



# Building Healthy Economics

P.O. Box 10677, Oakland, CA 94610 [www.familyhoodconnection.org](http://www.familyhoodconnection.org) 510-776-4178

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Dear Friend!

Greetings! My name is David Roach. I am the founding Director of the Familyhood Connection Inc.

On behalf of the Familyhood Connection Inc, a 501 C-3 corporation in the state of California, please review "The Familyhood Connection's Road to Building Healthy Economics Model."



## 2009 recipient of Morehouse Colleges Community Service Award

Our road towards building Healthy Economics has been to advocate for African American Farmers (African American Farmers make less than 1/3 of one percent in the state of California). African-American farmers recently won a class action lawsuit for discrimination against the U.S.D.A. (see Pigsford vrs U.S.D.A.) In addition to our advocacy, we have established farmers markets and cooperative grocery stores in West Oakland that support African American farmers.

The mission of the Familyhood Connection Inc, is to promote programs that bring the generations together to build Healthy Economics. We define Healthy Economics as the day a community once termed "low-income," "high crime," becomes a sustainable and peaceful community.



**Will Scott. President of the African -American Farmers of California**

My personal journey began at Morehouse College in 1991, when Dr William Sheftal assigned our Urban Economic and Public Policy Class to find economic solutions for the African American community. During my research, I became inspired by the Tuskegee Normal School (Today's Tuskegee University) pioneered by Booker T. Washington, George W. Carver, and Thomas Campbell as a model of rebuilding our communities by connecting a school's agricultural system to meet the food needs of the school and its surrounding community.

## The West Oakland Food Collaborative launched today's Mandela Foods Cooperative

Our journey to turn this inspiration into action began with the Mo' Better Food Conference in 1996 and two years later establishing a student run farmers market at McClymonds high school (where I was the Director of the Business Academy). My students learned various computer programs to operate and promote the farmers market that was supplied by produce grown by African American farmers. A few years later, I became the co-director of the West Oakland Food Collaborative, which was funded by the U.S.D.A. to expand the farmers market for two years while planning to establish a cooperative grocery store in West Oakland in year three. Today's Mandela Food ' Cooperative in West Oakland is the result of the work initiated by Mo' Better Food and later the West Oakland Food Collaborative.





From these years of working to improve the health of West Oakland, I have witnessed an increase of urban gardens, school gardens, and farmers markets conducted by various organizations that in most cases have moved into a low-income community with the mission of increasing access to healthy foods for the residents.

Healthy Economics main difference is to strengthen organizations already in the community that represent a specific demographic of the community to provide the healthy food needs of the community.

For example, I am a board member or representative in some capacity with the following organizations. Each organization contains its own governance and membership of individuals who participate with the intent of improving the education for the next generation:



- The African American Farmers of California**
- The Historical Black College and Universities Coalition**
- McClymonds Alumni Association**
- S.F. Bay Area Morehouse College Alumni Association**

We call the Healthy Economics Campaign a “Model,” because the organizations above, typically exist in every city in the U.S. For example, there is a high school in every city, and typically graduates (Alumni) of that high school live fairly close to their old high school. Our role is to pull them together, to create a continuity of education and community development. Our strategy is to utilize three main programs (we often call “The three steps of Hotep”) are designed to bridge these typical type of organizations that represent an association in most communities.



These three programs are:

- 1) Mo Better Food ( [www.mobetterfood.com](http://www.mobetterfood.com)) our primary focus is to support African American farmers by establishing market for their produce.
- 2) Friends of school – ([www.friendsofschool.org](http://www.friendsofschool.org))
- 3) The Intergenerational Enterprise - ([intergenerationalenterprise.com](http://intergenerationalenterprise.com))



These three programs are designed to function like a needle and thread to pull together a number of organizations to create a cultural quilt that protects the history of a community by reinforcing its past through intergenerational activities and intergenerational governance.

## With all these programs, where do we begin?



We have already started...

When President Barack Obama stepped into office, one of the first things he did was change the way we celebrate the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. He changed Dr. King's birthday, from "a day off" to "a day of service." "Therefore for the past two years, thousands of volunteers, all over the country, on Dr. King's birthday, have found various projects in their own community to come together and volunteer to improve.



Over the past two years, two projects, we have spearheaded here in Oakland: Castlemont High school's garden, and The Mo' Better Food Educational Park, have attracted several hundred volunteers to come together to improve the community. While, we have great success on these 1 day a year events, if anybody knows anything about planting a garden, it takes a lot more maintenance than one day a year can provide. For this reason, we are suggesting all these programs to begin the first Saturday of each month with a follow up meeting/volunteer day the following 1st Saturday. Therefore, in addition to hosting a once a year volunteer event for the year, we host 12 volunteer day

(every 1st Saturday).

Each 1st Saturday Event contains three main components:

1) An Intergenerational Enterprise meeting



2) A Volunteer Project (ie. School garden, farmers market-social enterprise defined by community)

3) Kulture Freedom – Remembrance Educational Activities  
(see [Kulturefreedom.com](http://Kulturefreedom.com))

The website: [1stSaturdays.com](http://1stSaturdays.com) currently lists various cities, locations and projects seeking volunteers.

Healthy Economics attempts to "systematically" expose and promote the opportunities of developing "green jobs" through hands on initiatives that interconnect to facilitate sustainability in the community. Systematically because its an agreement between several organizations to plant here... have a farmers market there...a grocery store over there, which they all support. They agree on their roles and responsibilities to participate in the operations, management and ownership of these endeavors.



In addition to the organizations above “The Systematic Organizations- ones identified as in every community

The Familyhood Connection Inc, is partnering with several organizations to promote Healthy Economics.

The Organizatons/Schools are:

Kulture Freedom.Com

The Oakland Film Society

Healthy Oakland

Tommorrows Answers

Oakland Unified School District

Urban Releaf

Kijiji Grows

Goun Green

Black Farmers Agricultural Association

Claremont Middle School

Castlemont High School

McClymonds High School

Support Oakland Artist



As the founding director of the Familyhood Connection Inc, I have traveled towards Healthy Economics through the Adventures of Hotep. (Hotep means Peace). Hotep, was first seen in the magazine Lunda- The Idea of Familyhood in 1992, and became the mascot of Mo’ Better Food ( Mandela Farmers Market).

Our travels together have consisted of working together with several organizations to accomplish one thing-building healthy economics.

If your organization would like to join our campaign, contact me at: [mobetterfood@gmail.com](mailto:mobetterfood@gmail.com)

Kind regards, David N. Roach