

SUN VALLEY KITCHEN + COMMUNITY CENTER

# COMMUNITY IMPACT REPORT

2024



DEAR SUPPORTERS & SUN VALLEY COMMUNITY MEMBERS,

Annual reports give us a chance to pause and reflect—on the work we’ve done, the challenges we’ve faced, and the community that continues to carry us forward. This past year has been one of both deep transition and powerful momentum for Sun Valley Kitchen + Community Center, and we’re proud to share how we’ve responded, adapted, and grown.

Even in the midst of shifting resources and citywide redevelopment, our team remained grounded in care and community. Some of the most meaningful highlights from this year include:

- Expanding our Health & Wellness offerings to include mental health support for youth and families
- Becoming a site leader for the Sun Valley Mobile Food Pantry, serving up to 120 households monthly
- Growing our youth employment program with new professional development workshops
- Hosting our biggest Night Market yet—bringing 3,000+ people together for food, art, and community celebration beneath the Colfax viaduct
- Partnering with History Colorado to preserve and uplift Sun Valley’s stories, past and present

None of this would be possible without your support. Thank you for believing in this work and for standing with us in building a stronger, more resilient Sun Valley.

 Glenn Harper  
Founder

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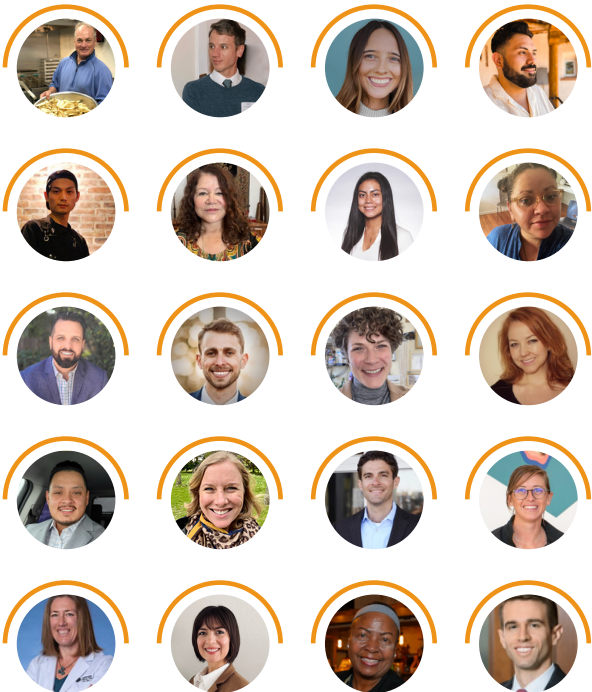
**Oracio Guardado** Program Manager

**Josh Kim** Kitchen Manager

**Dr. Sofia Chavez** Health + Wellness Coordinator

**Amabel Barnabe** Youth Program Coordinator

**Soleil Jacquez** Health + Wellness Assistant



## GROWING COMMUNITY TOGETHER

# WHERE FOOD, LOVE, AND CONNECTION TAKE ROOT

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We're committed to building a stronger, more connected Sun Valley—one meal, one moment, and one neighbor at a time.

While the neighborhood transforms around us, our purpose remains steady: to nourish, empower, and uplift the people who call Sun Valley home.

From youth leading grocery programs to families finding healing through culturally rooted care, everything we do centers around dignity, access, and belonging.

Because when we grow together, the whole community thrives.



BY THE NUMBERS

## OUR 2024 IMPACT

**1,498**

individuals served  
through our No-  
Cost Grocery  
Program

**390**

youth served  
by our  
programming

**130,485**

pounds of  
food  
distributed  
to Sun  
Valley  
residents

**62**

new neighbors  
joined us through  
their first visit to the  
No-Cost Grocery  
Program

**\$862,114**

grant funds  
awarded

**30,046**

meals served to Sun  
Valley residents

**\$85,194**

in donations  
by individual  
contributors

**600**

volunteer  
hours  
contributed

**\$55,915**

in wages to  
youth  
employees



## WE BUILD COMMUNITY NOT JUST PROGRAMS

Sun Valley Kitchen + Community Center (SVK+CC) is a vibrant community hub in Denver's Sun Valley neighborhood, dedicated to fostering well-being and unity through food-centered initiatives. In 2024, SVK+CC expanded its impact by:

- **Providing Nutritious Meals:** Offering affordable, fresh meals through our social enterprise restaurant, supporting both community health and local employment.
- **Empowering Youth:** Delivering cooking classes, professional development, and employment opportunities to nurture the next generation.
- **Enhancing Wellness:** Our Health & Wellness Center offers services like acupuncture, yoga, and herbal remedies to promote holistic, culturally-rooted care.
- **Celebrating Culture:** Hosting the fourth annual Viaduct Night Market, a space where local chefs and artists showcase their talents, fostering community pride and economic growth.
- **Supporting Families:** Operating a no-cost grocery program, ensuring families have access to essential food and personal care items.

Through these initiatives, SVK+CC continues to be a cornerstone for connection, nourishment, and empowerment in Sun Valley.

THROUGH EVERY CHANGE,  
WE REMAIN A CONSTANT

### Our Mission

TO SUPPORT,  
CONNECT, AND  
EMPOWER THE SUN  
VALLEY  
COMMUNITY

### Our Vision

A THRIVING,  
CONNECTED SUN  
VALLEY WHERE  
EVERYONE HAS THE  
SUPPORT AND  
OPPORTUNITIES TO  
LIVE HEALTHY,  
EMPOWERED LIVES

### Our Values

NOURISH  
EMPLOY  
ENRICH  
EDUCATE  
UNITE



## NOURISHING THROUGH FOOD ACCESS

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At Sun Valley Kitchen + Community Center, we know food is more than a basic need—it's a powerful tool for connection, care, and opportunity.

## FOOD ACCESS

# NOURISHING OUR NEIGHBORS

At Sun Valley Kitchen + Community Center, we know food is more than a basic need—it's a powerful tool for connection, care, and opportunity.

Twice a week, we serve families through our No-Cost Grocery Program, offering fresh produce, pantry staples, household essentials, and a free, nourishing meal—all in a welcoming, dignified space. And in 2024, we began to serve as the site lead for the **Sun Valley Mobile Food Pantry** in partnership with Food Bank of the Rockies, expanding our reach to support families across West Denver.

In addition, our kitchen team prepares healthy, home-cooked meals for youth attending programming at the **Sun Valley Youth Center**, ensuring kids have the nourishment they need to grow, learn, and thrive.

And through our Sun Valley Kitchen **social enterprise restaurant**, we offer affordable, nutritious meals to the public while creating employment opportunities and culinary training for youth and community members.





## FOOD ACCESS

# WORKING FOR OUR COMMUNITY

Our food access work is rooted in partnership—both with our neighbors and with organizations that share our commitment to equity, dignity, and community-driven care.

As the lead agency of the **Sun Valley Food Access Collaborative**, we coordinate with groups like Denver Food Rescue, UpRoot Colorado, Fresh Food Connect, Denver Urban Gardens, Denver Botanic Gardens, EarthLinks, and Food Bank of the Rockies to align efforts and expand impact. Together, we work to ensure that food access and education in Sun Valley is consistent, community-centered, and culturally responsive.

**Youth employees are at the heart of this work.** Many are from the neighborhood and take on meaningful roles in grocery distribution, kitchen prep, meal service, and engaging directly with families.

They help run our food programs with care—greeting neighbors, managing logistics, and building lasting relationships. It's more than job training—it's leadership in action, and a reflection of our mission to build systems of care led by and for the community.

**WHEN YOUNG PEOPLE LEAD AND THE COMMUNITY IS  
CENTERED, FOOD ACCESS BECOMES SOMETHING DEEPER—  
IT BECOMES BELONGING.**



Food access partners from Denver Food Rescue



Youth employees at the Sun Valley Mobile Food Pantry in partnership with Food Bank of the Rockies



Kids' gardening workshop with UpRoot Colorado and Fresh Food Connect



## PROJECT HIGHLIGHT

# SUN VALLEY URBAN FARM

In 2024, Sun Valley Kitchen + Community Center was selected by Denver Parks and Recreation as one of the inaugural awardees of the **Community Agriculture and Healthy Food Access Partnerships and Services** contract to build an Urban Farm, and expand our work in building community-led food systems in Sun Valley.

Born from community vision and sustained through partnership, the Sun Valley Urban Farm is transforming an underused lot into a vibrant space for connection, learning, and nourishment. Led by SVK+CC in collaboration with the **Sun Valley Food Access Collaborative** and Rude Recreation Center, the farm will offer educational programming, volunteer opportunities, and fresh, locally gleaned produce for neighbors. We're envisioning a rotating series of workshops that brings in diverse voices and perspectives rooted in food justice, environmental sustainability, community wellness, and more, ensuring the farm becomes not just a source of food, but a hub for dialogue, education, and empowerment.



**SUN VALLEY**  
FOOD ACCESS  
COLLABORATIVE





# EMPLOYING AND EDUCATING THROUGH YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

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We believe youth are not just the future—they're the leaders of today. Our programs create opportunities for young people to grow, lead, and build skills that last a lifetime.

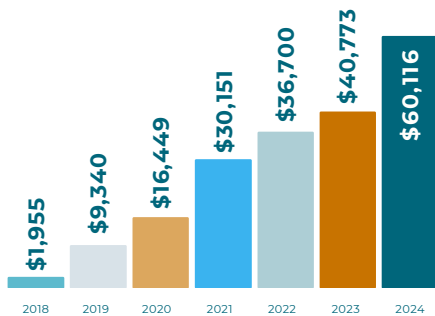


## YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

# RISING LEADERS OF SUN VALLEY

## YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

This year, we employed 10 youth from the Sun Valley community, who supported core programs like food access, kitchen operations, and community outreach. They gained hands-on experience in meal prep, customer service, and teamwork, all while building strong relationships with the community they serve. Youth also had the opportunity to grow their skills through partnerships with outside organizations like History Colorado, expanding their leadership beyond the Kitchen.



## YOUTH EMPLOYEE WAGES

YOUTH EMPLOYEE WAGES HAVE BEEN SUPPORTED OVER THE YEARS THROUGH FUNDING FROM HEALTHY FOOD FOR DENVER'S KIDS.

## YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

We hosted monthly Youth Professional Development Dinners, bringing in guest speakers to cover topics like resume building, financial literacy through programs like Mini Money, and more. Youth also get to explore exciting opportunities—like going behind the scenes at 9News Denver or recording a podcast with Lake Night Radio. And in 2024, we expanded our support by launching monthly mental health sessions for youth employees, providing space for reflection, healing, and wellness.



Youth development participants behind the scenes at 9News Denver



Youth interview with Lake Night Radio

# YOUTH EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHTS

## ODIE AND SAM

This summer, youth employees Odie and Sam each completed 100 hours of hands-on work at Sun Valley Kitchen + Community Center, earning \$1,000 through **Mayor Mike Johnston's YouthWorks Initiative**.

Whether helping with Kids Cooking Class, assisting neighbors through the No-Cost Grocery Program, or supporting the Sun Valley Mobile Food Distribution, they showed up with heart, consistency, and leadership. Their dedication made a meaningful impact across our programs and reflected the power of youth-driven service in Sun Valley.



## JORGE

This year, Jorge helped bring neighborhood history to life through his work with **History Colorado's Westside Memory Project**. Focused on stories from The Bottoms and Sun Valley, he collaborated with project staff to design visuals that accompany oral histories and personal narratives shared by community members.

His creative contributions helped preserve these memories in ways that speak to younger generations, using art to connect past and present while deepening his ties to the neighborhood.

◀ [Learn more about the Westside Memory Project: The Bottoms & Sun Valley Neighborhood](#)





## YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

## LEARNING THROUGH EXPERIENCE

Our youth enrichment programs are designed to introduce kids to new skills, build confidence, and create space for joy, creativity, and movement.

In our weekly **Kids Cooking Class**, children in grades 3–5 learn how to prepare healthy, delicious meals from scratch. Guided by an instructor and supported by volunteers, kids gain hands-on kitchen experience while learning about nutrition, food safety, and teamwork. Each class ends with a shared meal, and the pride that comes from creating something of their own. This year, we also initiated a **Kids Gardening Workshop** in partnership with UpRoot Colorado and Fresh Food Connect from spring to fall.

**Westside Athletics** keeps kids moving with weekly programming focused on wellness and team spirit. Our Running Club, in partnership with Golden Mountain Runners, helps youth set and reach goals together, culminating in 5K races and group runs. Through our soccer program with Volo, kids developed coordination, confidence, and community on and off the field.



Westside Athletics soccer camp with VOLO Kids Denver



Kids' Cooking Class



Kids' Gardening Workshop

41

participants returned for more  
than one Kids' Cooking Class  
session

15

Westside  
Athletics participants

44

Garden Workshop  
participants



## YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

# GOLDEN MOUNTAIN RUNNERS



In 2024, our partnership with **Golden Mountain Runners** became a cornerstone of youth empowerment at Sun Valley Kitchen + Community Center. Together, we offered weekly training that promotes physical health, mental resilience, and personal growth.

With support from dedicated volunteer coaches, youth participants set and achieve meaningful fitness goals—many completing their first-ever 5K race. For many, the experience is transformational, showing them what's possible through commitment, teamwork, and support.

Beyond coaching, Golden Mountain Runners has played a key role in our broader impact—fundraising to cover race fees and gear, and connecting us to new community partners who have helped strengthen and grow our youth programming.

This partnership exemplifies what's possible when people invest in their community with consistency and care. Thanks to Golden Mountain Runners, our youth are not only building endurance—they're building confidence, pride, and connection with every stride.



Monster Dash 5K with Golden Mountain Runners

## ENRICHING THROUGH HOLISTIC HEALTH

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We believe that health is more than physical well-being—it includes mental, emotional, and cultural healing, too. Our holistic health programming is designed to meet people where they are, offering care that is accessible, culturally responsive, and rooted in trust.

## HOLISTIC HEALTH

# HEALING TOGETHER

The Sun Valley **Health & Wellness Center** is a weekly hub for acupuncture, chair yoga, sound healing, and herbal care. Open to all, this space creates low-barrier access to services that support stress relief, chronic pain management, and overall wellness. We also host monthly herbal wellness workshops, offering hands-on learning rooted in traditional healing practices.

Alongside our monthly mental health sessions for youth employees—which provide a safe space for young people to reflect, process, and care for their well-being—we also launched the **Mental Health for Families initiative**. This program invites caregivers and family members to connect with a mental health professional for free, confidential support.

By centering healing in every form, we're building a healthier, more resilient Sun Valley—one breath, one conversation, and one community gathering at a time.

# 497

acupuncture sessions  
provided

# 38

participants  
returned for  
more than one  
chair yoga  
session

# 160

repeat  
participants  
joined us for our  
Herbal Wellness  
Workshop





## UNITING THROUGH COMMUNITY BUILDING

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Sun Valley Kitchen + Community Center brings people together through moments that matter—shared meals, neighborhood events, and everyday connections rooted in care. Our community-building efforts are intentional, joyful, and grounded in the belief that relationships drive change.



## COMMUNITY BUILDING

# EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

### FALL HARVEST FESTIVAL

Held each fall, our Harvest Festival brings the community together to celebrate the changing season with food, music, and family-friendly activities. Neighbors enjoy chili cook-offs, face painting, pumpkin decorating, and time spent outdoors before winter settles in. It's a joyful moment to pause, connect, and celebrate abundance in all its forms.

### HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS

Holiday celebrations at Sun Valley Kitchen are cozy, festive gatherings that bring warmth and joy to families during the holiday season. At Halloween, kids dress up, decorate cookies, and trick-or-treat in a safe, welcoming environment. In December, our Winter Holiday Open House offers a home-cooked meal, crafts, and cookie decorating activities for kids—bringing light and connection to the darker days of winter.

### EARTH DAY

Our Earth Day celebration brought together neighbors, partners, and environmental advocates for a day of hands-on action and learning. Activities included community clean-ups and interactive stations focused on sustainability. This event is a reflection of our belief that caring for each other includes caring for the land we share.

### SUN VALLEY VIADUCT NIGHT MARKET

The Viaduct Night Market is our biggest annual celebration—drawing over 3,000 neighbors and visitors for a one-of-a-kind evening beneath the Colfax viaduct. The event features local food trucks, artisan vendors, live music, cultural performances, a beer garden, and interactive experiences for all ages.



## THE MILESTONES BEHIND US

# CELEBRATING 10 YEARS OF IMPACT IN SUN VALLEY

In 2024, we celebrated ten years of showing up for Sun Valley. What began as a neighborhood kitchen has grown into a vibrant hub for food access, youth empowerment, mental health, and community care.

Here's a look at what we've accomplished together:

## Food Access & Community Care

- 949,212 pounds of food distributed through our No-Cost Grocery Program
- 185,728 nourishing meals served, from family dinners to youth programs and community events
- 8,329 unique neighbors supported many returning week after week for care and connection

## Youth Empowerment

- \$195,487 in wages paid to youth employees from Sun Valley
- 7,636 youth employee hours of paid leadership and community service
- 2,534 duplicated cooking class participants gaining skills and confidence
- 354 duplicated Westside Athletics youth, staying active and engaged

## WATCH OUR 10-YEAR ANNIVERSARY VIDEO



From our first shared meals in 2014 to becoming a trusted community anchor in 2024, this video reflects on a decade of growth, healing, and hope through the voices of neighbors, youth, staff, and volunteers who made it all possible.

◀ Watch our 10-Year Anniversary Video:  
[\*Celebrating a Decade of Impact in Sun Valley\*](#)



# WHAT WE'RE BUILDING TOGETHER IN 2025

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As we close out a transformative year at Sun Valley Kitchen + Community Center, we're looking ahead with clarity, momentum, and deep community commitment. In 2025, we'll continue to expand the programs that matter most—ensuring our neighbors have access to healthy food, mental health support, meaningful employment, and spaces to gather, learn, and lead.

Here's what's on the horizon:

- Finalizing plans for the Sun Valley Urban Farm, a community-led project that will bring food justice, education, and healing to the heart of the neighborhood. Planning and design will continue through the end of 2025, with construction and programming set to begin in 2026.
- Developing a kitchen training program through our social enterprise restaurant, creating pathways for youth and adults to gain hands-on culinary experience, job readiness, and career development.
- Expanding opportunities for youth employees to grow as leaders—through paid training, mentorship, and new collaborations with organizations like History Colorado, Lake Night Radio, and 9News Denver.
- Growing our mental health support, with new group sessions, one-on-one counseling, and monthly healing-centered workshops for both youth and families.
- Extending our Health & Wellness Center to five days a week, offering consistent access to acupuncture, herbal care, chair yoga, sound healing, and culturally rooted wellness services.
- Deepening community partnerships to open more doors, create more opportunities, and uplift the talents and dreams of Sun Valley residents.

And through it all, we'll keep doing what we do best—showing up for Sun Valley. Whether it's a warm meal, a trusted relationship, or a new opportunity, we're building something lasting together.

One neighbor, one meal, one moment at a time.

## CONTACT US



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