kitchen + Community Center is dedicated to proactively addressing the dynamics that come with this change. Through regular community dialogues, conflict resolution services, and educational opportunities, we aim to promote understanding and cooperation among residents to build a harmonious and inclusive neighborhood.

## EXPANDING MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS SERVICES

We plan to significantly expand our mental health and wellness services by offering more counseling, support groups, fitness opportunities, and wellness workshops. These enhancements will ensure residents have the resources needed to lead healthy lives.

## REVITALIZING THE SUN VALLEY FOOD ACCESS COLLABORATIVE

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the Sun Valley Food Access Collaborative was essential in ensuring food security and fostering community engagement. We are committed to revitalizing this initiative to meet our community's current needs by re-establishing food distribution networks, expanding community garden projects, and launching new food education programs.



Whatever you can do, or  
dream you can, begin it.  
Boldness has genius, power  
and magic in it.

*JOHANN WOLFGANG VON GOETHE*

Anything you vividly  
imagine, ardently desire  
sincerely believe in and  
enthusiastically act upon  
must inevitably come to  
pass.

*PAUL J MEYER*

The more you dream the  
more you can do.

*GLENN HARPER*

# OUR FINANCIAL PARTNERS

*PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS IS A NOT AN EXHAUSTIVE LIST*

## TOP CONTRIBUTORS (OVER \$1,000)

- Aaron Martinez
- Andrea Wight
- Annelise McAuliffe Soares
- Benjamin Garnett
- Chris Manning
- Cisco
- Community First Foundation
- Courtney and Kaleb Meihls
- Dan Metzger
- Dietvorst Family Charitable Fund
- Grace Lopez Ramirez
- Lisa Schomp
- Megan Lloyd
- Melissa Washeck
- Network for Good
- Perkins + Will
- Peter + Carly Newlin
- Schomp Honda
- Sebastian Rossi
- Sue Powers
- Tamara McMahon
- Theresa Simcic
- Turner Construction

## NIGHT MARKET SPONSORSHIPS

- Xcel Energy
- Denver Arts and Venues Music Advancement Fund
- Denver Streets Partnership
- Urban Ventures/STEAM on the Platte
- Heidi Newhart
- Councilwoman Jamie Torres
- Meow Wolf
- Mile High Connects
- Denver Human Services (DHS)
- Councilwoman Debbie Ortega
- Colorado Access
- Mortenson Construction
- City of Denver Office of Economic Development

## GRANTS

- Anschutz Foundation
- CDC COVID-19 Health Disparities Grant
- CDPHE Monkeypox Grant
- Centura Health Equity + Advancement Fund
- City and County of Denver Human Together Community Grant
- City and County of Denver Non-Profit Recovery Grant
- Community Services Block Grant (CSBG)
- Colorado Access
- Denver Botanic Gardens Grant for Growing and Cooking
- Denver Health Mpox Grant
- DDPHE Food in Communities Grant
- Food Pantry Assistance Grant (FPAG)
- Healthy Food for Denver's Kids (HFDK)
- Meow Wolf Foundation Community Grant
- NEWSED Neighborhood Activation Program Grant (ARPA)
- Osprey Tree Foundation
- Quick Foundation
- Schlessman Family Foundation
- The Denver Foundation
- The Marcus Foundation
- The White Foundation
- Theda + Tamblin Clark Smith Family Foundation

**“Access to food and nutritional support is crucial for unhoused individuals and programs like Sun Valley Kitchen should continue to be funded.”**

**- DENVER COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT, AUGUST 2023**





Youth Employees at the Sun Valley Viaduct Night Market

© Hillary Thomas Photography 2023

# OUR TEAM



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Aaron Martinez  
Vice Chair

Collin Edwards  
Member at Large

Marie Benedix  
Member at Large

Ashton Cortright  
Treasurer

Courtney Meihls  
Member at Large

Nicole Munoz  
Member at Large

Dan Metzger  
Chair

Daisy Wiberg  
Member at Large

Pax Moultrie  
Member at Large

Carlos Maestas  
Member at Large

Jeanette Le  
Member at Large

Samantha Chiarelli  
Member at Large

Bery Belitra  
Youth Representative

## SVK+CC STAFF

Glenn Harper  
Founder

Nick Talarico  
Director of Operations

Emma Welty  
Program + Operations Manager

Sofia Chavez  
Health + Wellness Coordinator

Evan Carroll  
Kitchen Manager

## YOUTH EMPLOYEES

Abdul A.      Hussein H.

Abdul H.      Jorge M.

Antoine G.      Odie T.

Berry N.      Oscar A.

Christain I.      Samuel G.



## CONTACT US

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*We are a 501(c)(3) organization.*