The adage, “If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together,” is at the heart of The Health Foundation’s strategy to improve the health and well-being of the people of Wilkes County, North Carolina. After all, complex problems are rarely solved by any one individual, program, or service.

Someone once joked, “There is no magic pill that helps people live longer, healthier lives. And if there were, most of us would probably forget to take it half the time.”

But when caring, compassionate people align toward common goals, the substantive seeds of change are sowed. That’s why The Health Foundation has a multi-pronged approach to achieving its mission.

First, we have a robust grant-making program to invest in programs and services that have merit. But we take that partnership a step further, often providing educational opportunities and technical support to the agencies we support. Oftentimes, this leads to those agencies being able to leverage additional support from outside funders, further stretching our charitable investments.

We also lead a number of initiatives designed to bring the collective wisdom of the community together. By convening and facilitating these processes, we are better able to evaluate what’s working and learn how best to make a positive difference.

Of course, nothing is more central to our success than you. We consider it a great honor that you choose to support our work. Together, we are growing stronger, and better able to serve the children, youth, and adults who call this beautiful place “home.”

Thank you!

David Shelton
President

Heather Murphy
Executive Director
Mission: To improve the health and well being of the people of Wilkes County, North Carolina.

We're your local, independent non-profit organization. We work tirelessly to inspire a community-wide effort to create a place where every child (and adult!) is healthy, safe, and able to thrive.

Healthier, Together:

To have maximum impact, it’s important to fill in the gaps in services wherever possible.

Those gaps are often identified through our Community Health Needs Assessment, a deep dive into the most pressing health care needs here.

One thing we heard again and again was that people often didn’t know where to turn for important but non-emergency services. That’s why we were pleased to work in partnership with our local and statewide United Way to introduce the 2-1-1 hotline to Wilkes County.

Our AmeriCorps Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) volunteer, Kelsey Harris, spent her year of service spearheading the effort to consolidate services into the national database. Now, a simple phone call to 2-1-1 connects you to a live person, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. That person then helps you find the resources you are looking for, be it for housing, food, daycare, medical care, mental health care, substance abuse services, and more.

The Health Foundation provided a three-year grant to United Way of Wilkes to maintain the program.

Dial 2-1-1 for non-emergency services.
Together, we have the power to make healthy eating and active living the new normal.

As members of the first cohort of Health People, Healthy Carolinas, an initiative of the Duke Endowment dedicated to improving healthy eating and active living, our Healthy Wilkes Action Team has worked hard to put programs in place to promote healthy living.

Many of our signature programs are going strong, among them WorkWell Wilkes, Sports, Play, and Active Recreation for Kids Physical Education (SPARK PE), Bike Rodeos, and Brenner FIT Academy.

We’ve also started new programs to help us on our journey to health so we can have an impact on rising obesity rates and chronic disease.

**Shape NC**

Shape NC is designed around the importance of the first 1,000 days in a child’s life for healthy development. It combines physical activity, nutrition, and design to reduce obesity. Wilkes Developmental Day School, one of 10 child care centers participating, received the first Breastfeeding Friendly Child Care Center Designation in the county, which was an achievement recognized by the state of North Carolina.
Healthy environments support healthy lifestyles!

**Kids in Parks**

Children who spend time outdoors enjoy many health benefits, including growing leaner, with better attention spans and decreased aggression. Kids in Parks uses interactive, natural “treasure hunts” to get kids to play outside on existing nature trails. Kids in Parks launched at Jefferson Turnpike, Cub Creek Park, Mulberry Fields, and Smoot Park.

500 miles hiked on our trails!

---

**Community Opioid Prevention & Education**

It’s easy to feel powerless about such a powerful epidemic, but working together makes a difference.

Wilkes is one of 10 communities chosen to work with the School of Government at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to devise actionable strategies to address this community health crisis. The COPE (Community Opioid Prevention and Education) Team is focusing on stigma, harm reduction, access to care, and developing resiliency.

The whole team includes representation from law enforcement, the health department, the hospital, the recovery community, concerned citizens, and more.

In 2015, Wilkes County had the highest drug overdose mortality rate in North Carolina, so our work is cut out for us. Our commitment: bringing our friends, family members, and neighbors affected by the opioid crisis back into the community.
Breaking the cycle of abuse and neglect

We believe that adversity is not destiny.

Many children in Wilkes are growing up under tough circumstances. These children are affected by abuse, neglect, exposure to substance abuse and their parents’ untreated mental illness.

To make matters worse, research shows that children affected by Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) can lose up to 20 years of their lifespan when left unaddressed. And we know it is an issue for Wilkes, where the rates of children in foster care are nearly triple the state’s.

That’s why our Thrive Team utilized your contributions to train thirteen professionals in *Reconnect for Resilience*. In turn, trainers introduced 578 people to the program. This 14-hour class teaches how to recognize and deal with our own emotional response to traumatic occurrences, while also providing tools to use when working with others.

When stress and trauma throws your nervous system out of whack, *Reconnect* gets you out of the “Amped Up” or “Shut Down” state and back into your “resilient zone,” where you feel safe and able to manage your responses.

Classroom teachers, first responders, medical staffs, and more are finding the techniques helpful at both work and home.

Trainer Cindy Hartley, Director of the Sheltered Aid to Families in Emergencies (SAFE) Spot Child Advocacy Center, said, “Being part of a group of Resiliency Educators here in Wilkes gives me a sense of belonging and purpose in that work.”

13 local, professional trainers

578 People who have received introduction or training in 2018
Child sexual abuse is preventable, but we can’t leave it up to children alone.

That’s why parents, educators, clergy, and other community leaders are banding together to learn and implement the many strategies that are proven to keep our children and youth safe.

The Health Foundation is funding the Stewards of Children program, Darkness to Light, to give every adult the tools they need to do just that. We are partnering with the SAFE Spot Child Advocacy Center, Communities in Schools, and Wilkes Partnership for Children to offer this important resource to schools, churches, youth programs, and families.

The two-hour program helps everyone develop safe practices to prevent the unthinkable from happening. So far, over 1,400 people have taken the class and pledged to implement the program’s recommendations. Echoing what many participants say, one commented “I will listen to children with different ears.”

At The Health Foundation, we have a vision that every child (and adult!) is healthy, safe and able to thrive.

To sign up for the class, call SAFE Spot Child Advocacy Center at (336) 838-9169.

Over
1,400

Adults have learned how to better protect our children.
Communities designed to make it safer and easier for people to walk, bike, or wheel make staying healthy easier to enjoy.

When we studied how to make Wilkes a more child-friendly place to grow up, we asked kids what they wanted. Many of them told us they would like to be able to ride bikes more, and so we set out to discover how to make that happen.

Thanks to a “Cultivating Healthy Communities” grant from the Aetna Foundation, we’ve been able to work with a team of eleven students and adults who have been working hard to come up with creative, doable programs that will get more people on bikes.

They have interviewed and researched, graphed and sticky-noted, held community forums, and “prototyped,” taking their big ideas and turning them into functional projects. Over the past several months, we’ve heard a lot of ideas, from the team and from you, but only the most promising ideas made it to the finish line.

Those include a bike share/rental program that would make riding affordable, a mobile bike repair program, a community bike block party, educational programs, a bike-friendly business program, and a blog to promote all the amazing trails in Wilkes.

Follow us on Facebook @healthywilkes to keep up with our progress on this and all our projects in real time!
We want everyone to know where their next meal is coming from, and for it to be healthy.

For many of us, hopping into the car to make a quick grocery run is no big deal. And, once you get there, stores have a wide variety of fresh fruits and vegetables.

It’s not that easy for everyone. As we learned during Raising Places, for example, folks using the Wilkes Transportation Authority are limited in the number of grocery bags they can bring on the bus, and trips to the store can take hours.

That’s how we figured out that it was easier to bring the store to people than people to the store. And so we spent the better part of 2018 preparing to launch Wilkes Fresh, a mobile food market selling fresh, local produce at various locations in Wilkes.

The Wilkes Community Partnership for Children received state funding to cover purchasing the van and some initial start-up costs, and The Health Foundation outfitted space at West Park to serve as the “food hub,” where the produce is prepared for sale. Funding from The Foundation’s Duke Endowment grant was used to hire Food Access Coordinator Gail Cecile to manage the markets, which happen three days at week at six sites.

The Town of Wilkesboro, the Wilkes County Health Department, St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, the Cooperative Extension, and the Wilkes Family YMCA help plan the project and staff the markets with volunteers.
One of the difficulties rural communities like Wilkes face is the ability to recruit medical professionals. Over the years, we’ve learned the importance of investing in the educations of people whose hearts are set on working in or around Wilkes County. That’s why your support of our Allied Health Professions Scholarship program is so important.

Thanks to your gifts and their hard work, the future of the medical community in Wilkes gets brighter every year. In 2018, we had the biggest scholarship class in our history, awarding $2,000 each to 25 students entering nursing, dentistry, physical therapy, respiratory therapy, radiology, and more.

Through 2018, we’ve awarded $317,300 in scholarships, an investment in the future of health care we consider to be priceless.

We’re proud to be able to offer scholarship awards both out of general funds (where donors have designated their gifts to go to scholarship) and the endowed earnings of named scholarships, established in honor or memory of people in our community.

Back row: Marlise Greene, Staley Parks, Emily Childers, Tanya Link, Amanda Zhan, Presley Church, Sydney Culler, Sophie Brinegar.

Middle row: Kristian Miller, Ana’e Limon, Mary Hannewald, Lola Griffith, Vanessa Castillo, Fabiola Perez.


Not pictured: Jayci Alexander, Laura Davis, Anna Reece, Kaitlin Whittington.
### Summarized Statements of Activity
($ in thousands, as of December 31st)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2017</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Support and Revenue</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Contribution Income</td>
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<td>Rental Income</td>
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<td>Gain (Loss) on Investments</td>
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<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>422</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
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<td>1,605</td>
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<td><strong>Expenses</strong></td>
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<td>Program Services</td>
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<td>1,251</td>
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<td>Fund Raising Expenses</td>
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<td>51</td>
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<td>Management and General</td>
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<td>206</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
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<td>1,508</td>
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<td><strong>Change in Net Assets</strong></td>
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<td>Net Assets, Beginning of Year</td>
<td>3,919</td>
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<tr>
<td>Net Assets, End of Year</td>
<td>4,495</td>
<td>3,919</td>
</tr>
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</table>
CRITICAL PARTNERSHIPS

Wilkes on Wheels Design Team Members
David Barlow
Megan Barnett
Dave Barton
Kirstin Devlin
Reagan Hailey
Lazaro Holguin
Jahad Martin
Mahogany McCray
Kedron Nicholson
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Our most generous and loyal donors are recognized through their membership in our giving societies. Giving levels are cumulatively totaled through January 7, 2019.

Dr. Fred C. Hubbard was the founding father of Wilkes Regional Medical Center. Members of The Dr. Fred C. Hubbard Society consist of those whose total giving exceeds $100,000.

Our Benefactor’s Society members are those whose cumulative gifts total more than $50,000.

The Edd and Gertrude Gardner Society is named after two individuals whose contributions played a vital role in the growth of Wilkes Regional Medical Center. Mr. Edd Gardner served 56 years as an original appointee to the board of trustees of the hospital. His wife, Mrs. Gertrude Gardner, organized the original ladies’ auxiliary. She served as its president from 1951 until 1953. Members of this society have made cumulative gifts of over $10,000.

Membership in our Legacy Society is open to anyone who has remembered us through estate planning who wishes to be so recognized.

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