

TASTEWISE KIDS  
ANNUAL 2025  
REPORT

[www.tastewisekids.org](http://www.tastewisekids.org)



## GREETINGS FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR!

TasteWise Kids (TWK) embraced the end of 2025 with a deep sense of purpose, connection, and momentum that will carry into 2026. Our work centers on activating the curiosity of young people with the hope of them building a lifelong, joyful, healthy relationship with food. In 2025, a priority of TWK was to expand programs and build stronger and more supportive relationships with partners to better serve children and families. We are proud that we were able to make progress towards that goal.

Throughout the communities in which we partner, educators told us how our programs are shaping their students' daily experiences. One principal shared, "I've seen firsthand how TasteWise Kids programs enrich our students' education and lives." From Earth Day celebrations and outdoor learning to hands-on salad making sessions with local chefs, our partnerships created opportunities for students to explore, question, and connect with the environment and each other, and better understand their relationship with food and its pathways.

These experiences are not simply enrichment—they are essential life learnings. As another principal put it, "These opportunities offer our students a different lens through which deeper understanding of concepts and ideas can occur." Schools repeatedly emphasized how closely our work to empower children to think about food in new ways aligns with their commitment to developing the whole child.

The gratitude we received from educators was both humbling and energizing. "Thank you so much for your care, dedication, and continued support...", one principal wrote. Teachers echoed this warmth in their own way—sometimes with joyful simplicity: "You are sunshine when you come to our school... Can you come every day?"

These voices reflect the heart of our impact. They show that TasteWise Kids is not just delivering programs, but building relationships, strengthening communities, and opening new opportunities for children.

As we look ahead, we are committed to deepening these partnerships and expanding access so that even more students can experience the joy and empowerment that food literacy brings. We are grateful to every school, educator, family, volunteer, and supporter who made this year possible.

Thank you for believing in this work and for helping to plant the seeds for young people to thrive in good health.

In Gratitude,

  
~ Salina Duncan

# MISSION AND VISION

TasteWise Kids inspires kids to explore and experience the world of food and its sources.

We work with local chefs, farmers, and other food professionals to teach our students about where their food comes from, help them to explore their own sense of taste, and to discover the value of fresh food from multiple perspectives:

- Health and nutrition
- Agriculture and environmental stewardship
- Career Awareness/Development
- Culinary – preparing food to individual taste preference
- Social aspects of eating with friends and family

We believe every kid deserves to:

- Know where their food comes from
- Have the skills to prepare their own food
- Be empowered to make their own informed food choices



# GUIDING VALUES

We focus on creating a supportive environment to educate students about healthy food choices and food preparation, and inspire future leaders.

## **SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**


We prioritize Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion across our programs and partnerships. We intentionally reflect the diversity of our students in our staff, volunteers, food experts, and educational content, including multi-lingual materials. We partner with local small, BIPOC, minority, and women-owned businesses and focus our programs in Title 1 schools and under-resourced communities.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY**

We value and respect the land that feeds us. Through partnerships with local farmers, students learn about composting, organic farming, and environmental stewardship. Our Every Day is Earth Day programming connects healthy food to a healthy planet, and we continually work to reduce waste in our programs.

## **GOVERNANCE RESPONSIBILITY**

Our Board and staff actively uphold our values and foster an inclusive, creative culture that supports healthy relationships with food. Board members annually review and sign commitment and conflict-of-interest agreements, and all Board and staff members complete onboarding training to ensure shared accountability and alignment.



# PROGRAMS + IMPACT

## 1 DAYS OF TASTE

- A three-day discovery-based program that introduced 1,000 4th graders at 16 different schools to the basic elements of taste.
- 1,000 Take Home Salad Kits provided at 16 schools were enjoyed by approximately 4,000 family members.
- Kids went on a taste exploration and learned how to balance various flavors for good nutrition and taste.
- Kids took a tour of a working farm to see how food is grown.
- Kids worked with a chef to make a salad and vinaigrette.

## 2 FOOD STORY TIME

- 575 preschool and lower elementary age children participated in interactive story sessions at 15 locations, integrating 3 focus areas: literacy skills, developing enjoyment of reading, and listening to stories
- Each story was followed by a hands-on, food-focused activity.

## 3 EXPLORING FOODS

- 24 students in the PAL program for young adults at Augusta Fells Savage High School participated in monthly life skills and cooking sessions, which highlighted seasonal nutritional ingredients.
- 150 students participated in after school salad making sessions in partnership with Child First.
- This intergenerational family kitchen skills series was customized to each community.

## 4 EVERYDAY IS EARTH DAY

- 1,021 students at 4 schools participated in Earth Day programs.
- Activities included planting seeds to take home, creating insect habitats, vertical gardens for small spaces and urban garden design.
- Students learned about the full cycle of food and the importance of healthy soil for healthy food.
- Students explored worm composting.

## THE IMPACT



## STUDENT THOUGHTS

"I learned that I love feta cheese!" ~ Student

"I loved the salad, it's what got me to start eating salad" ~ Student

"You are sunshine when you come to our school. We welcome sunshine and Taste Wise Kids every day. Can you come every day?" ~ Teacher, Augusta Fells

"I never liked salad. I actually never tried it until today. I never knew I actually liked salad."  
~ Student

# ENGAGEMENTS + EVENTS HIGHLIGHTS

Our annual fundraiser, **Flavors of Maryland**, was a special night - it was a celebration of our 10<sup>th</sup> year as a nonprofit. We were thankful to host the evening at Gertrude's. Not only is Gertrude's beautiful, but it is also owned by one of our founding board members, John Shields. Chefs, farms, and partners curated an evening filled with delicious Maryland food paired with local wines. We remain grateful for the community acknowledgement of the work we do and the support from our partners to make the night so successful.



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TEENS

### Kitchen Science: Healthy After School Snacks

Learn how to make nutritious, tasty after school snacks to boost your brain energy. Julie Eugenio, Community Programs Manager of TasteWise Kids, joins us for a hands-on, interactive experience.

Tuesday, September 30, 3:00 p.m.

The free educational and cultural programs at Pratt libraries are made possible by the generous support of donors to the Enoch Pratt Free Library.

Light Street Branch  
3253 Light Street

prattlibrary.org

In partnership with the **Pratt Library**, TasteWise Kids planned and facilitated several after school food-related workshops for teens at the Light Street library. Each session included a lesson about healthy choices when snacking, a hands-on lesson, a science connection to cooking, and the enjoyment of trying new foods.

TasteWise Kids led the What's Cooking stage at the **B'more Healthy Expo**. Children of various ages joined TWK on stage along side Chef Key. TasteWise Kids led a discussion about the importance of offering healthy snack and meal options at home to the families gathered. The audience enjoyed watching creative smoothies, colorful salads, and a variety of hummus dips be made with and by the kids. Kids can cook and belong in the kitchen too!



# ENGAGEMENTS + EVENTS HIGHLIGHTS



We led the Kid's Corner at the **Ekiben Community Night Market** for a second year in a row!

**Charm City Books** welcomed us in their store for an in person food story time.

TWK led two worm composting workshops with the **Department of Public Works** at the Urban Oasis Earth Day event and at the EcoLoop Food Waste Reduction event.



**Chef Jerry Edwards** and **Chef's Expressions** hosted a Wine Supper in July benefiting our programming. Chef Jerry has been volunteering for and supporting Days of Taste since its start in Maryland.

**Child First Partnership** – TasteWise Kids provided modified versions of our Days of Taste salad-making sessions to after school programs at two new schools. Through our partnership with Child First we were also able to introduce our Food Story programs to three new elementary schools.



We were thrilled to support **Filbert Street Garden** as they worked to beautify their community space. TasteWise Kids led a food story time, invited the Baltimore Family Alliance for a green workshop, and welcomed families to Filbert Street over the summer. With each visit, participants were also able to take part in painting the community murals.

# VOLUNTEER SUMMARY



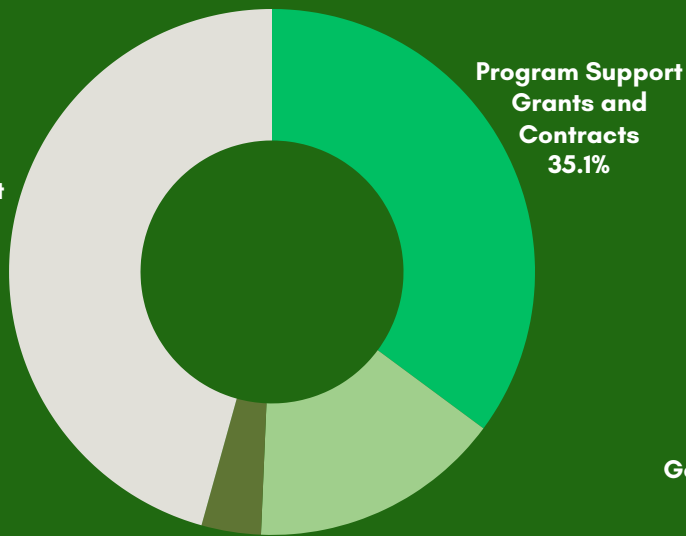
In 2025, our dedicated volunteers and board members generously donated a total of 944 hours to TasteWise Kids. They supported the Days of Taste program as chefs, farmers, and classroom assistants. Volunteer groups from Whole Foods, Pompeian, and Hopkins Pediatrics joined us as program volunteers. Volunteers are crucial to the success of our programs. The commitment and effort of our volunteers is instrumental in ensuring the continuity and success of our initiatives.

In 2025, we had the opportunity to expand our traditional short-term programs into long-term series with select partners. These expansions allow TWK to deepen the impact for students and their communities. We're especially grateful to the South Baltimore Gateway Partnership for their foundational investment to make this new work possible! In Addition, we would like to thank BIC Educational Foundation for funding 6 Baltimore City schools to take part in the Days of Taste program annually.

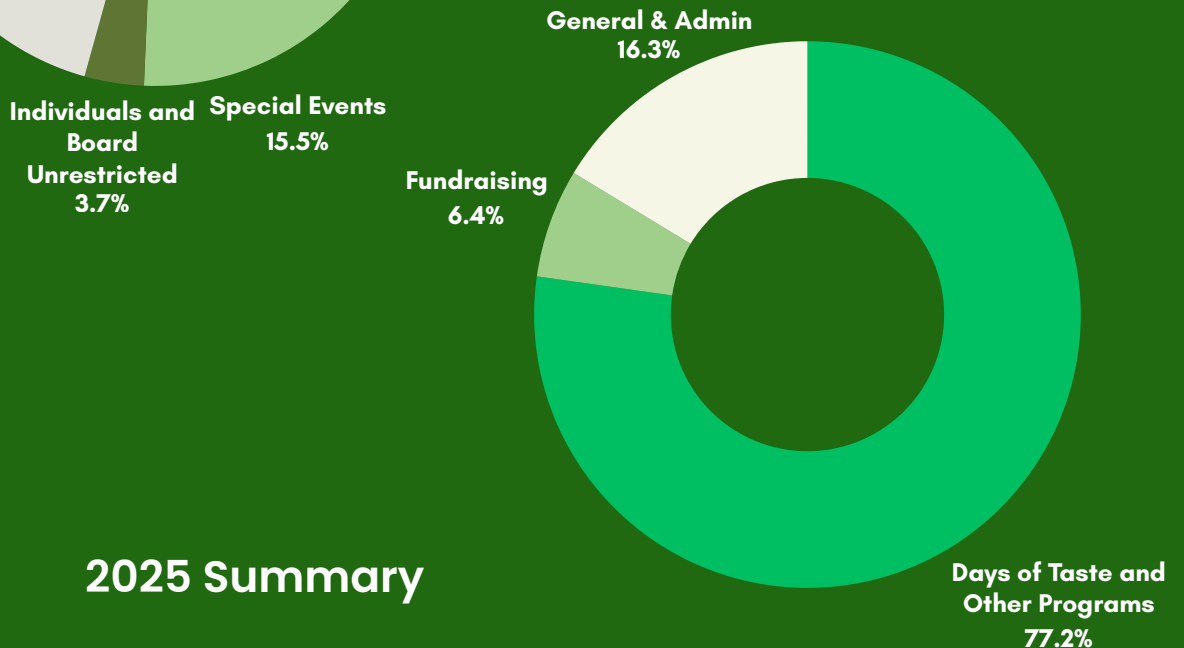


# 2025 FINANCIALS

## 2025 Revenue- \$243,460



## 2025 Expenses- \$221,824



## 2025 Summary

TasteWise Kids had its largest year of programming in 2025 since its founding. TasteWise Kids is committed to growing its programs to advance its mission to inspire kids to explore and experience the world of food and its sources. During 2025, both revenues and expenses increased compared to 2024. In addition, the organization was able to modestly grow its cash reserves, which provides the organization a more stable future. The ending net assets for 2025 were approximately \$115,000.

*All figures are estimates pending preparation of final year end financial statements.*

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS



## **AMBER PERRY | Board President**

Amber (she/her) joined the TWK board in 2021 and now acts as President of the board. She is Vice President, Regulatory Strategy & Services for Pepco Holdings, Inc. Amber and her family live in Silver Spring, MD and love food festivals, traveling, and tennis. A true foodie, Amber is always looking for new, creative ways to elevate her favorite vegetable: Brussels sprouts.

## **NEAL CROWLEY | Board Vice President**

Neal (he/him) joined the TWK board in 2020. He is Director of Global Insurance Management at Franklin Templeton. He enjoys being active, traveling, cooking, discovering new foods, and listening to music. His favorite vegetable is a nod to his southern upbringing: collard greens!

## **CRAIG SARSONY | Treasurer**

Craig (he/him) joined the TWK Board in 2025. He is the Sr. Vice President for Global Operations at Global Fund for Women, an organization that provides support to gender justice movements around the world. For most of his career, Craig has led the finance and operational functions of international nonprofits working on poverty relief, health, and justice. He enjoys gardening and is a volunteer gardener working with children at the Boys and Girls Club of Carroll County. Craig's favorite vegetable is spinach, which he especially enjoys as part of a smoothie.

## **David + Tonya Thomas**

Chefs David Thomas (he/him) and Tonya Thomas (she/her) both joined the TWK board in 2021. Together they have served at the James Beard House, appeared on The Today Show, and more. Chef David Thomas was crowned Food Network's Chopped Grand Champion in 2020. The chefs are currently part of a group working to establish the Muloma Heritage Center in St. Helena Island, SC.

## **KIMBERLY BARKER | Board Secretary**

Kimberly (she/her) serves as the board secretary for TasteWise Kids. She is Director of Marketing Operations at M&T Bank and a faculty member of the American Bankers Association School of Bank Marketing and Management. Tomato is her favorite vegetable—even though she knows it's a fruit!

## **RUSSELL JOYNER**

Russell (he/him) joined the TWK board in 2022. He is an Executive Partner with Gartner providing strategic advisory work for mid-sized enterprises. Russell and his wife live in Crofton, MD and enjoy travelling, spending time with family and discovering new local restaurants in Annapolis and Baltimore. Russell's favorite vegetables are spinach and Brussels sprouts.



# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

## **ROBERT HOFFMANN**

Robert (he/him) joined the TWK board in 2023 after serving a year on the TWK Communications Committee. Currently he is the Corporate Director of Digital Marketing with Live! Casino & Hotel. Robert and his girlfriend live in Bluffton, SC and enjoy travelling, hiking, playing pickleball and spending time with family and their dog Ruby. Robert's favorite vegetables are asparagus and acorn squash.

## **NATALIE ESTELLE**

Natalie (she/her) joined the TWK board in 2023. She is a College and Career consultant and a Baltimore City Public Schools Visual Arts Teacher with over 20+ years of experience in graphic design, marketing in various industries, food photography and education. She has experience in running a non-profit organization in addition to being a published author. Her favorite vegetables are English cucumbers and potatoes.

## **TELA BOONE-HURTE**

Tela (she/her) joined the TWK board in 2021. She is an IT Business Relationship Manager at CareFirst BCBS. Tela lives in Harford County, MD, with her husband and three children. She and her family love to travel, volunteer in the community, and explore new recipes and restaurants. Tela's favorite vegetable is spinach because of its versatility.

## STAFF TEAM

### **Salina Duncan | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Salina (she/her) has served as the Executive Director of TWK since August, 2023. She is a community health educator with a focus on providing nutritious food options and nature-based experiences to youth. Salina lived in Guatemala for 10 years, where she worked as the director of a small nonprofit to provide basic health and educational resources to communities with limited access. Salina enjoys spending time with her family, yoga, and gardening. She lives in Westminster, MD with her two children.

### **Julie Eugenio | Programs and Partnerships Manager**

Julie Eugenio (she/her) brings food content to the children and families of TasteWise Kids. She volunteered for Farm to Chef 2020 and fell in love with TWK's mission. As a teacher in Howard county she was always involved in after school programs, enriching the school community. Julie is a mother of three boys and understands the importance of teaching children how to make healthy choices and appreciate their food's source. Her husband, Ray Eugenio, is Chef and Owner of Heritage Kitchen, giving Julie a unique glimpse into the food industry.

### **MEGAN BOBER | FOOD EDUCATOR**

Megan Bober (she/her), is a Food Educator with TasteWise Kids, where she brings enthusiasm for teaching children about healthy eating and new foods. As a pediatric dental hygienist, Megan is passionate about educating kids, whether it's instilling proper oral hygiene habits or encouraging curiosity around nutrition. Her commitment to community engagement began in the spring of 2023, when she started volunteering in Baltimore City schools as a PTO President. That role naturally led to her involvement in the TasteWise Kids Days of Taste program. Outside of work, Megan loves exploring new adventures with her husband and two children.



# SUPPORTERS + PARTNERS

## Sponsors and Grantors:

- BIC Educational Foundation
- BCYF
- Pompeian Olive Oil
- United Healthcare Community Plan
- M&T Bank
- Fells Point Wholesale Meats
- Live! Casino & Hotel
- Kramon & Graham Attorneys at Law
- KBST&M
- Michele's Granola
- Kiwanis Club of Ellicott City
- South Baltimore Gateway Partnership
- Baltimore Community Foundation
- Domino Sugar
- Atlas Restaurant Group
- Engel Law Group
- Sprouts
- RHS & Associates
- Spark Solutions Consulting
- Ravens
- Eldridge Crandell
- LCR Jazzy Events
- Harris Teeter
- Tulkoff Food

## Flavors of Maryland Chef Sponsors:

- Doug Wetzel & John Shields of Gertrude's
- David and Tonya Thomas of H3irloom Food Group
- Jerry Edwards of Chef's Expressions at the Manor
- Chris Amendola of Foraged
- Steve Chu and Ephrem Abibe of Ekiben
- Joseph Burton of Rooted Rotisserie
- Rey Eugenio of Heritage Kitchen
- Evan Orser of Victoria Gastro Pub
- True Chesapeake Oyster Co

## Days of Taste Chefs:

- Rey Eugenio
- Jerry Edwards
- Chris Amendola
- Carlos Raba
- Amanda Mack
- Heather Smith
- Davon Pulliam
- Nancy Longo
- Evan Orser
- Catalina Smith

## Days of Taste Schools:

### **Baltimore City**

- Dickey Hill
- Govans
- Charles Carroll Barrister
- Southwest Baltimore Charter
- Federal Hill Preparatory School
- Hazelwood
- Patterson Park Public Charter
- Commodore John Rodgers
- Margaret Brent
- George Washington
- Sharp Leadenhall
- New Song Academy
- Robert W. Coleman

### **Baltimore County**

- Owings Mills
- Glyndon

### **Howard**

- Talbott Springs
- Guilford

## Days of Taste Host Farms:

- The 6th Branch
- Filbert Street Community Garden
- Free Town Farm
- Great Kids Farm
- Whitelock Community Farm
- Baltimore County Agricultural Center

**THANK  
YOU**

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