

OUR PLAN FOR

IMPACT

2013 - 2018



JOHN REX
ENDOWMENT

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OUR PATH OF PROGRESS

WHEN THE JOHN REX ENDOWMENT was formed in 2000, the result of the purchase of Rex Healthcare by the University of North Carolina Health Care System, the foundation was charged with advancing the original vision of Raleigh businessman and philanthropist John Rex. His desire was simple, yet broad: to support the well-being of area residents.

Our original board of directors set out on their journey with an aspiration for this independent, private foundation to create a more focused impact with its grantmaking. The board refined the foundation's purpose to one of a more directed path — that of supporting the health and well-being of underserved children living in Wake County. Keeping in step with this objective, the foundation moved forward with a guidepost of ensuring access to care for Wake County children.

Seven years following its charter, the John Rex Endowment shifted slightly in step as a result of then recent national reports. A 2001 Surgeon General's Call to Action¹ and a 2004 National Institute of Medicine report² called attention to the issue of childhood obesity.

Responding to this growing concern for the health of our nation's children, the foundation set a path of commitment toward promoting healthy weight among children in Wake County. This stride marked the beginning of a shift from the John Rex Endowment's emphasis on access to health care to a concentration on the health and well-being status of children and the prevention of health problems.

The most recent turning point in the John Rex Endowment's path of progress occurred in Spring 2012. The foundation announced it would embark on an assessment of selected funding areas in order to hone its focus and gain an even deeper impact on the health of Wake County children. More than 50 community stakeholders were engaged in the process, sharing their perspectives regarding the strengths, challenges, and opportunities related to the health and well-being of children in Wake County. The process resulted in the selection of *Injury Prevention* and *Mental Health, Social and Emotional Well-being* along with *Healthy Weight* and *Nonprofit Capacity Building* as the foundation's four areas of funding focus for the next five years.

... focus and gain an even deeper impact on
the health of Wake County children.

We aspire to make improvements
that will last. Such change takes time.

We then set out to develop a plan with the aim to identify the most promising avenues through which our foundation can make the greatest difference and bring about positive change for children in Wake County. We know the kind of change we hope to create will take longer than five years. We aspire to make improvements that will last. Such change takes time. Our intent is that our plan will start us on this journey of achieving deeper impact toward our mission.

Our Plan for Impact, 2013-2018, is the culmination of this assessment and planning process. But this is not a path we walk alone. A significant part of the plan relies on the development and enhancement of deeper partnerships with and across organizations and our community. It is only by working together toward common goals that we will successfully reach our desired destination.



OUR MISSION

We hold a fundamental belief that all children should be enabled to reach their full potential. Thus, our approach and motivation in all we do is 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. This belief is manifested in our mission.

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

OUR COUNTY'S CHILDREN

THE FACTORS that influence children's ability to live their lives fully are numerous and complex. In Wake County, the statistics regarding children from birth to age 18 shape an insightful story about our county's children that is worth sharing.

We start with sheer population growth, which, in Wake County between 2000 and 2010, was greater than any other North Carolina county.³ That kind of rapid growth brings a progressively diverse population, which includes a significant increase in residents born outside of the United States.³ Of the more than 238,000 children living in Wake County,⁴ roughly 16 percent are children of immigrant families.⁵ As recognized by Wake County stakeholders, it is a segment of the population whose unique needs we as a community generally are unprepared to address.^{7,8,9}

Yet even more significant to the health and well-being of children than population segment is the annual income of the family household. The Federal Health and Human Services Poverty Guidelines define poverty for a family of four at or below \$23,550 annually.¹⁰ Within the 857 square miles that comprise Wake County,⁶ the percentage of residents living in poverty ranges among the municipalities, from a low of 2.6 percent in Apex to a high of 27.4 percent in Zebulon.¹¹ **Throughout Wake County, nearly 40,000 of those living in poverty are children.**⁴

WAKE COUNTY BY THE NUMBERS

Square miles **857**
(7th largest of 100 counties)⁶

Population **925,938**⁴

Population living in poverty (12%)³ **111,113**

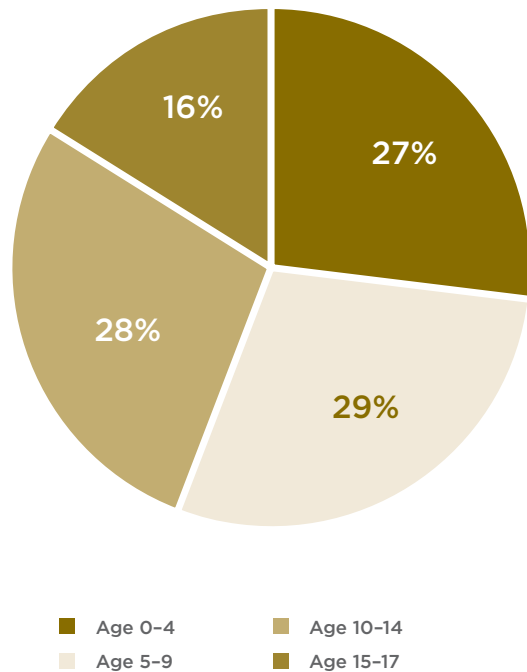
Children under the age of 18 **238,154**⁴

Children living in poverty (16.4%)⁴ **39,123**

Children in single parent home (26%)¹² **31,414**

Unemployment rate **7.8%**¹³

BREAKDOWN OF WAKE COUNTY CHILDREN UNDER 18⁴



Compare the \$23,550 figure with the North Carolina Justice Center's 2010 calculation that **a family of four in North Carolina in reality needs \$48,814 annually to afford basic expenses** (housing, food, child care, health care, transportation, taxes, and other life necessities)¹⁴, and you begin to see the disparity and understand the circumstances in which many of our county's children are living.

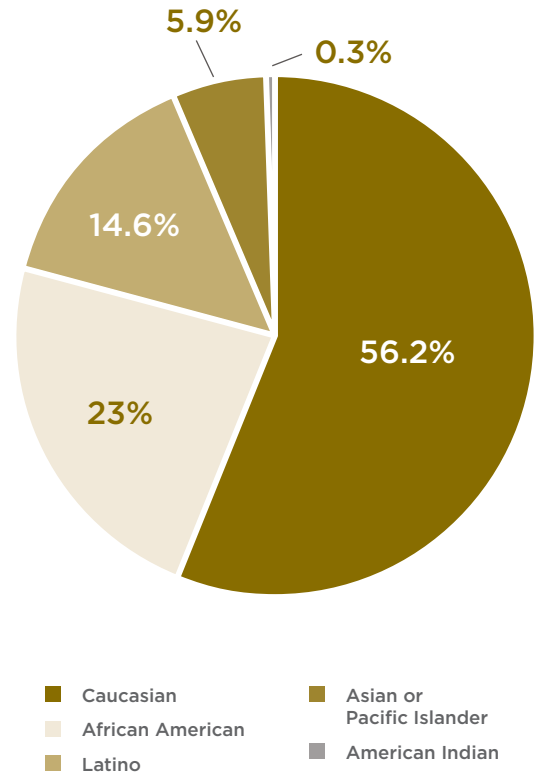
In addition to household income, race and ethnicity is also a significantly influencing factor in the health and well-being of a child. Minority children are more likely than white children to be uninsured.¹⁵ Although infant mortality rates have dropped in North Carolina, the rate among African American infants is more than double than that of white infants.⁷ Adolescent pregnancies are highest among African American and Latino girls aged 15-17.¹⁶

These and other racial and ethnic disparities are somewhat due to disproportionate rates of minority children living in poverty. However, when controlling for income and insurance coverage, health disparities for minority children still exist. According to the National Institute for Health Care Management Research and Educational Foundation, "Disparities based on race and ethnicity are at least partially attributable to racism and discrimination in the United States, which have led to institutional barriers to health care, education, occupational and housing opportunities."¹⁷

In essence, children’s development and the opportunities and challenges they face are affected by a variety of factors such as family, social, and physical environments, along with income, education, behavior, and access to and availability of services.

As a foundation, the work we do and the goals of our five-year plan aim to support an environment that builds on community resources through projects that address at their very core the factors that influence our children’s ability to live their lives fully. We intend to bring about positive change for children in Wake County by influencing foundational improvements that will endure well into the future.

RACE/ETHNICITY OF WAKE COUNTY CHILDREN⁴



OUR FUNDING AREAS

Our five-year plan not only opens a greater opportunity to create positive change for children in Wake County, but it also enables the John Rex Endowment to identify the most promising areas in which our grantmaking can make the greatest impact.

Additionally, provided with a clearer understanding of our funding goals, the organizations with whom the foundation works will have an opportunity to create their own growth and project plans with greater knowledge of the foundation's funding interests through 2018.

OUR FUNDING AREAS

HEALTHY WEIGHT

CHILDHOOD OVERWEIGHT AND OBESITY is clearly a public health concern in Wake County. The issue is especially important to address now, when nearly 36.5 percent of children in Wake County are overweight or obese¹¹, compared to 33.5 percent statewide.¹⁸

Nationally, obesity rates have more than doubled in children and tripled in adolescents during the last 30 years.¹⁹ We know what that means to the health of our children. Clinical risk factors related to childhood obesity are well documented — high cholesterol, high blood pressure, diabetes, and significant increases in the risk for heart disease in adulthood as early as age 25.²⁰ Other risks resulting from childhood overweight and obesity include social and psychological problems, such as stigmatization and low self-esteem.

Healthy eating for Wake County families is not always an easy solution. Families find it cheaper and easier to purchase unhealthy foods, and more than 57 percent of North Carolina children eat fast foods one or two times each week.²¹ Additionally, 63 percent of the state's children are not eating the recommended minimum five servings of fruits and vegetables each day.²¹

The other half of the “eat healthy and exercise” equation is also challenged when increased activity is stymied by fear for children’s safety and competing priorities, limiting the amount of time children spend outdoors being physically active.¹¹ Although the county boasts tens of thousands of acres of recreational space with hundreds of parks and miles of greenways,²² **45 percent of the state’s children spend more than two hours a day in front of a TV/video/computer screen** and are not participating in any vigorous physical activity just a few days a week.²¹

The policies and programs that impact social and physical environments in Wake County create both barriers and opportunities for improving the health of families and children. Key stakeholders feel environmental, policy, and systems approaches are necessary to achieve long-term, sustainable changes and supports for healthy weight in children.

Nearly 36.5 percent of children in Wake County are overweight or obese.¹¹

WEIGHT DEFINED

Overweight is defined as having excess body weight for a particular height from fat, muscle, bone, water, or a combination of these factors.

Obesity is defined as having excess body fat.

Overweight and obesity are the result of “caloric imbalance”—too few calories expended for the amount of calories consumed—and are affected by various genetic, behavioral, and environmental factors.

Childhood obesity has both immediate and long-term effects on health and well-being.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention¹⁹

OUR FUNDING AREAS

INJURY PREVENTION

ANY HARM INFLICTED upon a child, whether by another person or as the result of an accident, is never acceptable. Yet it happens all too often. In Wake County alone, between July 2011 and June 2012, more than 2,000 individual Wake County children were victims of maltreatment, and another nearly 3,000 children were living in homes for which preventive services were recommended.²³ Even more sobering is the frequency and severity of the maltreatment. Of the 2,000 victims, 8.5 percent of the children were victimized more than once during the same time period,²⁴ and 723 of those 2,000 cases had the most severe findings of abuse and/or neglect.²³

Unfortunately, injuries sometimes end with the most tragic outcome. In Wake County, 50 percent of all deaths among children age 1 through 18 are the result of injury.²⁵ For each child fatality, it is estimated there are approximately 25 hospitalizations and almost 925 emergency room visits.²⁶ The list of related costs extends beyond the event itself to include school and work absences, ongoing medical and rehabilitation care, physical disability, and emotional trauma. All told, **the estimated national cost of childhood injury totals \$87 billion.**²⁷

As noted, not all harm and injuries that come to children are at the hands of another person. Unintentional injuries are just as much of a concern to childhood health and safety, and in fact are the leading cause of injury-related deaths among Wake County children.²⁵ For example, one fifth of all crashes in Wake County are child pedestrian crashes, and more than 50 percent of these child pedestrian crashes occur among children ages 10 to 14.²⁹

There was a consensus among Wake County stakeholders that the injury prevention landscape is not as well developed as other areas impacting the health and well-being of children. This may be due in part to the broad range of issues in this one area, and even more so to the recognition that funding is often directed toward addressing injuries after they occur, rather than on the prevention of injury.⁸

An opportunity to create a greater impact in this area lies in coordinating prevention efforts across organizations and communities, and the development of a strong and consistent injury prevention focus among those who are in a position to engage work on this issue on a community level, including public health professionals, public safety professionals, school administrators, and parents.

Between July 2011 and June 2012, more than 2,000 individual Wake County children were victims of maltreatment and another nearly 3,000 children were living in homes for which preventive services were recommended.²³

INJURY DEFINED

Intentional injuries result from interpersonal or self-inflicted violence, and include homicide, assaults, suicide and suicide attempts, child abuse and neglect (includes child sexual abuse), intimate partner violence, elder abuse, and sexual assault.

Unintentional injuries include, but are not limited to, those that result from motor vehicle crashes, falls, fires, poisonings, drowning, suffocations, choking, and recreational and sports-related activities.

Source: North Carolina's Strategic Plan for Preventing Injuries and Violence²⁸

MENTAL HEALTH, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH influences a child's ability to learn, to make sound decisions, and to behave in positive and healthy ways.^{30, 31} Further, children with high levels of social and emotional well-being also are able to form strong attachments and connections to other people, can better regulate their emotions, and can develop positive coping mechanisms and resilience in the face of adversity^{31, 32} — all of which help to serve them and their community as they develop into adulthood.

The achievement of positive mental health for many Wake County children is not an easy one, though. The need is great, and the need for more resources even greater. Currently, the Wake County public health system serves approximately 1 out of 3 children in need of mental health services and approximately 1 out of 20 children in need of treatment for substance abuse.³³ It is estimated that approximately 5 percent of the children in Wake County receive 95 percent of the public services available.³³

Many of the county's children in mental health services experience behavior disorders (71 percent), mood disorders (9 percent), and anxiety disorders (8 percent),³⁵ which can be contributors to issues at school, including school suspensions. While the Wake County Public School System continues to make progress in decreasing suspensions — **14,223 short-term and 403 long-term suspensions in the 2011-2012 school year**³⁶ as compared to 17,339 short-term and 577 long-term suspensions in 2010-2011³⁷ — the numbers still indicate a high number of children with underlying mental, social, or behavioral problems.

Wake County stakeholders feel an effective, comprehensive mental health system must include supports that contribute to the mental health, social and emotional well-being of all children; however, this is difficult when funding and therefore services are tied to individual children and diagnoses.⁹ Our goal in this funding area therefore focuses on improving and increasing the places and spaces that nurture positive mental health for children.

Currently, the Wake County public health system serves approximately 1 out of 3 children in need of mental health services and approximately 1 out of 20 children in need of treatment for substance abuse.³³

MENTAL HEALTH DEFINED

Mental health is a state of well-being in which an individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.

Source: World Health Organization³⁴

NONPROFIT CAPACITY BUILDING

IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE our plan goals, we are reliant upon nonprofit organizations working to improve the health and well-being of children in Wake County. However, nonprofits are challenged with raising necessary funds to sustain operations, let alone ensure the development and maintenance of the infrastructure necessary to fulfill their respective missions.

The number of registered 501(c)(3) public charities in North Carolina has increased almost 76 percent since 1999 to 28,865,³⁸ increasing competition for funding. Most of these organizations are small, and raising funds is a challenge, particularly since the bulk of revenue and spending is limited to a smaller number of larger nonprofits, such as hospitals and universities.³⁹ Additionally, government support for North Carolina nonprofits has declined steadily since 2009, resulting in staff reductions and elimination of programs and services at the smaller organizations.⁴¹

At the same time the demand for programs and services has increased. In North Carolina, 93 percent of nonprofits saw an increased demand for services in 2012, and 58 percent were unable to meet this demand.⁴²

Nonprofit capacity building support allows organizations to strengthen and enhance core infrastructure so they can deliver quality programming more effectively and efficiently, for the near- and long-term future. Such support enables the organizations to move beyond temporary work-a-rounds in addressing challenges to focus on how they must operate in order to achieve their mission.

In North Carolina, 93 percent of nonprofits saw an increased demand for services in 2012, and 58 percent were unable to meet this demand.⁴²

NONPROFIT CAPACITY BUILDING DEFINED

Nonprofit capacity building refers to activities that improve and enhance a nonprofit's ability to achieve its mission and sustain itself over time.

Source: National Council of Nonprofits⁴⁰

OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The John Rex Endowment is directed by strong and deliberate guiding principles, which in turn have informed the development of *Our Plan for Impact, 2013-2018*. These principles will continue to lead us on our path as we implement this five-year plan.

OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

All children, regardless of their societal conditions, deserve to reach their full potential of health and well-being.

WE ARE COMMITTED TO HEALTH EQUITY.

ALL CHILDREN, regardless of their societal conditions, deserve to reach their full potential of health and well-being.⁴³ **The way in which we implement our plan will be shaped by our foundation's ability to influence and change societal conditions**, and our ability to focus resources on vulnerable children who currently experience disparities that disadvantage them from opportunities for optimal health.

WE ACTIVELY BUILD ON THE INTERCONNECTEDNESS OF OUR FUNDING AREAS.

ALTHOUGH OUR goals align closely with their respective funding area, **our plan maximizes the promise of having impact across funding areas even with work toward a single goal**. An example of such interconnectedness would be the support of a project that enables a community center to provide high-quality parenting support, which has the potential to benefit children's mental health, as well as prevent injuries that result from child maltreatment.

... our foundation believes in supporting an evidence-based approach to improve the health and well-being of children.

WE BELIEVE IN SUPPORTING OPPORTUNITIES FOR HEALTH PROMOTION AND PREVENTION.

WE SEEK to address the issues surrounding children's health with an approach that creates changes and improvements at the core of the matter. We do so by focusing on health promotion strategies that support children in living healthy lives, as well as on prevention strategies that **aim to arrest specific problems before they occur.**

WE FAVOR TAKING AN EVIDENCE-BASED APPROACH.

IN KEEPING with the adage, "**One doesn't need to reinvent the wheel,**" our foundation believes in supporting an evidence-based approach to improve the health and well-being of children. This approach takes into account the most relevant and high-quality findings in research literature and combines it with: 1) practical experience and widely accepted best practice standards; 2) knowledge of the project setting (e.g., strategies may vary depending on city or town); and 3) an understanding of the target population (i.e., elementary, pre-teen, adolescents).^{44,45,46}

OUR OVERARCHING STRATEGIES

We hold to a philosophy of achieving impact through change, and a commitment to making change happen for the betterment of children in our community. This commitment is represented in our three overarching strategies: building organizational capacity; shaping community policies and environments; and supporting system-level improvements. Our plan's goals were developed with specific strategies that are synergistic with these overarching strategies.

Our foundation focuses on change across a broader range of community settings.

BUILDING ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

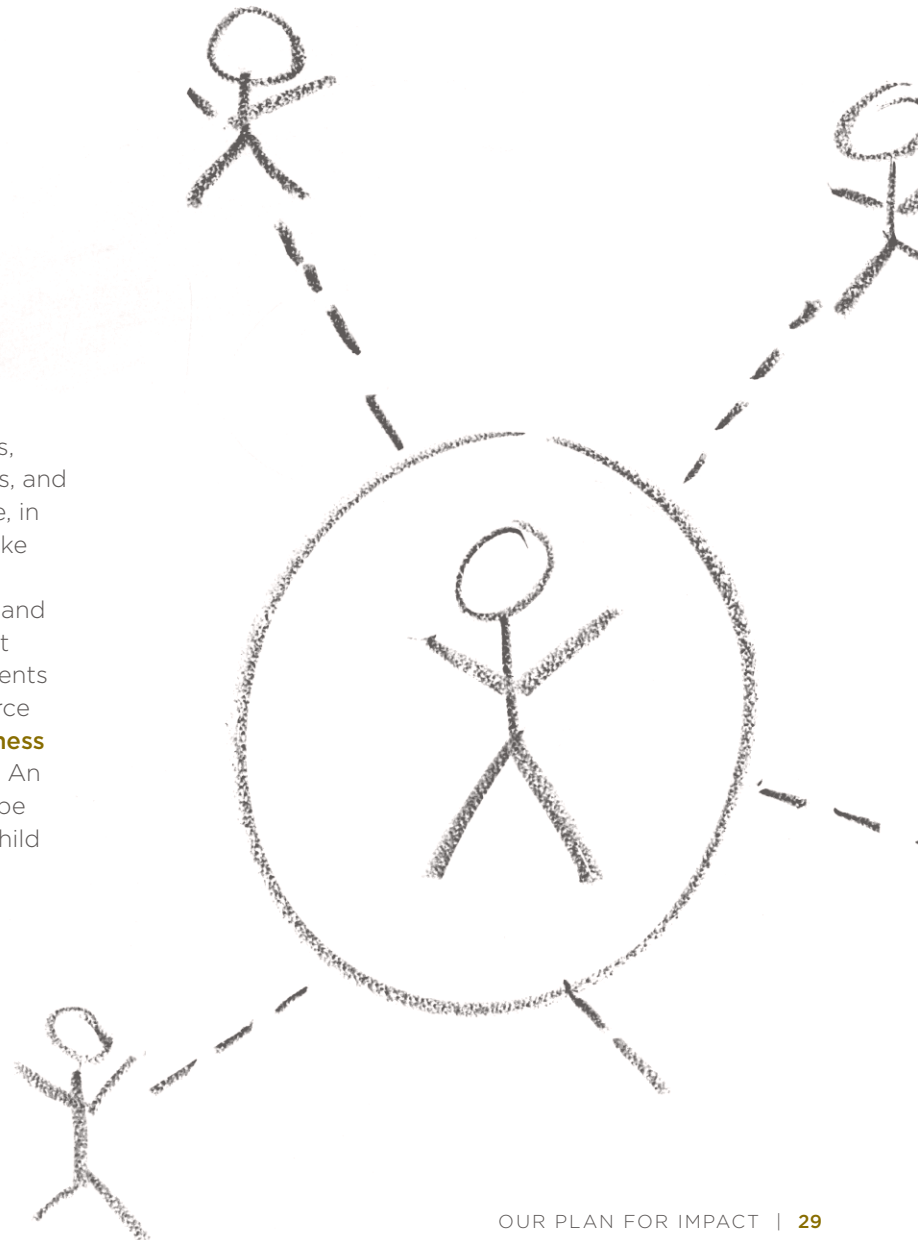
OUR FOUNDATION views capacity building as a process to maximize the existing strengths and assets of an organization through improvements to such foundational elements as program and evaluation infrastructure, staff development, and organizational decision-making. Helping to build the capacity of nonprofit organizations and government agencies produces a two-pronged benefit: **it increases the effectiveness of programs and services** focused on the health and well-being of Wake County children and families; and it improves the ability of organizations that provide these programs and services to **address community or systems-level issues** that enable Wake County children to live healthy lives.

SHAPING COMMUNITY POLICIES & ENVIRONMENTS

WITH A FOCUS on shaping community policies and environments, our foundation expands the emphasis from bringing about change within nonprofit organizations and government agencies, to a focus on change across a broader range of community settings, such as child care centers, neighborhoods, places of worship, and schools. Our work related to this strategy involves supporting change in two ways. First, **we look at how community settings operate**. For example, we may work with afterschool program administrators to establish policies on required training for adult volunteers. Second, **we consider the conditions in community settings**. For example, we may focus on facilitating children's independent play and learning through physical changes to a community center.

SUPPORTING SYSTEM-LEVEL IMPROVEMENTS

A **SYSTEM** is comprised of individuals, organizations, policies, relationships, institutional cultures, resources, and other components connected by a common purpose, in our case, the health and well-being of children in Wake County. Ideally, each single component of a system operates in concert with the others as an integrated and high-functioning whole. In reality, however, that is not always the case. Our foundation supports improvements in areas such as policy, regulation, linkages, or resource allocation **to increase the system's overall effectiveness in ensuring Wake County children live healthy lives**. An example of such a system-level improvement might be addressing and improving licensing regulations for child care centers.



OUR GOALS

We work alongside numerous organizations, community members, policy makers, and others who share in a vision that all Wake County children have a healthy weight, are living safe and injury-free, and have positive mental health and expected levels of social and emotional well-being.

Our plan lays out five goals as our foundation's intended contribution to this vision. For each goal, we have outlined specific strategies to be implemented over the next five years. These goal-specific strategies relate directly to one, two, or all of our overarching strategies, as well as to strategies for the other goals. In this way, we maintain an interconnected whole, the center of which will always be the health and well-being of the children of Wake County.

GOAL #1

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.

GOAL #1

THE JOHN REX ENDOWMENT wants to assure Wake County children have opportunities for healthy eating and active living. The role of parents and interpersonal relationships are critical, yet we know **families need safe, reasonably priced, and convenient access to healthy foods and opportunities for physical activity.** Key stakeholders, local leaders, and health advocates confirm Wake County's municipalities can and should play a central role in building healthier communities.

Toward this goal, the John Rex Endowment will prioritize an evidence-based approach to planning, policy development and implementation, and built environment changes (i.e., man-made structures like schools, parks, sidewalks, and other transportation-related infrastructure⁴⁷) that have a measurable and wide-scale impact on children's access to healthy foods and active living.

Avenues to improve children's nutrition may include enhancing the presence and affordability of healthy food options in retail environments, such as grocery stores, convenience stores, farmers' market and food stands. Similarly, municipal governments can enact zoning ordinances and other policies to improve opportunities for local organizations, parents, and children to grow and prepare fresh produce where they live, work, and

attend school. To increase routine physical activity in children, municipalities can focus on creating safer and more options for walking and bicycling, such as to/from schools or parks and recreation centers. In addition, local governments can develop plans and development policies that will result in more pedestrian friendly or "walkable" communities with safe and active public play spaces for families with children.

Grant funds for this goal will be targeted directly to municipalities, either singly or, should the municipality choose to do so, in partnership with nonprofit organizations.

OUR STRATEGIES

There is significant momentum within Wake County's towns and cities, and among its nonprofit organizations, local governments, and other agencies, yet additional efforts are needed to create healthier environments and policies that encourage and support children and families.¹¹ Our work toward this goal will provide support that improves the way municipal planning, policies, and the built environment contribute to children's increased access to healthy foods and opportunities for active living.

Avenues to improve children's nutrition may include enhancing the presence and affordability of healthy food options in retail environments, such as grocery stores, convenience stores, farmers' market and food stands.

To increase routine physical activity in children, municipalities can focus on creating safer and more options for walking and bicycling, such as to/from schools or parks and recreation centers.

GOAL #1

OVERARCHING STRATEGY	KEY CONSIDERATIONS	GOAL STRATEGIES
<p>Building Organizational Capacity</p>	<p><i>Strengthening regional and county-wide organizations support of municipalities in implementing evidence-based strategies focused on improving policies and implementing changes to the built environment that increase children's access to healthy foods and active living opportunities.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build capacity of regional and county-wide organizations to support municipalities in implementing evidence-based strategies focused on improving policies and implementing changes to the built environment that increase children's access to healthy foods and active living opportunities
<p>Shaping Community Policies & Environments</p>	<p><i>Building municipal stakeholders' recognition of the importance of policy and built environment to increase children's access to healthy food and active living opportunities.</i></p> <p><i>Transforming community settings through improved policies and the implementation of changes to the built environment that increase children's access to healthy foods and active living opportunities.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct or support activities that foster learning and commitment related to the role of policy and built environment as an avenue to increasing children's access to healthy food and active living opportunities • Enhance existing or create new opportunities for peer learning and support related to evidence-based strategies focused on policy and built environment change • Promote evidence-based standards and guidelines related to policy and built environment change • Plan for and implement evidence-based policy and built environment change strategies in municipalities

OVERARCHING STRATEGY	KEY CONSIDERATIONS	GOAL STRATEGIES
Shaping Community Policies & Environments <i>(Cont'd)</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide technical assistance and coaching to municipalities and partner organizations engaged in planning and implementing evidence-based strategies focused on policy and built environment change • Share success stories and learnings related to policy and built environment change
Supporting System-level Improvements	<p><i>Raising the profile of children's healthy weight as a key priority for healthy, livable, and economically sustainable cities and towns.</i></p> <p><i>Improving or creating municipal plans and policies to increase children's access to healthy food and active living opportunities.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct or support activities that foster learning and commitment related to children's healthy weight as a key priority for healthy, livable, and economically sustainable cities and towns • Promote model municipal plans and policies that increase children's access to healthy food and active living opportunities • Plan for and implement municipal plans and policies that increase children's access to healthy food and active living opportunities • Provide technical assistance and coaching to municipalities in improving or creating municipal plans and policies that increase children's access to healthy food and active living opportunities • Share success stories and learnings related to municipal planning



GOAL #2

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.

GOAL #2

REGARDLESS OF WHETHER an injury is intentional or unintentional, it has a ripple effect on a child's health and well-being. When we prevent injuries from occurring, we protect children from temporary or permanent physical disability, prevent mental and emotional trauma, and ensure children can participate fully in life.

The John Rex Endowment believes preventing injuries and ensuring the overall safety of Wake County children can only be achieved if our county has a robust and diverse community of professionals and organizations committed to injury prevention and engaged in effective injury prevention activities.

OUR STRATEGIES

The level of injury prevention activity in Wake County is lacking according to Wake County stakeholders.

Furthermore, injury prevention activities that do exist are not well coordinated and lack a community-wide consensus on priorities for these efforts.⁸ Therefore, early work related to this goal will focus on gaining a deeper understanding of who currently is involved in injury prevention activities and the nature of those activities. Our strategies in this goal focus on increasing the number of individuals and organizations engaged in effective childhood injury prevention work.

When we prevent injuries from occurring, we protect children from temporary or permanent physical disability, prevent mental and emotional trauma, and ensure children can participate fully in life.

OVERARCHING STRATEGY	KEY CONSIDERATIONS	GOAL STRATEGIES
<p>Building Organizational Capacity</p>	<p><i>Supporting more organizations to engage in prevention activities that are effective in preventing injuries and ensuring the overall safety of Wake County children.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support activities that foster learning and commitment related to injury prevention and taking an evidence-based approach • Build capacity to use an evidence-based approach to injury prevention • Build capacity in using data to inform planning and implementation of injury prevention activities • Build capacity in scaling up effective injury prevention activities • Share success stories and learnings related to organizations' capacity- building work in injury prevention
<p>Supporting System-level Improvements</p>	<p><i>Identifying existing injury prevention resources in Wake County.</i></p> <p><i>Using data on childhood injury in Wake County to build consensus across stakeholders on injury prevention priorities, and to improve coordination of injury prevention activities.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare a detailed county profile of organizations engaged in injury prevention work, the nature of that work, and funding streams for injury prevention • Improve access to childhood injury data • Support the development of mechanisms for using childhood injury data to identify injury prevention priorities, and improving the coordination of injury prevention activities



GOAL #3

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

GOAL #3

WHILE WE RECOGNIZE genetics (nature) certainly play a role in a child's mental health, we also know healthy environments (nurture) are essential to maximizing a child's positive mental health.³⁰ The John Rex Endowment believes shaping children's places and spaces, such as child care centers, parks and recreation facilities, and preschools, is our foundation's best opportunity to support Wake County children's positive mental health.

Affecting children's places and spaces involves improving physical as well as social environments in ways that contribute to the healthy social and emotional development of children. Our work regarding this goal will focus on how the people, policies, practices, programs, and physical elements of a place or space can become more intentional and effective in promoting children's positive mental health.

OUR STRATEGIES

Since 2010, nearly 30 individuals and organizations in Wake County have been deeply engaged in the work of Youth Thrive, a collaborative formed to develop a community-wide agenda to improve outcomes and build effectiveness in achieving positive results for Wake County youth. A key strategy of Youth Thrive involves training for people, policies, practices, and programs on the subject of positive youth development.

Our initial investments toward this goal will focus on children, birth through 5th grade. Any strategies focused on older youth will be developed later in our five-year period, based on learnings from the work of Youth Thrive. The John Rex Endowment will pursue strategies aimed at shaping places and spaces in ways that contribute to children's positive mental health.

GOAL #3

OVERARCHING STRATEGY	KEY CONSIDERATIONS	GOAL STRATEGIES
<p>Building Organizational Capacity</p>	<p><i>Improving the effectiveness and reach of programming in children's places and spaces to promote children's positive mental health.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build capacity to implement evidence-based programs that support children's positive mental health in children's places and spaces • Facilitate new organizational partnerships that expand the reach of evidence-based programming in children's places and spaces
<p>Shaping Community Policies & Environments</p>	<p><i>Building community stakeholder interest in recognizing the importance of shaping children's places and spaces to promote children's positive mental health.</i></p> <p><i>Transforming physical and social environments for children's places or spaces to promote children's positive mental health.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support activities that foster learning and commitment related to the role of children's places and spaces in promoting children's positive mental health • Research and promote evidence-based standards and guidelines related to the people, policies, practices, programs, and physical elements in children's places and spaces

OVERARCHING STRATEGY	KEY CONSIDERATIONS	GOAL STRATEGIES
<p>Shaping Community Policies & Environments <i>(Cont'd)</i></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop quality improvement tools aimed at the people, policies, practices, programs, and physical elements in children's places and spaces • Implement quality-improvement projects that focus on the people, policies, practices, programs, or physical elements in children's places and spaces • Share success stories and learnings related to quality improvement activities and projects in Wake County children's places and spaces
<p>Supporting System-level Improvements</p>	<p><i>Changing systems to facilitate large numbers of children's places and spaces transforming their physical and social environments to better support children's positive mental health.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support advocacy for local or state policies that promote high-quality standards in children's places and spaces • Study and/or pilot workforce development approaches

GOAL #4

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.

GOAL #4

AS JOHN KANIA & Mark Kramer assert in “Collective Impact,” published in the Stanford Social Innovation Review, “No single organization is responsible for any major social problem, nor can any single organization cure it.”⁴⁸ Instead, it is often coalitions (i.e., individuals and organizations working together toward a common purpose), which often are recognized as integral avenues for addressing community needs and problems.

However, in practice, having various contingents work well together can be difficult: decision-making processes can be cumbersome and time-consuming, turf issues reinforce competition rather than collaboration, and funding to support coalition infrastructure is difficult to find.⁴⁹

Despite the challenges of coalition work, the **John Rex Endowment believes strong collaboration, collective planning, and unified action is critical** to ensuring Wake County children have a healthy weight, that they are

living safe and injury-free, and that they have positive mental health, social and emotional well-being. Therefore, our foundation will focus on building the capacity and effectiveness of existing Wake County coalitions working in these areas.

OUR STRATEGIES

Although there is substantive information and experience on the characteristics of effective coalitions, available tools and methods specifically focused on assessing and building the capacity and effectiveness of coalitions is limited.⁵⁰ As such, the John Rex Endowment’s initial focus will involve developing a framework similar to our nonprofit capacity building, but designed specifically for coalitions. This framework will drive the implementation of the strategies for this goal.

“No single organization is responsible for any major social problem, nor can any single organization cure it.”⁴⁸

OVERARCHING STRATEGY	KEY CONSIDERATIONS	GOAL STRATEGIES
<p>Supporting System-level Improvements</p>	<p><i>Building the interest and commitment of existing coalitions to engage in capacity building work.</i></p> <p><i>Identifying ways to contribute to stronger and more effective coalitions.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct or support activities that foster learning and commitment related to the potential impacts of strong and effective coalitions and the promise of capacity building to this end • Research and promote recommendations and standards related to coalition capacity and effectiveness • Research and develop capacity building tools targeted at assessing and increasing coalition capacity and effectiveness • Implement projects to strengthen the capacity and effectiveness of coalitions • Share coalition success stories and learnings



GOAL #5

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

GOAL #5

THE JOHN REX ENDOWMENT'S announcement in 2009 that it would begin investment in nonprofit capacity building was met with enthusiastic response from area nonprofits. During that first grant cycle, 13 organizations received funding dedicated to building the strength and resilience of organizations serving Wake County children.

Grantee experiences and our learnings consistently reinforce the importance and value of assessing and improving nonprofit infrastructure. **In essence, our nonprofit capacity building provides an opportunity for these organizations to pause, learn, reflect, and take action in developing long-term and sustainable solutions to the challenges they face in addressing the needs of the county's children.**

OUR STRATEGIES

The John Rex Endowment will continue work in support of nonprofit capacity building. All area nonprofits that play a significant role in supporting Wake County children in living healthy lives—even if working outside our identified funding areas—remain eligible to apply for organizational assessment, capacity building, or strategic restructuring support. During our plan's five-year timeframe, we will conduct a comprehensive evaluation of our nonprofit capacity building funding to-date. Until such time that we carry out the evaluation, the strategies related to this goal will be our focus as we support stronger and more effective nonprofits serving Wake County children.

Grantee experiences and our learnings consistently reinforce the importance and value of assessing and improving nonprofit infrastructure.

OVERARCHING STRATEGY	KEY CONSIDERATIONS	GOAL STRATEGIES
<p>Building Organizational Capacity</p>	<p><i>Building the interest and commitment of more nonprofit organizations to engage in nonprofit capacity building.</i></p> <p><i>Making improvements in our support of nonprofit capacity building.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct or support activities that foster learning related to specific nonprofit capacity building topics • Implement projects to assess and improve the capacity of eligible nonprofit organizations • Share success stories and learnings related to nonprofit capacity building • Conduct comprehensive evaluation of nonprofit capacity building funding

OUR EVALUATION PROCESS

AS WE PURSUE these goals, we will measure our progress and continuously evaluate contributions to our successes as well as any failures. We will adjust and enhance our strategies and refine our approach based on our learnings.

Critical elements of our evaluation process rely on quality evaluations of individual grants and their direct impact, as well as overall assessments of how our grantmaking and other activities contribute to the achievement of our goals. As a learning organization—one that constantly strives to improve based on insights gained from all experiences—**this evaluation process is essential to our ability to be effective**, and to adjusting our strategies as we learn.

... we will measure our progress and continuously evaluate contributions to our successes as well as any failures.



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