OUR MISSION

To support the growth and development of healthy Black families and individuals

OUR VISION

To bring about health equality for Black babies and full health equity for all Black children and families

A Black child should have the same opportunities in life as any other child.

OUR HISTORY

In 2006, current HBF board members volunteered on the Community Advisory Board (CAB) to Berkeley’s Black Infant Health Program. In 2013, the CAB established HBF and it became a 501 c(3) organization in July 2014.
OUR PHILOSOPHY

Our work is rooted at the intersection of health equity and social justice. Our programs and policies address the unique conditions that our Black families face, which cause additional daily stressors tied to toxic stress associated with individual, interpersonal, and institutional forms of racism.

We understand the importance of addressing systems change, engaging and empowering community, and advocating for our families. We believe that, collectively, we have the capacity to change these conditions. We know that maternal stress causes poor health outcomes in Black babies and that we need to go beyond the traditional health care system and provide equitable and healthy experiences for our mothers, children, and families. We also know that bringing our fathers closer into the circle of care is important to family stabilization.

OUR TEAM AND SUPPORTERS

Our Staff are highly qualified and from the communities we serve — many are graduates of our programs. We have a dedicated, hands-on Board of Directors who are passionate and have a wealth of knowledge, professional insights, and community experiences. We also have support from our “Friends of HBF” who are a wide range of community influencers that provide guidance and resources to the organization.

We acknowledge and appreciate our funding partners: the City of Berkeley, The San Francisco Foundation, UC Berkeley Chancellor’s Fund, Bella Vista Foundation, and future funders.
STEP began in 2002 and is a peer-led support and empowerment group that addresses health and social inequities for African American parenting women in our community. Many STEP women start their journey through the Black Infant Health (BIH) Program — we partner with BIH and provide support to their women. Once BIH women graduate, STEP provides continued education in areas such as access to essential goods and services, housing, education, job training, school readiness, and health information. “Our kitchen table” talks provide opportunities to share information and experiences.

Please join our Sister’s Circle! We meet every 4th Thursday, 6-8 pm. Childcare, food, and support are provided.

The vision of Healthy Black Families, Inc. is to “fully achieve health equity through the elimination of racism — primarily institutional racism.”

- Dr. Vicki Alexander, HBF, Inc. Founder
OUR PROGRAMS

STEP: Sisters Together Empowering Peers

STEP began in 2002 and is a peer-led support and empowerment group that addresses health and social inequities for African American parenting women in our community. Many STEP women start their journey through the Black Infant Health (BIH) Program — we partner with BIH and provide support to their women. Once BIH women graduate, STEP provides continued education in area such as access to essential goods and services, housing, education, job training, school readiness, and health information. “Our kitchen table” talks provide opportunities to share information and experiences.

STEP Sister Circles meet regularly. Childcare, food, and support are provided.

Kindergarten Readiness

Our Kindergarten Readiness Program uses peer educators to provide African American parents with information on early childhood development, how to access quality childcare, kindergarten readiness, and early enrollment. STEP Leaders are trained to create and implement outreach and education plans that engage parenting mothers, families, and kin-care providers of children ages 0-5.

We convene community empowerment groups, educational forums, and workshops in community-based settings to share information and resources highlighting the importance of early childhood education. Presentations are provided by experts from the City of Berkeley’s 20/20 Vision, Berkeley Unified School District, and other community groups. All of these experts address “Equity for Black Children” with a focus on toxic stress, racism, and its effects on early childhood development, classroom education, and family stability. In addition, local African American families share experiences about raising their children ages 0-5 and the systemic challenges they face in preparation for kindergarten readiness.
**Thirsty for Change**

We partner with the Center for Food, Faith and Justice, McGee Avenue Baptist Church, and The Way Christian Center with the aim of creating an atmosphere of healthy food and drink consumption, awareness of health equity, and empowering our families to lead healthy lives.

Thirsty for Change! engages African Americans in South and West Berkeley through a wide array of fun activities for the entire family to improve the health of our community. Activities include community gardening, shopping at farmer’s markets, cooking and eating nutritious foods, and recruiting youth water ambassadors. We aim to increase community knowledge on the health impacts of sugar sweetened beverages (SSBs), such as poor oral health, diabetes, and obesity. We encourage our community to drink water over SSBs, eat healthy foods, choose to breastfeed (when feasible) and exercise.

For more details on our Thirsty for Change! goals, please visit www.healthyblackfamiliesinc.org.

**Telling Our Stories**

We offer participants a safe space to address stressors associated with motherhood, mother-child bonding, relationships, and more through the form of self-expression and writing. To date, HBF has completed three rounds of healing writing circles that have culminated in three self-published books, entitled: What We Carry: Stories Black Women Never Tell – Multiple Volumes. Subsequently, HBF hosts book launch celebrations accompanied by live readings from the authors, community engagement, and public acknowledgment of the power of story-telling.

These books are authored by several dedicated writers (Black women) who gathered over a period of 6 weeks to share stories of resilience, strength, grace, vulnerability, and more through various life experiences. Topics in the book range from Black Hair and Interpersonal Relationships to the Representation of Black People in The Media. This book represents the voices of Black women from all walks of life. The communal writing space whereby this book was birthed is an integral space devoted to Black women and community empowerment. When the women are empowered, the community is then empowered.
OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

Building resilient and powering individuals and families
Peer support, leadership development and services as solidarity not charity

Building Community Power
Telling Our Stories and Raising our voices for the Right to Stay, Return, and Thrive; Educate, Activate, Organize

Building Effective Alliances
Collaboration and cooperation with partners with shared values. Authentic self-determination and transformative
Here’s How You Can Support HBF

- Donate — *Contributions can be made via our website or checks mailed to the HBF office address below.*
- Volunteer
- Share Our Work
- Become a Friend of HBF

Healthy Black Families, Inc.
510.285.6689 | www.healthyblackfamiliesinc.org
3356 Adeline Street, Berkeley, CA 94703 | Follow us on Facebook