

# PROGRESS

REPORT 2014

## A MESSAGE FOR OUR COMMUNITY

My husband Tom and I grew up in Raleigh and raised our children here. Now we are fortunate enough to be part of our grandchildren's lives as they visit us in this thriving city.

I've seen the Raleigh area change over the years, responding to the needs and demands of its diverse and increasing population. Through service with many organizations, I have participated in that change, doing what I can to make Wake County an even more desirable and healthy place for people to live and to care for their children.

This is precisely why I am so proud to serve on the Board of Directors of the John Rex Endowment. The foundation is as dynamic as the city it calls home. In my ten years with this organization, it has adapted to respond to the needs of our community's children.

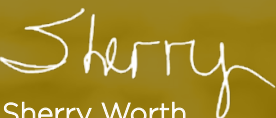
Our grantee partners are terrific organizations that share our interest in making this community a vibrant place to live for our children. We are committed to support the efforts of these organizations by giving them resources needed to help them accomplish their work with the greatest impact.

As you look inside this Progress Report, you'll read about some of these organizations and the work they have accomplished with the funding provided by the John Rex Endowment. You'll also get a snapshot of our 13-year history of giving, as well as the goals we have established as part of our five-year plan.

I encourage you, as a fellow community leader, to support such efforts toward positive mental health, preventing injury, and healthy foods and active living for Wake County children.

Don't you agree that every step forward in these areas, which are so crucial to the health of our children, helps to create a place where we all live healthier lives?

Warmest regards,



Sherry Worth  
Chair

# THE FOUNDATION'S STORY

**2000.** The John Rex Endowment was formed in 2000, resulting from the purchase of Rex Healthcare by the University of North Carolina Health Care System. The independent, private foundation, now managing a \$75 million endowment, was charged with advancing the original vision of Raleigh businessman and philanthropist John Rex. In his will of 1839, Rex stated the desire to use the estate he had created in Raleigh to “most extensively promote the welfare of others.”

**2001.** In 2001, the original Board of Directors established the foundation's purpose to support the health and well-being of underserved children living in Wake County. Seven years later, following national reports calling attention to the issue of childhood obesity, the John Rex Endowment made a commitment toward promoting healthy weight among children in Wake County.

**2013.** In Spring 2013, after a year-long assessment process, the foundation announced its five-year plan for funding in four areas: Healthy Weight; Injury Prevention; Mental Health, Social and Emotional Well-being; and Nonprofit Capacity Building.

**2013–2018.** OUR PLAN FOR IMPACT: 2013–2018 identifies the most promising avenues through which the foundation can make the greatest difference and bring about positive change for children in Wake County. Together, in partnership with organizations across the community, John Rex Endowment continues the work of the plan in order to make lasting improvements in the lives of vulnerable children.

## JOHN REX ENDOWMENT

We hold a fundamental belief that all children should be enabled to reach their full potential. We are driven by our desire to contribute to the ability of Wake County's children to thrive, to live fully, and to be well physically, mentally, and emotionally.

## OUR MISSION

The John Rex Endowment supports an environment where children and families in greater Wake County live healthy lives.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

### WE ARE COMMITTED TO HEALTH EQUITY.

We focus resources on projects that benefit vulnerable children who are at a disadvantage for achieving optimal health. **Wake County SmartStart** received funds to develop a way for families with young children to access a centralized system for referrals to home-based services. A minimum of 19 public and private home-based programs in Wake County serve at least 1,500 children. Another 21 programs provide referrals to home-based services. The new system brings together providers and agencies, making it easier for families to get information and secure easy and timely access to programs that best meet their needs.

### WE ACTIVELY BUILD ON THE INTERCONNECTEDNESS OF OUR FUNDING AREAS.

While our goals align closely with a respective funding area, we also maximize impact across funding areas. A grant awarded to **Wake County Public School System's Project Enlightenment** enables implementation of the Triple P Positive Parenting Program, which focuses on the prevention of maltreatment and the risk of injuries to young children, and the promotion of positive social-emotional development. At least 500 providers will be trained in Triple P, reaching 71 percent of 27,600 Raleigh families with a child from birth to five years of age, and with the goal of improving parenting skills while reducing abuse and neglect, out of home placements, and social and behavioral problems.

### WE BELIEVE IN SUPPORTING OPPORTUNITIES FOR HEALTH PROMOTION AND PREVENTION.

We seek to create change and improvement at the core of a matter and aim to arrest specific problems before they occur. Grant funds were awarded to **InterAct of Wake County** to update its Youth Education Services (YES) program, which focuses on reducing dating violence among young people. Youth engaged through outreach and prevention programming not only change their personal knowledge, attitudes, skills and beliefs, but also impact friends, families, and communities.

### WE FAVOR TAKING AN EVIDENCE-BASED APPROACH.

In keeping with the adage, "One doesn't need to reinvent the wheel," we support an evidence-based approach to improve the health and well-being of children. A recent grant, Preventing Obesity by Design (POD) in Wake County, emphasizes the transformation of outdoor areas into active learning environments at eight child care centers. This project brings to bear knowledge gained in the four-year POD project, conducted in collaboration with the N.C. Partnership for Children in 10 North Carolina counties. Led by **N.C. State University Natural Learning Initiative**, child care center staff receive assistance and training to create active, edible outdoor settings.

## OUR GOALS

We are driven by our desire to contribute to the ability of Wake County's children to thrive, to live their lives fully, and to be physically, mentally, and emotionally well.

### **HEALTHY FOODS AND ACTIVE LIVING**

Improve policies and implement changes to the built environment that increase children's access to healthy foods and active living opportunities in Wake County municipalities.

### **PREVENTING INJURY**

Increase the number of people and organizations engaged in activities that are effective in preventing injury and ensuring the overall safety of Wake County children.

### **POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH**

Develop and enhance the contribution of Wake County children's places and spaces to the positive mental health of children.

### **COALITION EFFECTIVENESS**

Advance the effectiveness of coalitions working to: prevent childhood overweight and obesity; prevent injury and ensure the overall safety of children; and support children's mental health, social and emotional well-being.

### **NONPROFIT CAPACITY BUILDING**

Build the strength and sustainability of nonprofit organizations that support Wake County children in living healthy lives.



# GOALS IN ACTION

## HEALTHY FOODS AND ACTIVE LIVING

With our **Wake County Healthy Community Grants**, local municipal governments are provided resources to create healthier cities and towns through collaborative action. The grants help to improve policies and implement environmental changes to increase children's access to healthy foods and active living. Active Living By Design, one of our partners, created community-led change by collaborating with local and national entities to build a culture of active living and healthy eating to nearly 200 partnerships and communities. Advocates for Health in Action, another partner, collaborates with organizations to shape policy and environments that ensure affordable access to healthful foods and physical activity.

## PREVENTING INJURY

Clear and clean data can help prioritize community needs and can contribute to effective change. Our injury prevention funding is focused on the top five causes of Wake County childhood injury according to our recent assessment, **A Profile of Wake County Childhood Injury & Injury Prevention**. We engaged the UNC Healthy Solutions Team within the Department of Health Behavior at UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health to prepare a detailed county profile of those engaged in childhood injury prevention work and to identify existing data on childhood injury in Wake County. The report identifies key data and gaps on childhood injury and injury prevention and outlines recommendations for improvements. It is available on our website, along with a database of evidence-based programs from more than 11 national sources.

## POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH

The **Lucy Daniels Center** was awarded a grant to improve child care facilities' capacity to develop and sustain policies and practices that support the healthy social and emotional development of children they serve. Examples include decreasing expulsions and limitations on attendance, and the promotion of children in entering kindergarten with developmentally appropriate social and emotional skills. As part of the work, project staff has served administrators and staff at 42 child care centers. On-site trainings are supplemented with intensive in-classroom observations, mentoring, group discussions, and problem-solving specific to the needs of individual children and sites.

## NONPROFIT CAPACITY BUILDING

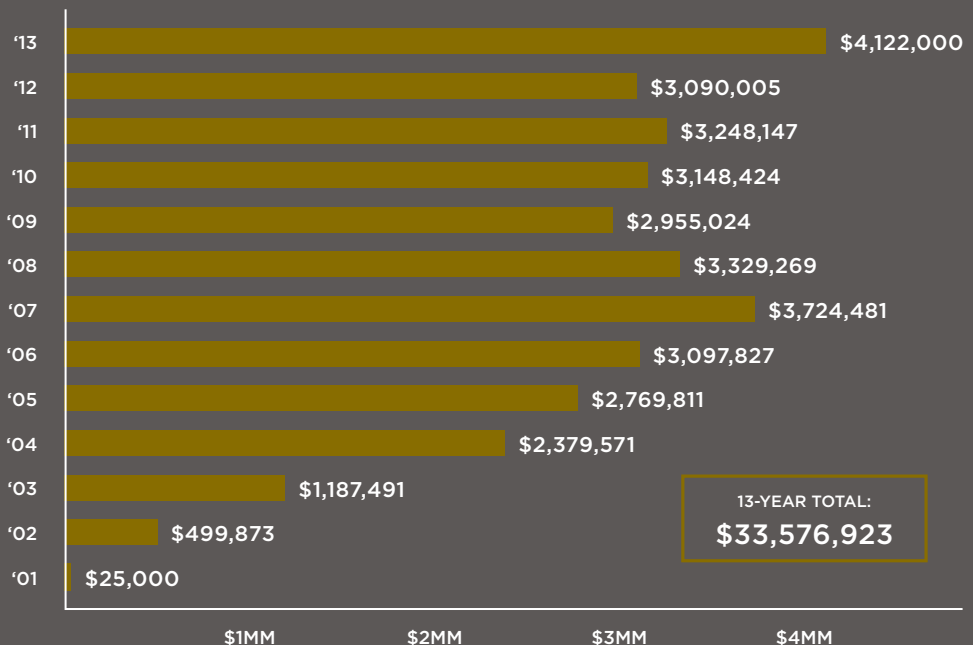
We support organizations to strengthen and enhance core infrastructure so they can deliver quality programming more effectively and efficiently and achieve their mission.

We have assisted 32 unique organizations through organizational assessments and capacity building. The assessments allow organizations to undergo a six-point capacity review and for board and staff to reach a shared understanding of the organization’s strengths and challenges. Capacity building projects, which often are assessment outcomes, allow organizations to plan for or implement strategies to increase effectiveness and sustainability.

1. **Mission, Vision and Strategy:** Does the organization have a clear mission and vision, and are they aligned with its strategies? Nine organizations have worked on related projects.
2. **Governance and Leadership:** Does the organization have strong governance and foster leadership? Five organizations have worked on related projects.
3. **Resource Development:** Is the organization financially sustainable? Five organizations have worked on related projects.
4. **Strategic Relationships:** Does the organization have strong and positive relationships with external stakeholders? Two organizations have worked on related projects.
5. **Internal Operations and Management:** Does the organization have a strong and sound core infrastructure? Eleven organizations have worked on related projects.
6. **Program Delivery and Impact:** Is the organization effective in delivery of programs and services? Is impact evaluation integral to the organization? One organization has worked on a related project.

## HISTORY OF CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS

Grants and Program Services



## STAFF

Kevin Cain, President and CEO

Gladys Hairston, Program Associate

McAllister Ross Myhra, Director of Operations

Kate Shirah, Program Director

## BOARD

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Deborah Nelson, *Consultant for early childhood system building initiatives*

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Ramon Rojano, *Director, Wake County Human Services*

Jimmy Talton, *Senior Vice President, CapTrust Financial Advisors*

For more information,  
visit [rexendowment.org](http://rexendowment.org).



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To request a printed copy, send an email to [mcallister@rexendowment.org](mailto:mcallister@rexendowment.org).