Dear Grassroots Supporters,

The year started with a flash of hope and excitement as COVID-19 vaccines surfaced and we saw not only a reduction in COVID-19 cases early in the year, but also plans for our schools to reopen. We started the year with virtual health programs for youth on ZOOM. By August, 2021 school hallways were once again filled with students, and Grassroots athletes were back in gymnasiums facilitating health programs and creating unique relationships. Changes in the pandemic continuously changed Grassroots programming, but several things remained consistent throughout: the community desire for programming, the commitment of Grassroots staff and volunteers, and the positive health outcomes for youth that engage in Grassroots programming.

With adversity comes great opportunity, and we are proud of our response to the pandemic and our growth in 2021. In the past 12 months, we reached more young people than in any prior year. And our programs made a real difference in the outcomes for youth, their family members, and their broader communities.

In tandem with our work in the DC community, we built new relationships with school leaders, community stakeholders, and funders in Philadelphia, where we plan to launch our first programs in January 2023. Our path to Philadelphia is our first step toward a transformational vision to re-imagine school-based health education and PE on a national level. We believe that schools everywhere should have the support they need to prioritize health and physical education as core subjects for students, and we want to be a resource in making this vision a reality.

In the coming year, we are committed to continuing our work at the community level in DC and Philadelphia, as well as to continuing to develop strong partnerships with national organizations like the Active Schools, the National Youth Sports Strategy, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and the NCAA.

We are grateful for the continued support from friends, alumni, partners, and donors large and small. Without you, we would not be here today. We look forward to working with you as we achieve new heights and reach new communities in the years to come. Thank you for continuing to follow, support, and engage in our work.

TYLER SPENCER, FOUNDER

JANE WALLIS, DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMS
OUR MISSION

The Grassroot Project advances health equity in cities by using sports to re-imagine health education in middle schools and mobilizing NCAA athletes as health educators and role models for youth.

OUR VISION

Schools everywhere have the support they need to prioritize health and physical education as core subjects for students.

“MY FAVORITE PART ABOUT TGP WAS…”

- They talk about a lot of important topics that can help you out in the long run.
- I like how they help us deal with stress.
- We got to learn while having fun.
- How they used the fun out of this to still teach and provide info.
- That we could express ourselves.
- Being able to do fun things while talking about serious things.
- That you can be yourself.
- They used the fun out of this to still teach and provide info.
- That they are all young people who understand us.
- The support.
- The games we played because it had a connection with the lesson.
**HEALTH OUTCOMES**

**SPRING 2021: VIRTUAL**

- **86** NCAA Athlete Volunteers in Programs
- **408.1** Athlete Hours in Programs

**FALL 2021: IN PERSON**

- **39** NCAA Athlete Volunteers in Programs
- **209** Athlete Hours in Programs

**2021 TOTALS**

- **617** Athlete Hours in Programs
- **125** Unique Athletes in Programs
- **865** Athlete Hours in Programs
- **5.2%** COVID Curriculum
- **33.8%** 8th Grade Mental Health
- **35.2%** 7th Grade Sexual Health
- **25.8%** 6th Grade Nutrition

**~8,000** Student Hours in Programs

**OUR IMPACT**

- **566** Students
- **6th Grade Nutrition**
- **145** Students
- **7th Grade Sexual Health**
- **77** Students
- **8th Grade Mental Health**
- **215** Students

**COVID CURRICULUM**

- **45** Students

**NUTRITION OUTCOMES:**

- After completing TGP’s nutrition and physical health curriculum, TGP students reported understanding the value of healthy eating and being physically active, including:
  - **94%** believe that healthy eating reduces the risk for illness and disease.
  - **84%** believe that being physically active would benefit their ability to cope with stress.
  - **74%** reported the ability to choose a healthy meal or snack when eating with friends, up from 60% in the pre-survey.
  - **83%** reported the ability to choose water over a sugary drink.

**SEXUAL HEALTH OUTCOMES:**

- After completing TGP’s sexual health curriculum, students reported that they valued and understood the importance of learning about this highly stigmatized and uncomfortable health topic.
  - **95%** would recommend some or all of this program to a peer.
  - **97%** liked some or all of this program.

**MENTAL HEALTH OUTCOMES:**

- Students reported that after completing TGP’s mental health promotion curriculum...
  - **94%** felt as though they can take steps toward the future they want.
  - **90%** felt that when problems arise with their mental health in their life, they can handle them pretty well.
  - **100%** felt they could continue to improve their overall mental wellbeing in the future.
The Grassroot Project (TGP) worked with the Office of State Superintendent of Education and school health stakeholders to conduct a comprehensive assessment of needs related to health education and physical activity in DC schools, analyze and synthesize the results of this analysis, and propose recommended strategies and an implementation guide for improving health education and physical education in schools. This project helped provide the TGP with more context and gain more insight into the systemic barriers that our programming seeks to address.

Meet Heidi, one of our student-athlete volunteers from Howard University.

We have hundreds of volunteer health educators who are Division 1 student-athletes at American University, Howard University, George Washington University, and Georgetown University.

These athletes complete an intensive 4-day training in our comprehensive health curriculum, classroom facilitation basics, cultural competency, and the role of “impact-based service” and uplifting community voices in our work.

After training, volunteers facilitate our school-based and community-based programming.

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Grassroots Fam is a two-session evening workshop that creates a safe space for parents and caregivers of TGP participants to learn community-and youth-specific health information and feel more comfortable and confident communicating with their youth about health.

Grassroots Connect is an end-of-program celebration for middle school students, their families, teachers, and TGP student athletes. At these events, middle school students are connected to relevant and local community health service providers. This opportunity helps students know where they can get additional information and health services after their time with Grassroots.
TGP expands its footprint to more than 50 DC middle schools and begins launching community health fairs in partnership with the DC Department of Health and the DC Deputy Mayor’s Office for Planning and Economic Development.

TGP completes the first randomized controlled trial evaluation of a US-based sport-for-sexual health curriculum. The results show that our programs significantly improve students’ sexual health literacy.

TGP expands the pipeline to its final stage by researching and piloting a new mental health promotion program for 8th-grade students. This new curriculum includes sessions on mental health stigma reduction, emotional regulation, stress management, healthy & unhealthy coping mechanisms, interpersonal communication, problem-solving, bullying, mindfulness, and goal setting.

TGP designs and launches Grassroots Fam and Grassroots Connect. Grassroots Fam is a three-session program aimed at helping to improve the frequency and effectiveness of conversations between caregivers/parents and their teens. Grassroots Connect is a linkage-to-care program that directly connects our students and their families to a range of clinical and social services related to our programs (e.g. health screenings, health insurance navigation, counseling services, etc.). Both Grassroots Fam and Grassroots Connect complement our existing school-based programs, and they have helped us to be more holistic and comprehensive in our approach to adolescent health.

TGP pilots a new pipeline approach to adolescent health education based on the National Health Standards and community-led focus groups. Now in addition to the 6th-grade comprehensive sexual health curriculum, 7th-grade students complete a nutrition and physical health curriculum. This new curriculum is an innovative and community-based approach to increasing adolescents’ self-efficacy to make small, manageable changes to their daily nutrition and physical activity.

TGP begins working directly with the DC Public Schools and the Office of the State Superintendent of Education to improve the overall adolescent health landscape for DC students—including HIV but also addressing other health disparities facing DC teens.

The pandemic that never ends! TGP started the year still in a virtual program setting, but transitioned back to in-person in the fall of 2021. This allowed students to access full health education programs online both synchronously, facilitated by our student-athlete volunteers on ZOOM, and asynchronously as independent at-home work for students. TGP is now able to utilize these virtual lessons as a supplement to in-person programming.
The Grassroot Project’s (TGP) board and leadership have built a three year plan to expand the organization’s work outside of Washington, DC. While TGP plans to continue growing its work within DC, we see a tremendous opportunity to impact more youth by replicating our programs in new cities.

TGP has conducted extensive research of potential expansion opportunities, grounded in outreach to public health stakeholders, reviews of school policies and epidemiological data, and consultations with students and professional strategists. Considering all of the data and insights that we gathered during this process, we recognized that each city brings its own unique set of opportunities, and that there is a demonstrated need for public health programming in all major American cities.

We are excited to announce that Grassroots will establish DC as our headquarter city, and will expand to Philadelphia in the upcoming year.

As part of the strategic planning process, we recognized the need to revisit and potentially refresh our brand. TGP’s original focus in 2009 was on stemming the HIV/AIDS epidemic in DC by adapting a sports-based HIV prevention program that was developed by GrassrootSoccer in South Africa.

TGP was founded by young college athletes who embraced the ideals of grassroots/community change. Because of its grassroots/community-organizing history and its desire to align with the GrassrootSoccer brand, the organization chose the name “The Grassroot Project,” and it incorporated the HIV/AIDS awareness ribbon into the organization’s logo. This name served TGP well in its early years, but now a change is needed to better represent our expanded impact.

The current TGP brand aims to embody a energetic, bold, ambitious, and youth-centered approach to advancing health equity. Since sports and physical activity are a core part of TGP’s identity, its typeface and colors aim to present a “sporty” essence. We aim to maintain these elements of our brand as we grow.
STAFF & LEADERSHIP

JANE WALLIS
Director
Of Programs & Operations

TRENIYYAH ANDERSON & LARA NEGRÓN OCASIO
Program Coordinators

MACKENZE JONES
Senior Program Manager

KATIE STEINOUR
Development and Communications Manager

TYLER SPENCER
Founder and Executive Director

MACKENZE JONES
Senior Program Manager

KATIE STEINOUR
Development and Communications Manager

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Founder and Executive Director

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UGWECHI AMADI
Head of Enterprise Strategy, Nike

RICHARD LIVINGSTONE
Deputy Chief of Staff & Communications Director, DC Department of Housing and Community Development
Our 2021 fiscal year marked our most successful fundraising year in our organization’s history. This is a reflection of both our ardent push to set ourselves up for expansion to Philadelphia and nationally and supporters (new and old!) stepping up to stand with us in this vision. As we embark on expansion to Philadelphia in the 2022-2023 academic year, we aim to continue a successful fundraising effort.

SPENDING BY PROGRAM AREA

2021 FISCAL YEAR GRANTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS BY SOURCE

PUBLIC DISCLOSURE OF REVENUE, EXPENSES, AND ASSETS (Taken from IRS Form 990)

The Grassroot Project has received the Guidestar Platinum Seal of Transparency and continues to be listed as “one of the best” nonprofits in the Catalogue for Philanthropy.
DONORS

$250,000
Gilead Sciences

$120,000
Office of the State Superintendent of Education

Up to $100,000
Bender Foundation
Reva and David Logan Foundation

$25,000 – $49,999
W/V Healthcare
DC Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy
Ittleson Foundation

$5,000 – $10,000
CareFirst
DC Health
Craig LeJeune
Mayor’s Office on Volunteerism
Nancy Keener
Clark-Winchcole Foundation
Fight for Children

$2000 – $4,999
Reva and David Logan Foundation
Bender Foundation
Up to $100,000
Education

$120,000
Gilead Sciences

$250,000
Ugwechi Amadi
Nigel Powell and June Fernandez
Patrick Nero
Gilead Sciences

$500 – $999
Michael Bourie*
Dilendra Suber
Michelle Hess
Linda Abbey
Guenevere Burke
Faye Campbell
Beverly Cosslett
Jeffrey Howard
KPMG
Stephen Whisnant

$100 – $499
Linda Farrell
Nora Veder
Erin Wispelwey
Ted Costigan
Michael Plankey
Eric Strady
Son Lu
Anne Spencer
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Victoria Stulgis
Lynne Tye
Susan Veder
Nick Williams
Kamal Wood
Caitlin Morris-Bender

Regan Cook
Jocelyn Rigel
Lisa Danchak Martin
Amiee Danchak Yourio
Paulami Devarman
Ellen Edwards
Samantha and Elliot Gallion
Amelia Garton
Taylor Gwadin
Angelicina Weiner
Suzi Imanelor
Braeden Kelly
Shane Kocour
Lorne Lipstein
Ashley Mahoney
Kelly Maysley
Karen McDonald
Karen McDonnell
Richie Patel
David Phillips
Tracy Shakespeare
Lauren T’Kint de Roobenek
Anabel Ton
Lisa Washington
Dylan Wolfe
Beth Ellinport
Alexandra McAllufle
Sam Muratori*
Matthew Scott
Doloris Wood Bell
Melanie Wood
Brooke Stoller
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Scott Allen
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Kristen Bankert
Alexa Brooks Major
Carolyn Campbell
Lauren Gilliss
Aquila Harper
Tamara Henry
Raymond Kemp
Jaeyeon Lee
Jonathan Mabile
Jamie Maigne
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Giselle Maheshwari
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Nicole Collins
Robert Danziger
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Darius Baker
Angelo Barberio
Connor Barrett
Lauren Bennett
Sophie Bolich
Morgan Brinson
Drew Carmel
Abraham Correa-Medina
Cate Golden

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* indicates a member of The Coaches Circle, a donor who gives monthly