



annual report 2017



FOODCORPS

Healthy food is the fuel for human potential. A good diet ensures students show up for school well nourished, focused, and ready to learn. It helps them succeed. It creates a life full of opportunity.

Every child deserves a chance to connect with and benefit from healthy food every day. Schools, which feed 30 million children a day, are the places to make this happen. FoodCorps has an ambitious but attainable goal: to make every school a healthy school so that every child can grow up healthy and reach their full potential.

Dear friends,

FoodCorps sparked to life on an April morning in 2009. I was in a hotel room in San Jose, California, sipping coffee before starting my day at a W.K. Kellogg Foundation conference on food justice. A news alert flashed on the TV: President Obama was signing the Kennedy Serve America Act into law, marking a sweeping investment in AmeriCorps and directing the agency to address key national issues—childhood obesity among them. I went downstairs and invited anyone who wanted to figure out how we could start an AmeriCorps program for food to join me in an adjoining room. More than 30 people attended that first meeting, and FoodCorps was born.

Eight years ago, the Kennedy Serve America Act passed in a surge of bipartisan support, sailing through the House and Senate with margins of more than three to one. Republicans and Democrats, rural and urban legislators—all united behind an optimistic vision that our nation's biggest challenges could be solved by a surge of public service, and an adherence to the evidence of what makes the greatest difference to our fellow Americans in need.

Despite the shifts in political climate, FoodCorps has grown and evolved at an ambitious pace, and we remain as committed as ever to the values of service, collaboration, health, equity, and justice. This year we have had to fight to protect the very existence of AmeriCorps. We have seen child nutrition standards relaxed. We have seen a cultural rift divide city dwellers and rural communities.

Yet the call to service remains—and it's being answered with resounding energy. Around the country, 215 FoodCorps AmeriCorps members dedicated the past year to serving children in need. In as many red states as blue, as many rural communities as big cities, they helped schools build gardens, teach nutrition, and put healthy meals that kids love on the lunch line.

Their acts showed kids of all races, religions, origins, and economic backgrounds that there is a place at the table to welcome them. Their acts showed everyone else—parents, school leaders, volunteers, and the congresspeople who came out to visit them—that real progress in school nutrition and child health is possible. Their acts delivered the kind of authentic and humble leadership our communities and our country need.

I hope you will join me in celebrating their service, and our collective progress, over the past year, and looking forward to the important work that lies ahead.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Curt Ellis', written in a cursive style.

Curt Ellis
Co-founder and CEO

OUR IMPACT

on-the-ground service

Our Mission: Together with communities, FoodCorps serves to connect kids to healthy food in school.

In our 2016–2017 program year, we recruited, trained, and placed 215 passionate AmeriCorps members for a year of service in 169 communities across 17 states and Washington D.C. Here's what they achieved.

161,818 kids
351 schools

HANDS-ON LEARNING



- **taught 25,520 kids** for 10+ hours—a tipping point to change what kids eat
- **supported 783 gardens** for immersive outdoor learning

“Kindergartners did a scavenger hunt in our school garden using our five senses, where we touched leaves, listened to insects, looked at tools, smelled the air, and tasted cherry tomatoes. They were learning about the color red in class, and were very excited to find the little spots of red in our tomato jungle. In their little garden gloves they held the tomatoes carefully, walked them inside, washed them off, and then ate them together. The majority of kids gave a thumbs-up, and they all tried at least one bite.”

— Brooke Juday, serving with Detroit Public Schools, Detroit, MI

HEALTHY SCHOOL MEALS



- **1,374 taste tests**, a fun way for kids to try healthy recipes, like cabbage carrot slaw, salsa fresca, and apple cucumber salad
- **440 new foods** added to the lunch line, like locally sourced carrots in Montana, student-grown lettuce in D.C., and a school's first salad bar in Arizona

“We had local farmers visit our fourth grade, and they brought hakurei turnips for the students to try. The fourth graders loved the turnips (both sauteed and raw!) and told me they wanted them on the lunch line. I told them to tell our cafeteria manager next time they saw her. This morning, she shared with me that she's had a number of students request the turnips, so she's going to work with our district nutrition director and the farmers to get some hakurei turnips to serve on the line.”

— Susie Burton, serving with Food Bank of Northeast Georgia, Clayton, GA

SCHOOLWIDE CULTURE OF HEALTH



- **131 schools** created new education opportunities for staff and families, from nutrition workshops and newsletters to teacher trainings

“This week we had a teacher development day for all the elementary teachers to come into the garden. We set up four booths—math, science, language arts, and art—showing how the garden can be incorporated into each subject. It was so successful, and now all of the teachers are on board to participate a lot more!”

— Maylan Ackerman, serving with Kohala Elementary, Kapaau, HI



COMMUNITY SUPPORT | 6,685 volunteers recruited

Building support within the school community—from parents to staff to administrators—creates staying power, which means a healthy school stays healthy.

“The principal of my school put a plug in the weekly email about the resources and support I can provide to the school. He even wants me to focus my teaching on ‘testing’ grades because he thinks it will help their scores.”

— Kelsey Kinderknecht, serving with New Settlement Apartments, Bronx, NY

Our People: FoodCorps' sixth class of service members was our...

largest

215
members

most diverse



1 in 3 are service members of color

most local

serving in their:
home state 4 in 5
1 in 2 home community

most experienced

40%

of first-year members back for a second year of service

Fostering Local Leaders

LaBria Lane | Flint, Michigan

In response to the water crisis in Flint, Bill Basl, Director of AmeriCorps, met with local leaders to ask what the people of Flint most wanted from AmeriCorps. Among their responses: "We want a FoodCorps member in every school." Last year we tripled our five-year presence in the city, with six locally recruited corps members serving all 5,600 students at Flint Community Schools. Second-year member LaBria Lane, a Flint native and avid gardener, shared how the crisis guided her service: "We were constantly including updated information for students to take home to their families and simple ways to fight the lead crisis on their own. Encouraging habits that include eating fruits and veggies that have specific vitamins was a huge part of curriculum this year. This definitely influenced our goals in service. It actually made our jobs even more vital." [Learn more about LaBria's service in Flint at foodcorps.org/2017stories.](http://foodcorps.org/2017stories)



Ryan Dennison | Navajo Nation/Gallup, New Mexico

This was Ryan's second year serving with FoodCorps in his own Navajo community and hometown, under the guidance of FoodCorps partner Community Outreach and Patient Empowerment (COPE). Throughout his service, Ryan integrated Native culture into his lessons: "This week, students learned about germination and seed sprouts. We are preparing for the last frost date in New Mexico. The seeds we have selected are grown from families here in New Mexico and in Arizona from neighboring indigenous tribes and seed savers." He collaborated with COPE advisers and teachers and students at the K-5 school he served to develop a nutrition education curriculum tailored for Native communities, integrating indigenous knowledge, values, and perspectives into healthy food education. He's now back for a third service term.



We are proud to be part of the AmeriCorps service community, harnessing the power of public service to bring our nation together toward a common goal: healthy kids.

We're making sure our impact is meaningful and enduring, to benefit schools and students beyond FoodCorps service.

TRACKING PROGRESS IN SCHOOLS

In 351 schools across the country, our corps members organized school teams to set goals and map out a plan of action, using the Healthy School Toolkit, the programming framework we developed in partnership with the Laurie M. Tisch Center for Food, Education, and Policy at Columbia University's Teachers College. Throughout the year, these healthy school teams tracked their progress instilling the physical and cultural practices that influence what kids eat—together making up the "school food environment."

In the 2016–2017 school year, 76% of schools adopted new practices that improve the health of their school food environment.



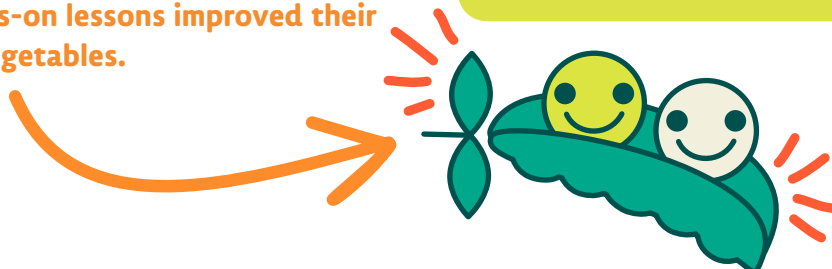
“Our students and teachers are deeply engaged in the work taking place in our schools through FoodCorps. The hands-on nutrition education has proven itself to be a powerful vehicle for positive change.”

— Harold Jeffcoat, Superintendent,
Van Buren School District, Arkansas

CHANGING CHILDREN'S ATTITUDES

We're not just teaching kids about nutrition; we're changing kids' relationship with healthy food. FoodCorps measures shifts in kids' attitudes toward vegetables (and their willingness to try them) with our research-based Vegetable Preference Survey. Attitudes shape eating behaviors, so by getting kids excited about vegetables, we help them become lifelong healthy eaters.

In the 2016–2017 school year, MORE THAN HALF of all students who received at least 10 hours of FoodCorps' hands-on lessons improved their attitudes toward vegetables.



“When I was giving samples at our harvest festival, one of the parents came up to me and told me that her daughter didn't eat salads before our classes and now she eats them all the time!”

— Jen Glen, serving with FreshFarm Markets,
Washington D.C.

PROVEN PROGRESS IN THE WAY KIDS EAT

Evaluators at Columbia University's Teachers College completed a pioneering study in 20 FoodCorps schools across eight states to understand the relationship between the work we do in schools and what kids actually eat in the cafeteria.

This research, made possible by anchor support from the Walmart Foundation, validated our Healthy School Progress Report, the menu of research-backed program activities that guides our work and tracks our progress creating healthy school food environments. It also showed us how to make our program more effective, such as by dedicating more time to fewer schools and focusing on earlier grades.

Best of all, we now know we're on the right track, thanks to this exciting finding:



In schools where FoodCorps' hands-on learning happens to a high degree, students eat **TRIPLE** the fruits and vegetables compared with peers in low-implementation schools.



CREATING NEW TOOLS FOR CHANGE

Sprout Scouts is FoodCorps' after-school learning program. A series of adventures gives kids the skills and confidence to grow their own food and make nutritious meals they'll love.



175 Sprout Scouts clubs started • **12,955 kids** participated in Sprout Scouts activities

The Sprout Scouts club that service member Mariah Marten-Ray started in San Luis Obispo, California, sparked big changes at her school when a student told the principal, "Wednesday is my favorite day to come to school because it's garden club."

The Sprout Scouts curriculum was co-created with FoodCorps partner Life Lab, and made possible through the generous support of Presenting Sponsor Target and Founding Partner Whole Kids Foundation.

Mariah shared: "As support grew, the principal became the biggest advocate for the garden. She wrote it into time cards to have teachers help supervise garden club; she encouraged every classroom to adopt a garden bed and set up classroom experiments; and she advocated for the district to provide funding to pilot an integrated garden program next year." **Read Mariah's full story at foodcorps.org/2017stories.**

BUILDING A BETTER FOODCORPS

Connecticut field office pilot

In Connecticut, we tested a new structure: placing locally recruited FoodCorps staff on the ground to oversee state programming and local partnerships. Our goals: to strengthen service, broaden our impact, and grow our influence to drive systems change that will give every child the opportunity to grow up healthy.

“With two years of FoodCorps service members in a school, that population will be better fruit and vegetable eaters—no doubt in my mind.”

— Lonnie Burt, Food Services Director,
Hartford Public Schools

EARLY WINS

greater reach

20 corps members—our largest state cohort to date—reaching 21,000 kids in 39 schools

broader influence

direct partnerships with nine school districts (with 12 in place for 2018)

grasstops alignment

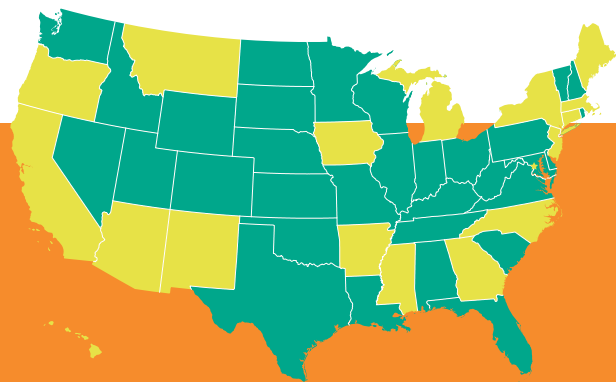
collaboration on state-led initiatives, like boosting local food sourcing in schools, a top priority for Connecticut leadership

proud partners

94% of service sites gave FoodCorps top marks—critical community buy-in

GAINING MOMENTUM FOR SYSTEMS CHANGE

Our Connecticut team has elevated FoodCorps’ voice to protect child health and improve school nutrition throughout the state. They co-lead the burgeoning Connecticut Farm to School Collaborative, which supports farm to school initiatives; advocated to protect critical resources already in place at a state Department of Education hearing against proposed cuts to school lunch funding; and leveraged relationships to build stronger nutrition policies.



OUR NATIONWIDE NETWORK

FoodCorps would not be possible without our 169 community partners who oversee the daily work of our service members, and the leadership and support of our state partners and collaborators:

AZ | Johns Hopkins University Center for American Indian Health

AR | National Center for Appropriate Technology—Southeast Office

CA | Community Alliance with Family Farmers

CT | University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension

GA | Georgia Organics

HI | The Kohala Center

IA | Iowa State University Extension and Outreach—Local Foods

ME | University of Maine Cooperative Extension

MA | The Food Project

MI | Michigan State University Extension—Community Food Systems Workgroup

MS | National Center for Appropriate Technology—Gulf States

MT | National Center for Appropriate Technology—National

NJ | Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station Cooperative Extension and New Jersey Department of Agriculture

NM | University of New Mexico Community Engagement Center and Farm to Table New Mexico

NY | Edible Schoolyard NYC

NC | North Carolina 4-H and North Carolina State University Center for Environmental Farming Systems

OR | Oregon Department of Agriculture

Washington D.C. | Office of the State Superintendent of Education



A Closer Look: **Mayberry Elementary, East Hartford, CT**

FoodCorps put child nutrition front and center at a state Board of Education meeting in July. Service members, school leaders, and even a student shared their FoodCorps success stories at schools like East Hartford's Mayberry Elementary, where corps member Molly Deegan (pictured above) served for the past two years.

"This year exceeded my expectations," said Shari-Lynn Staeb, general manager of the nutrition services team at East Hartford Public Schools, and Molly's supervisor. "I thought we'd have some fun time with the children," she said, "but we did so much more."

Molly's service has led to lasting changes for Mayberry: from the new volunteer-supported school garden, to the launch of programs that increase local procurement and family engagement in meals, to the active involvement of staff, parents, and students in the Healthy School Committee, which Molly guided to set goals and track progress. Fifth grader and committee member Cebрина Torres felt empowered by her role: "This program has given me a chance to share my ideas to make my school a happier and healthier place."

Central to Molly's success was ensuring school leadership was on board with FoodCorps from the start—an alignment guided by our field office's direct stewardship of our Connecticut partners, and affirmed by principal Anne Axten-Jones at the Board of Education meeting, when she said, "I would do it again in a heartbeat." Mayberry is hosting another service member for the 2017–2018 school year.

PLANS FOR EVOLUTION

We see big possibilities with this amplified on-the-ground presence. That's why we're replicating our Connecticut strategy in other places where we serve, starting in our 2017–2018 program year with Arizona, California, and Massachusetts.

At Mayberry Elementary, 71% of students—more than 250 children under the age of 10—rely on school food for daily nourishment.

DRIVING SYSTEMS CHANGE

creating a nation of healthy schools

FoodCorps builds on our direct impact in schools to push forward strategies for systems change at the local, state, and national levels that can benefit schools and students far beyond our reach.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

We propel our 605 FoodCorps alumni to become leaders and changemakers in child health.

Alumni Snapshot: 2016 Grads

9 in 10 employed full or part time

88% in fields aligned with our goal of nurturing a nation of healthy children, like education and school food leadership

1 in 3 hired by a FoodCorps school or partner after their service—13 in newly created jobs

"I travel to 800-person towns in Oklahoma to connect school districts with aquaponics farmers, work with cities of 5 million to figure out their farm to school sustainability plan, and celebrate the small or large victories of food service directors, state agency leaders, teachers, parent volunteers, community members, and FoodCorps service members across my five states."

— Rachel Spencer, FoodCorps Arkansas alumna and Southwest Regional Farm to School Lead at the USDA

"Two years of FoodCorps has done more for my career and my ability than two years of graduate school ever could have."

— Demetrius Fassas, FoodCorps Montana alumnus and current FoodCorps service site supervisor at the National Center for Appropriate Technology national office, in an email he sent to co-founder and CEO Curt Ellis

"I continue to ensure that more children, and especially families, are equipped with the knowledge and tools necessary to live a healthy lifestyle within their means. I am energized by the fact that I am still in service to others."

— Kira McNealy, FoodCorps Connecticut and California alumna (where she served in the San Diego district she attended) and Nutrition Education Program Coordinator for Share Our Strength's Cooking Matters program



NETWORK BUILDING

We align and activate more than 170 partners and thousands of community volunteers in support of healthy schools.

Spotlight: Share Our Strength

We teamed up with the No Kid Hungry campaign to pilot school breakfast innovations, with the goal of making it easier for kids to have a healthy start to their day. Leveraging our complementary strengths—Share Our Strength’s school meal expertise, and FoodCorps’ people power—the initiative awarded \$40,000 in grants to nine FoodCorps schools to offer breakfast in classrooms, healthy grab-and-go bags, and late-morning “second chance” meals. The results: every school had an uptick in breakfast participation—one Hartford, Connecticut, school saw rates more than double—and we’ve renewed and expanded our partnership for the year ahead.



Kumar Chandran

Policy Director | FoodCorps

Kumar brings over a decade of experience in food and nutrition policy, most recently as Chief of Staff for the USDA’s Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services, where he served under the leadership of Undersecretary Kevin Concannon. Previously, he collaborated with government agencies at all levels on child nutrition initiatives through roles at Share Our Strength and California Food Policy Advocates.

POLICY INFLUENCE

We work to drive changes in policy and culture at all levels of decision-making to make healthy schools the norm nationwide. In 2017, FoodCorps established a Washington D.C. office on Capitol Hill, helmed by our new Policy Director, Kumar Chandran, who is laying the groundwork for FoodCorps’ state-by-state and national policy strategy. In his first months on the job, Kumar enabled FoodCorps to respond rapidly, and vocally, to legislative setbacks and opportunities:

School Nutrition Guidelines

We spoke out against the USDA’s relaxation of school nutrition guidelines. “We don’t water down academic standards because some schools have difficulty meeting them,” Curt Ellis, FoodCorps co-founder and CEO, said. “Why should we do that with nutrition standards?”

Read our full statement at foodcorps.org/2017stories.

National Service

When the President’s proposed budget put AmeriCorps on the chopping block, we rallied our network to raise their voices, gathering over 230 letters from FoodCorps alumni, staff, and partners. Support for service prevailed, and FoodCorps secured a three-year renewal of our national AmeriCorps grant.

State Funding for Farm to School

Last spring, we launched a call to action to pass HB 2038 in Oregon, protecting the \$4.5 million in funding for farm to school and school garden programs that the state planned to eliminate. FoodCorps provided anchor lobbying support, five of our community partners submitted written testimony and letters of support for the bill, and our Oregon alumni contributed to the 280 phone calls and more than 400 messages sent to legislators and the governor. In July, the bill passed unanimously.

2016-2017 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Co-founder, Draper Richards Kaplan Foundation

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Restaurant Investor and Philanthropist

Ricardo Salvador, PhD
Senior Scientist and Director of the Food and Environment Program, Union of Concerned Scientists

Susan Tunnell, JD
Lawyer and Philanthropist

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Susan Tunnell Lawyer and Philanthropist

Guided by an unwavering dedication to growing healthy kids and healthy food systems, Susan is helping to build a strong and durable FoodCorps—from igniting our Giving Tuesday campaign with a triple match, to unlocking a vast network in California that is enabling our ambitious growth nationwide.

“From her first moments engaging with FoodCorps, Susan was asking what she could do to put wind in our sails. What were the problems we had that needed solving? Who did we need around the table? FoodCorps and the kids we serve couldn't hope to find a more dedicated advocate than Susan.”
— Curt Ellis, FoodCorps



“Schools are where the future is created. If we want a future free of injustice, schools are where we can start telling the truth about the way the food system must be transformed. FoodCorps is doing that work, school by school, in fundamentally effective ways.”

— Ricardo Salvador,
Union of Concerned Scientists



Statement of Financial Position

Assets

Current Assets		
Checking and Savings	\$	2,925,453
Accounts Receivable	\$	8,853,054
Other Current Assets	\$	337,089
Fixed Assets	\$	99,629
Other Assets	\$	46,025
Total Assets	\$	12,261,249

Liabilities and Net Assets

Liabilities		
Accounts Payable	\$	47,285
Credit Card Charges	\$	98,697
Other Current Liabilities	\$	341,449
Total Liabilities	\$	487,431
Net Assets		
Temporarily Restricted Net Assets	\$	9,803,151
Income and Unrestricted Net Assets	\$	1,970,666
Total Net Assets	\$	11,773,818
Total Liabilities and Equity	\$	12,261,249

Statement of Activities

Revenues

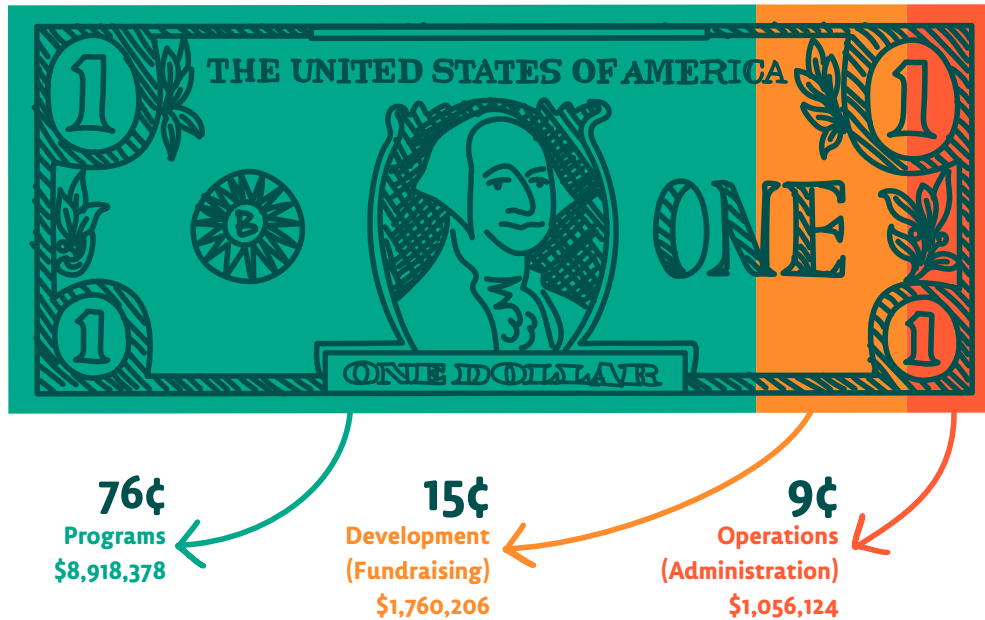
Corporate	\$	2,921,588
Foundation	\$	3,336,380
Government	\$	2,435,910
Individual	\$	2,061,584
Program Service Fees	\$	1,341,278
Other (In Kind, Special Events)	\$	147,124
Total Revenues	\$	12,243,864

Expenses

Service Member Stipends and Benefits	\$	4,463,923
Staff and Fellow Salaries and Benefits	\$	4,754,074
Contract Services	\$	498,665
Marketing and Communications	\$	58,808
Nonpersonnel Expenses	\$	452,476
Facilities and Equipment	\$	416,557
Travel and Meetings	\$	986,935
Other Expenses	\$	103,270
Total Expenses	\$	11,734,708
Net Income	\$	509,156

Expenses by Department

for every dollar invested:



Note: These are the unaudited financials for the 12-month period from August 1, 2016 to July 31, 2017. Total revenue reflects unrestricted revenue and revenue released from restriction.

"If you have healthy worms, you have healthy soil. If you have healthy soil, you have healthy plants. If you have healthy plants, you have healthy people. If you have healthy people, you have a healthy world."

— Massachusetts second grader



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Get Involved

- ▶ **Fuel Us:** Set up a monthly donation
- ▶ **Join Us:** Find volunteer opportunities in your community
- ▶ **Amplify Us:** Sign up for (and share!) our newsletter, and connect with FoodCorps on:



Visit foodcorps.org/get-involved to learn more and join our nationwide movement for healthy kids.

