



The Farmer's House Strategic Plan 2021-2023

Mission Statement

Empowering youth and adults with developmental disabilities to pursue their best lives by focusing on skills, employment, inclusion and self-reliance.

Vision Statement

A place where disABILITIES disAPPEAR!

The Farmer's House Values

- We value our unique culture open to individualism, innovation and creativity
- We value a positive, affirming and safe environment
- We value being part of our community
- We value the highest quality of services and reputation
- We value integrity and best practice
- We value each other

What is Meaningful to the Individuals we Serve?

Input from the individuals we serve tells us that they need and expect the same basic things that all individuals need and expect:

- Something meaningful to do with their day
- Being productive and valued
- Friends to share their lives with
- To be treated kindly

- The opportunity to have their opinion be heard and to make their own decisions about their lives.
- To continue learning and creating a life that is meaningful to them
- Avenues to be happy, laugh and have fun
- A place to live that is comfortable and safe.

What is Meaningful to other Stakeholders?

Parents, guardians, employees and partnering stakeholders expect the following things for the individuals our organization serves:

- To trust the people and organization providing services
- To be treated with dignity and respect
- To continue to develop social skills and meaningful friendships.
- To be part of their community
- To continue to develop, retain and maximize skills that will allow them to be as independent and self-sufficient as possible
- To continue developing self-advocacy and self-determination skills
- To be obtain and be supported in employment that is meaningful to them
- For the organization providing services to be a source of information that positively impacts the lives of the individuals served

History

The Farmer's House began as the collaborative dream of Peaches and David Cunningham for their son John David (JD) and Suzanne and Alan Zimmerman for their daughter Julianna (Anna). The two families met at preschool for children with developmental disabilities when John David and Anna were 3 and 4 years old; now they are young adults. Like most parents who have children with a developmental disability, one of their biggest concerns was for their future. Every parent hopes that the future includes a safe environment for their child's individual needs and a fulfilling and valued lifestyle. In 2006 out of these hopes and dreams The Farmer's House was launched. The organization started Early Work Experience (EWE) programs in 2010 with a garden. Platte County R3 high school special education class and Platte County Board of Services Day Program participated. After deeming the endeavor a success in 2011 additional school districts were asked to join. The Historic Vaughn Orchard property was leased and in March 2012 the first Farmer's House Market was opened.

Structure

Board: The Farmer's House is a 501(c)3 organization registered in the state of Kansas. It is governed by a board of directors currently consisting of seven members.

Director: The organization does not have a paid, full-time Executive Director. Rather, it is currently led by one of the founders, Suzanne Zimmerman, who does the work without compensation. Moving forward, the agency plans to begin an Executive Director Search to hire a full-time professional Executive Director. It is anticipated the search may take up to six (6) months; it will be started in the spring of 2021 with the goal of having an ED in place by fall of 2021.

Staff: The organization is operated by a staff of thirty-five (35) including sixteen (16) full-time staff and nineteen (19) part-time staff. The staffing consists of three (3) directors including a Director of Development, Senior Program Director and Director of Programs and Administration. There are currently two (2) managers, five (5) coordinators, thirteen (13) direct program support staff and twelve (12) retail and catering support staff (*see attached organizational staffing chart.*)

Programs

TFH programs serve youth and adults with developmental disabilities starting at age 14 and up who benefit from ongoing support to optimize their personal, social and vocational competency to live successfully in the community. TFH currently operates under four program categories described below:

- **Early Work Experience (EWE)** - Providing vocational exploration and job skills development experiences for middle and high school students in the context of our Social Enterprises—retail markets, gardens, commercial kitchens and catering. Our goal is to prepare students for employment upon graduation through the development of hard and soft job skills. Services are provided in partnership with participating Northland school districts and school districts throughout the Kansas City area. Program activities occur during the school day in two-hour small group sessions assisted by classroom teachers and our Early Work Experience Specialists. The age range for EWE is from 12 to 21. Gaining the skills to become competitively employed and earning an income is a desire for most individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. It is also necessary to meet their basic needs of food, shelter and clothing. TFH Early work Experience Program is the only program of its kind focused on northland youth with developmental and intellectual disabilities in real-life work settings on a continuous basis to youth throughout middle and high school.

There is no cost to students participating in this program when attending with their school class/district. Transportation is provided by the participating school districts. Funding for EWE comes from Missouri NAP Tax Credits, revenue from the Social Enterprises (markets and catering), Platte County Board of Services for Platte County students who have an open case with the Kansas City Regional Office, foundations and private donors. Limited, private pay, week-day spots are available for students who reside outside of Platte County or who do not have an open case with Platte County. An eight(8) week summer program is offered to students residing in Platte County who have an open case with the Kansas City Regional Office and Platte County Board of Services. Currently this program serves 9 schools and 75 students who attend on a regular/weekly. A return to pre-Covid capacity of 11 schools and 85 students on a regular/weekly basis is anticipated by fall 2021. Over 300 students from across the greater Kansas City region will participate annually in the work experience program.

- **Community Integration (CI)** – This is a structured program providing meaningful activities in local communities, including vocational training, academic advancement and avenues for using special talents and abilities. Our goal is to increase autonomy and

self-reliance, empower choices, maximize dignity, and encourage positive social interactions and healthy lifestyles. Through the cultivation of individual talents and promotion of self-determination skills, people with disabilities make contributions to the cultural and economic life of our community. Program activities occur weekdays. Included in the CI program is the Margaret Nerman Art Studio. This is a vibrant art gallery where artists with exceptionalities create, exhibit, and sell their work. We believe that all people can be creative in a collaborative, supportive environment and the Margaret Nerman Studio is a vibrant art space and gallery where artists with exceptionalities create, exhibit, and sell their work. Artists receive proceeds from the sale of their work and contribute to the cultural and economic life of our community. The age range served by CI is 18 and up with most participants ranging in age from early 20's to 40's. Medicaid billing through the Department of Mental Health (DMH) makes up the majority of the funding stream for this program with some private pay. Currently CI provides services to 36 individuals with a return to pre-Covid capacity of 40, which equals to over 430 direct support service hours per week anticipated by fall of 2021.

- **Employment Services (ES)** - Providing career exploration and discovery activities based on individual abilities, skills and interests. Our goal is to provide meaningful activities that support job skills development, vocational exploration and, ultimately, employment. Services are highly individualized and occur seven days a week generally at employment locations in the community. The age range served by ES is 18 to unlimited with most participants ranging in age from early 20's to 40's. Medicaid billing through DMH makes up the majority of this program's funding stream. Currently ES provides services to 13 individuals with a return to pre-Covid capacity of 17 anticipated by fall of 2021.
- **Social Enrichment** - Providing social, wellness and life-skills activities on-site and throughout the community during select evenings and weekends. Activities include a variety of planned outings, recreational experiences and unique events. Ongoing lifestyle classes center on healthy meal preparation and baking. Art classes allow creative expression that fosters personal growth and self-esteem. Age range is 18 to unlimited with most participants ranging in age from early 20's to 40's. Participants in this program only pay for their own entrance fees or costs for the activities such as movie ticket, meal, etc. Staffing, transportation and often supplies are provided at no cost to participants. Currently Social Enrichment provides services to 21 individuals and has returned to pre-Covid capacity.

Locations

The Farmer's House programs take place in the greater Kansas City community as well as at four physical TFH locations outlined below:

- **TFH Market and Gardens at the Farm in Weston - 23200 State Highway 273, Weston, Missouri:** This location supports the EWE Program. It is the original "farm market" location and currently its operation is seasonal. Sales from the Market and Farm to Fork Kitchen are budgeted at \$240,000 in 2021, with fall being the busiest retail season. The property was first leased from Vaughn Orchard starting in January of 2012 and includes

the use of the main market building, the Farm to Fork Kitchen shanty, free standing restrooms and a separate garage. It also includes the use of surrounding acreage where TFH has constructed a large hoop house, raised beds and by the spring of 2021 an area for community gardens and a small orchard. The current lease on this property is through 12/31/2021.

- **TFH Market and Catering Kitchen - Downtown Weston - 415 Main Street, Weston, Missouri:** This location supports the EWE Program. This property contains a Farmer's House Market and a commercial catering kitchen. Sales from the Market & Catering for 2021 are budgeted at \$286,000. This location was originally leased in October 2015 to allow EWE programs to operate year round. The property was purchased in 2016 and the loan was paid in full in 2018. The over 150 year old historic building is approximately 4,000 square feet with approximately 2,000 square feet on each of the two stories.
- **Westwood Market and Art Studio - Rainbow in Westwood - 4740 Rainbow Blvd, Westwood, Kansas:** This location supports both CI and ES Programs. By June 2021 the Market at this location will reopen to the public which will be staffed by individuals participating in the ES program who will be paid interns while they learn about operating a retail business. Also located at this property is TFH Art Studio which includes the Margaret Nerman Art Gallery. Participants in TFH CI program visit this location regularly to participate in many different mediums of art. This location is in a small retail strip mall and is approximately 7,000 square feet of space on two levels. It is leased from Tuteria Properties for the common area maintenance charges with no rent cost. The organization could not afford this space without the rent being gifted by Tuteria Properties.
- **Wells Bank Building - 301 Main Street, Platte City, Missouri:** This location supports both CI, ES and Administrative space for the Agency. The building is the former Wells Bank building and was donated to TFH in March 2019. This location is actually two historic buildings which now create one space. It is approximately 6,500 square feet on two levels. CI and ES utilize the first floor of the building as their home base or training classroom and the upstairs is utilized for administrative functions.

Why

Employment is the foundation of TFH programs and our cornerstone program is Early Work Experience. Individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (ID/DD) are among the most underemployed and unemployed groups in the country despite their ability, desire and willingness to work in the community. National Core Indicators report that Missouri lags the nation in the number of people with ID/DD who are competitively employed in an integrated environment at 8% versus the national average of 15%. US Census data indicates that Platte and Clay Counties are the fastest growing in the Kansas City metro area with a combined population in 2016 of approximately 85,000 ages 0 to 18. The Missouri Division of Developmental Disabilities estimates between 1.8% and 3% of the population have ID/DD. This means that nearly 2500 underserved children and youth in the northland could benefit from our Early Work

Experience (EWE) Program gaining the necessary skills needed to become members of the workforce - maximizing their independence and earning potential.

Providers focusing on employment services have increased in Platte County and the Kansas City area in the past five years in response to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) designed to strengthen and improve our nation's public workforce system, including youth and those with significant barriers to employment, into high-quality jobs and careers. It is projected that the demand for employment services will remain high as we emerge from the pandemic.

Demand remains steady for community integrated day programs throughout the Kansas City Area. In Jackson County Missouri and Johnson County Kansas there are a number of service provider options including Ability KC, Center for the Developmentally Disabled and Developing Potential for individuals with ID/DD. Life Unlimited and Easter Seals Midwest are located in Clay County. In Platte County the Platte County Board of Services (PCBS) is the only other organization providing community integration and day program services, and their programs are generally at capacity.

Legislative, Regulatory & Political Environment

Local, state, and federal government funding is important to the success of TFH programs and services and the loss of any of that funding would be a hardship on the organization. The most significant regulatory agencies impacting TFH Programs are federal Medicaid and the State of Missouri Department of Mental Health (DMH) which matches federal funds and controls waiver funded services within Missouri. TFH CI and ES programs are regulated by DMH and primarily funded through Medicaid Waivers. On 7/1/2019 funding for the Missouri fiscal budget was significantly cut which resulted in a waitlist being enacted in Missouri for new individuals with ID/DD seeking services. Beginning in late 2020 through today, DMH funding through the state has been more accessible and individuals are being removed from the waitlists. DMH funding accounts for approximately 35% of the TFH existing revenue stream and almost 100% of the funding for the CI and ES programs.

On a federal level a draft bill unveiled in March 2021 known as the HCBS Access Act would require Medicaid to provide home-and community-based services to everyone who is eligible and establish a minimum set of services that states must offer. The bill is also designed to eliminate wait lists and allow people with disabilities to move across state lines without forfeiting critical services and supports, and to help states create a network of providers and workers to deliver such supports. This would be a positive step forward for individuals in the KC area across state lines. For the past five plus years Medicaid funding in Kansas has been virtually non-existent with significant wait lists and low provider reimbursement levels making quality service provision very challenging.

TFH EWE Program is funded heavily by donations facilitated by Missouri NAP Tax Credits awarded through the Missouri Economic Development Council. NAP Funding for 2020-2022 will be \$500,000 in actual dollars to TFH over the three year period which represents approximately 30% of the current fund development budget (which is net of Medicaid funding or social enterprise revenue) and approximately 13% of the total income budget for 2021.

Financial Snapshot

The Farmer's House has a 2021 operating budget of approximately 1.6 million. The agency was able to secure various Covid-funding sources in 2020 including Cares Act and PPP Loan funding that offset salaries and other operating expenses and protected cash reserves. As of 3/31/2021 the agency had current assets of around \$900,000 including cash, accounts receivable from medicaid program billing and inventory. The agency has long-term fixed assets of approximately 1.1 million predominantly consisting of buildings and vehicles. The agency has minimal debt including a second round of PPP Loan funding for \$145,000 that will hopefully be dismissed. The first round of PPP Loan funding for \$155,000 received in 2020 has already been dismissed by the SBA. Medicaid funding in the state of Missouri opened back up in 2020 and TFH has seen a steadily increasing demand for employment services and community integration. It is projected that medicaid funding for 2022 could reach close to \$900,000 in revenue. If Missouri medicaid funding remains open and anticipated increases in the medicaid waiver rates come through, it is projected total revenue in 2022 would be around 1.8 million and hit approximately 2.0 million by 2023.

Environmental Scan

Strengths

- Quality of service provision with a high level of stakeholder satisfaction
- Programs built around self-sustaining small business models (Market, Catering)
- Culture of innovation and uniqueness - quickly adapted during the pandemic
- Staff with strong background in education ideal for supporting individuals with I/DD
- Fun locations, people, programs and atmosphere. **We have good mojo!**
- Accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) since 2016 for our Community Integration and Employment Services which is the gold standard for the individuals TFH serves.
- NAP Funding for 2020-2022 – \$500,000 over the three years.

Weaknesses

- Highly dependent on government revenue streams and tax credits that are uncertain in future years.
- Being spread between many different locations challenges the culture of oneness.
- No paid full-time Executive Director.
- Highly interconnected Board limits ability to expand beyond the immediate circle to grow individual and corporate giving.
- The Farm location is leased with current lease expiring December 31, 2021.
- Volunteer recruitment, utilization, tracking, appreciation and moves management needs further organization and structure.

Opportunities

- Build board for future financial growth and stability to expand individual and corporate funding opportunities.
- Expand capacity by investing in staffing across programs to support more individuals being served. .

- Increased mission awareness through social media/digital media to raise awareness and attract volunteers and funders.
- Build capacity to help families with residential issues by offering expertise, information, referrals, and case management.

Threats

- The Farm location is not secure without a long term lease or TFH ownership.
- The Farm location is in need of significant improvement for safety and functionality.
- Rapid change in leadership with future board growth and a new ED could result in the loss of TFH culture of good mojo and of the original mission focus.
- Decrease in Missouri DMH funding due to state or federal financial constraints.
- Loss of Missouri NAP Tax Credits due to state financial constraints
- Succession planning and cross training specifically as it relates to leadership with director positions. Currently there are no clear internal successors.

Goals & Action Steps

Taking into consideration stakeholder input, the current environment and that we begin this strategic plan period while emerging from a world pandemic, the following goals and action steps will be the focus of TFH 2021-2023 Strategic Plan:

Leadership & Governance

Goal: Build the board for future financial growth and stability, to attract first rate ED candidates and to expand individuals and corporate funding opportunities.

- Hire an outside consultant to help with the board development process by April 2021.
- Establish the structure for the board and supporting committees for approval by the board.
- Identify three potential candidates for the board and committee positions as indicated in the structure and extend invitations to serve by August of 2021.

Goal: Strengthen TFH leadership capacity.

- Utilize a search firm to hire a high-performing Executive Director to lead the organization forward by fall of 2021. New ED should have significant fundraising and management capability.
- Make cross training and succession planning a priority for the new ED and Executive Team.
- Continue to identify areas where leadership is over extended and outsource or hire to meet the expanding agency needs based on growth and financial resources.

Programs:

Goal: Continue to provide quality programs with high stakeholder satisfaction while expanding strategically to meet demand.

Early Work Experience

- Bridge TFH service provision gap between transition from EWE to employment by exploring additional funding sources beyond DMH such as Vocational Rehab (VR).

- Expand opportunities for early work experience to students in the Kansas City area by reaching out to school districts, specifically Jackson County.
- Secure the Farm for the long-term benefit of the organization
 - Start discussions with the Vaughn family about what is possible at the present location by June 2021.
 - If the existing location is secured develop a long-term facility infrastructure improvement/replacement capital campaign plan for implementation by fall 2022.
 - If the existing location is not secured begin a location site search by August 2021.

Community Integration

- Maintain a low support staff to person served ratio contributing to a high standard of quality and effectiveness.
- Expand opportunities with the Art Studio in accordance with the original business plan.

Employment Services

- Bridge TFH service provision gap between transition from EWE to employment by linking EWE participants with ES services including DMH waiver funded services and explore the addition of vocational rehabilitation funded services.
- Implement the business plan to utilize TFH Market at the Market and Art Studio as an employment services work based learning site while providing paid employment to individuals in ES by July of 2021.

Social Enrichment

- Explore creating a monthly dinner club that supports the development of meaningful, personal relationships. Tapping into local restaurants to host that provide a variety of settings for socialization and dynamic relationship building,
- Create a monthly “Painting with a Partner” experience for individuals who seek an atmosphere that lends itself to more of a “dating” experience.

Residential

- Build capacity to help families with residential issues by offering expertise, information and referrals.
- Continue to gather information and explore potential residential models and funding streams.

Financial Stability

Goal: Continue to strengthen TFH financial position and mitigate financial risks

- Follow and be accountable to an annual budget and fund development plan that provides continued diversification of funding streams with a focus on corporate and individual giving.
- Explore the establishment of an endowment to secure the future for TFH by the end of 2021.

