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| Press Kit |
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# **Backgrounder :**

Get Healthy Dallas (GHD) is a non-profit organization dedicated to addressing the lack of healthy food options, adequate education, and economic development opportunities in South Dallas, a historically low socio-economic neighborhood of Dallas, Texas.

Founded by Stacy Cherones and Robert Foster in 2013, Get Healthy Dallas strives to provide fresh food and educational resources to the South Dallas community via two programs: Ignite Academy and Fish Face Farms.

Ignite Academy is an entrepreneurial culinary arts academy which will provide entrepreneurship, nutrition and agriculture, and culinary arts classes to Lincoln High School students in South Dallas. The academy’s program will include a market garden, demonstration kitchen, and restaurant open to the public.

Fish Face Farms is a subset of Get Healthy Dallas that will provide the farming technique of aquaponics to provide the vegetables and fish that will be used for cooking in Ignite Academy. Aquaponics combines the farming of aquatic organisms with the cultivation of plants in water to create a closed, self-sustaining system of farming fish and vegetables.

Get Healthy Dallas’ mission is to engage and develop the South Dallas community by equipping its high school students to develop future businesses which will provide fresh food options and stimulate local job growth in related industries within the community.

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NON-PROFIT LAUNCHES IN DALLAS TO TACKLE FOOD DESERTS

Non-Profit Get Healthy Dallas combines education and food to solve the issue of food deserts in South Dallas

Get Healthy Dallas is a new non-profit organization planning to launch publically in December 2013. GHD was founded by Stacy Cherones, dean of students at Paul Quinn College, Robert Foster, South Dallas community advocate, and Dr. Owen Lynch, associate professor of communication studies at SMU, as a solution to the food desert problem in South Dallas.

Cherones was advising an SMU ethics design team that conducted a social-scientific study of a South Dallas food desert, an area whose residents have limited access to fresh, healthy food. Cherones and her team partnered with Foster and together they connected with a group of 12 high school students from Lincoln High School known as the Turner Twelve, a South Dallas based student-mentoring program.

The team wanted to find solutions inside the community rather than outside. With that in mind, Dr. Lynch designed a study that would help the community understand the problem and come up with their own ideas of how to fix it.

He asked the high school students, “What is healthy?” To answer the question, students were told to take pictures of what their idea of healthy was in their neighborhood.

“From that we realized for that community healthy was more than just access to food,” said Lynch, “it was knowledge of food, it was ability to cook the food, it was the ability to have a healthy community around the food.”

GHD developed the Entrepreneurial Culinary Arts Program (ECAP) that is debuting at Lincoln High School in South Dallas. Realizing that a food desert is also a lack of community resources and job opportunities is what led the to the conception of ECAP.

“We came up with the idea for the academy within the school because the school is where you have the people in the most need,” said Lynch. “You have the obesity rates in the school and you also have kids dropping out of school without jobs.”

Rather than just teach the students about nutrition, ECAP takes it one step further. Lincoln High school will be home to a new demonstration kitchen, professional kitchen, and student-run restaurant. ECAP will not only teach students about healthy eating but will provide them with hands-on experience in the culinary arts. The restaurant, serving only locally grown food, is not just available to students but the entire community.

If ECAP is successful at Lincoln, GHD hopes this program might serve as a model for food deserts in other cities.

**Fact Sheet:**

* Get Healthy Dallas is a non-profit organization committed to improving community health in urban areas struggling with chronic disinvestment though holistic approaches and research based local engagement.
* Get Healthy Dallas is an umbrella organziation which hosts Fish Face Farms and the Lincoln High ECAP program.
* Our goal along with the active participation of the community is to use their resources and bring long-term change to their surroundings because every community rightfully deserves a healthy environment.
* Lincoln High ECAP project will be used as a basis for a charter school model that is built around the farm-fork theme. Our focus is a nutrition-focused culianry arts academy – including a restaurant open to the public, a televised student cooking show, and a school garden to facilitate authentic change.
* Fish Face Farms will utilize the farming techniques of an aquaponics operation, by renovating the building into a greenhouse, the students will be able to acquire their fresh ingredients and further their relationship with food by being able to cultivate the ingredients that they cook with.
* GHD’s President and Co-founder, Stacy Cherones has dedicated her time and efforts in order to replenish this neighborhood and use her expertise from her previous work in the public sector to reach this goal. She also serves as the Dean of Talent at Paul Quinn College and has strong ties to the community and its members.
* Robert Foster, Vice President and Co-founder of GHD as a resident of South Dallas has invested many years in community development efforts in the area. He has experience working with churches and teaching in university settings. He also served as a lead researcher and community advocate with the Foundation for Community Empowerment.
* Owen Lynch an Associate Professor at SMU is currently the Vice President of Development for GHD. He brings his expertise in participatory research design, organizational communication and knowledge of the culinary industry.
* GHD was granted a $125,000 grant by the QuadW foundation in its initial stages.
* Our findings into the food dessert and the South Dallas area were featured in White Paper publishing and remained a top 10 downloaded item for several weeks.
* The Dallas Independent School District board of trustees has given their approval to our program and continues to maintain a strong relationship with us.
* GHD was also just awarded the Dallas GiveCamp grant which will result in a strong social media presence and a complete makeover of our website.