

2019 ANNUAL REPORT *BEFORE THE PANDEMIC*



 The
Health
FOUNDATION
est. 1991



Ever have that conversation that begins with “Back in the day...” and ends with a nostalgic comparison to a life that felt simpler, cleaner, or better in some way? In light of what 2020 has wrought, this reflection on the year 2019 genuinely has that feel.

Back in the day, we convened at our offices at West Park, and impromptu work issues could be resolved in the hallway. Our community meeting space was in such high demand it could prove difficult to schedule Foundation meetings around our partners’ needs.

Our collaborative team meetings were accompanied by handshakes, hugs, laughter, and lunches. People dropped by. Stuck their heads in.

Those were the days!

Yes, and those were the days that best prepared us for 2020, when what our

David Shelton

David Shelton
President



community needed most was the ability to connect, problem-solve, and act in record time.

As you read this report, it is our hope that you take away a sense of how all of our programs and projects—whether we’ve been able to carry them out in quite the same ways as before—have laid a solid foundation for all the work that lies ahead.

Our nonprofit community is facing increased demands for services while having to develop entirely new means of delivering them. In tough times, it is our sector that is called on to do the toughest work—treat the sick, provide comfort to the afflicted, prevent the unthinkable.

The crisis is acute, but history can guide us through. Our shared values can be our guidepost as we strive to build a community in which every child and adult is healthy, safe, and able to thrive.

Heather Murphy

Heather Murphy
Executive Director

Healthy Environments Support Healthy Lifestyles!



Having safe places to play is a key strategy to promote health. Here, one girl enjoys some outside play time. Photo by: Matt Powell.

It's simple, really. Children and adults thrive when their neighborhoods, schools, churches, and community support healthy lifestyles and healthy behaviors. It's why research proves that where we live can have dramatic impacts on our quality and length of life, and why The Health Foundation is proud to be a part of the Duke Endowment's first Healthy People Healthy Carolinas effort to improve healthy eating and active living

Our Healthy Wilkes Action Team (HWAT) is a cross-sector collaboration of nonprofits, governmental entities, concerned residents, and businesses who have worked together to identify and implement a variety of programs to help you on your journey to health.

These include programs in pre-schools, schools, churches, workplaces and health care settings so that collectively we can have an impact on rising obesity rates and prevent chronic disease. Complex challenges are only solved by working together!

In 2019, many of those signature programs were still going strong, including WorkWell Wilkes, SPARK PE, bike rodeos, and Brenner Fit Academy.

And as a result of these well-established partnerships, when COVID-19 hit Wilkes County we were able to pivot quickly and continue working together. Several programs have been paused or resources added so they could continue safely.

Being flexible and resilient has involved a lot of Zoom calls, but team spirits are strong as everyone focuses on how best to rise to the challenges facing us.

Kids in Parks: Outdoor fun for everyone

Miles Walked: 1,745

Calories Burned: 261,750

Kids and adults can have fun outdoors and win cool prizes when they join the interactive Kids in Parks program. We've installed trails at Jefferson Turnpike, Cub Creek Park, Mulberry Fields, and Smoot Park.

Diabetes Prevention Program

Participants improving BMI: 68%

Participants achieving 150 minutes of physical activity per week: 86%

Meant to promote modest weight loss and encourage physical activity, the group has practiced standing yoga, gone on group walks at the Greenway, attended cooking classes, and used FitBits to track their daily steps. Doing it together is a great way to make *healthy = fun!* This program is hosted by the Wilkes County Health Department.

Data for both programs was gathered from participants' results in 2019.



Members of the Wilkes delegation at the Outdoor Economy Conference in Asheville. Back row, Thomas Salley, Heather Murphy, Ken Noland, Jim Horton. Front Row, LeeAnn Nixon, Nellie Archibald, Robin Hamby, Meredith Detsch Crystal Keener, Jenn Wages, and Andrew Carlton.

A Prescription for Better Health: Get Outside!

Spending time outside has a wealth of health benefits. Your Vitamin D levels will go up, you'll improve your fitness, you'll be less stressed, your concentration will improve, and you may even heal faster after injury, the Harvard Health Newsletter reports. That's why we're working to encourage active living in Wilkes.

Your gifts in 2019 helped build a crucial "missing link" of the Yadkin River Greenway, a 1.2-mile section between Smoot Park and Memorial Park in North Wilkesboro. Visit the riverside trail on a pretty day and you'll find walkers, runners, babies in strollers, and even the occasional unicyclist! Users now have a safe off-road route all the way from Smoot Park to the Fitness Zone outdoor gym at West Park, another facility built with your gifts.

Outdoor amenities can also be a big boost to the local economy. According to a 2019 Out-

door Industry Association's report, North Carolina's outdoor economy brings \$28 billion annually to the state. Now, thanks to The Health Foundation, local leaders are coming together to grab a bigger piece of that pie.

In 2019, we launched our Outdoor Economy initiative to encourage local business and civic leaders to "think big" about the potential of outdoor activity here. At a two-day workshop last fall, participants found that building on the natural beauty of Wilkes could pay big dividends in improved health and a more robust local economy.

The towns, county government, The Health Foundation and the Healthy Wilkes Action Team are collaborating on the development of a master plan that will map existing recreation spots and identify opportunities for future development. Working together, we'll find even more ways to encourage active living here in Wilkes.



Jason Roehrig, co-owner of Tumbling Shoals Farm in Millers Creek harvests organic radishes for sale. *Photo by: Matt Powell.*

Last year, The Healthy Wilkes Action Team launched the Wilkes Fresh Mobile Market—what an experience!

For far too many of our neighbors, it's not easy "eating green."

Almost one in four children in Wilkes live in homes that are food insecure. Poverty, disability and transportation barriers prevent access to fresh fruits and vegetables.

Enter Wilkes Fresh, our innovative mobile produce market that debuted in 2019. Wilkes Fresh travels across the county, bringing fresh, local produce to underserved areas. Shoppers can use Market Bucks (produce vouchers made possible by your support), in addition to EBT/SNAP cards, debit/credit cards and cash, to load up on the best of home-grown fruits and vegetables.

The Wilkes Fresh van was purchased with grant funding received by the Wilkes Community Partnership for Children. The mobile market was staffed in its kick-off year by Gail Cecile, Jenn Wages and countless volunteers from community partners like the Wilkes County Health Department, the Town of Wilkesboro, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, N.C. Cooperative Extension, Wilkes Family YMCA and more. The Health Foundation outfitted space at West Park for the program's Food Hub where produce is stored and prepared for sale.



Looking forward, The Health Foundation will intensify its efforts to address access to healthy foods. With support from the Aetna Foundation, we recently hired Sierra Watson, the Foundation's new Food Access Coordinator.

Sierra and the Healthy Wilkes Action Team will work on food initiatives across Wilkes, including expanding the mobile market's reach in the county. We're also exploring how a Central Kitchen might work in our community, and how to get healthy foods onto the tables of families who need it. We will be actively seeking community input, making sure we meet the needs of each neighborhood we serve.

Wilkes on Wheels

Exploring New Ways to Get Wilkes Rolling

Last year, we convened a team of talented teens and active adults to tackle a big question: How might we get more folks in Wilkes County to ride bicycles?

Biking has big health benefits, a fact not lost on a small core of avid riders who enjoy our area’s greenways, back roads and mountain bike trails. Our team fanned out across the community, using Human Centered Design techniques, to find out why more people here aren’t joining them.

Insights from the team’s listening tour include:

Lots of adults and children who want to ride don’t have bikes.

Lots of bikes aren’t rideable due to flat tires and other minor issues.

Teens think bike riding is just for little kids.

Many members of the community don’t feel safe on the roads, and some don’t even feel safe on the greenway.

Our team then developed and tested “prototypes,” pilot projects designed to address the barriers. Two notable examples:

The team fixed a fleet of used bikes and set up a pop-up bike share at Smoot Park in North Wilkesboro. The bike library con-



Design Team Member Jahad Martin presented his research at the 2020 National Bike Summit.



Lanisha Williams and David Barlow, Design Team Members



Mahogany McCray and Reagan Hailey, Design Team Members



Mahogany McCray, Design Team Member. Photos by Sarah Webster

cept was a big hit. Kids and adults used the borrowed bikes to ride around the park and the Yadkin River Greenway.

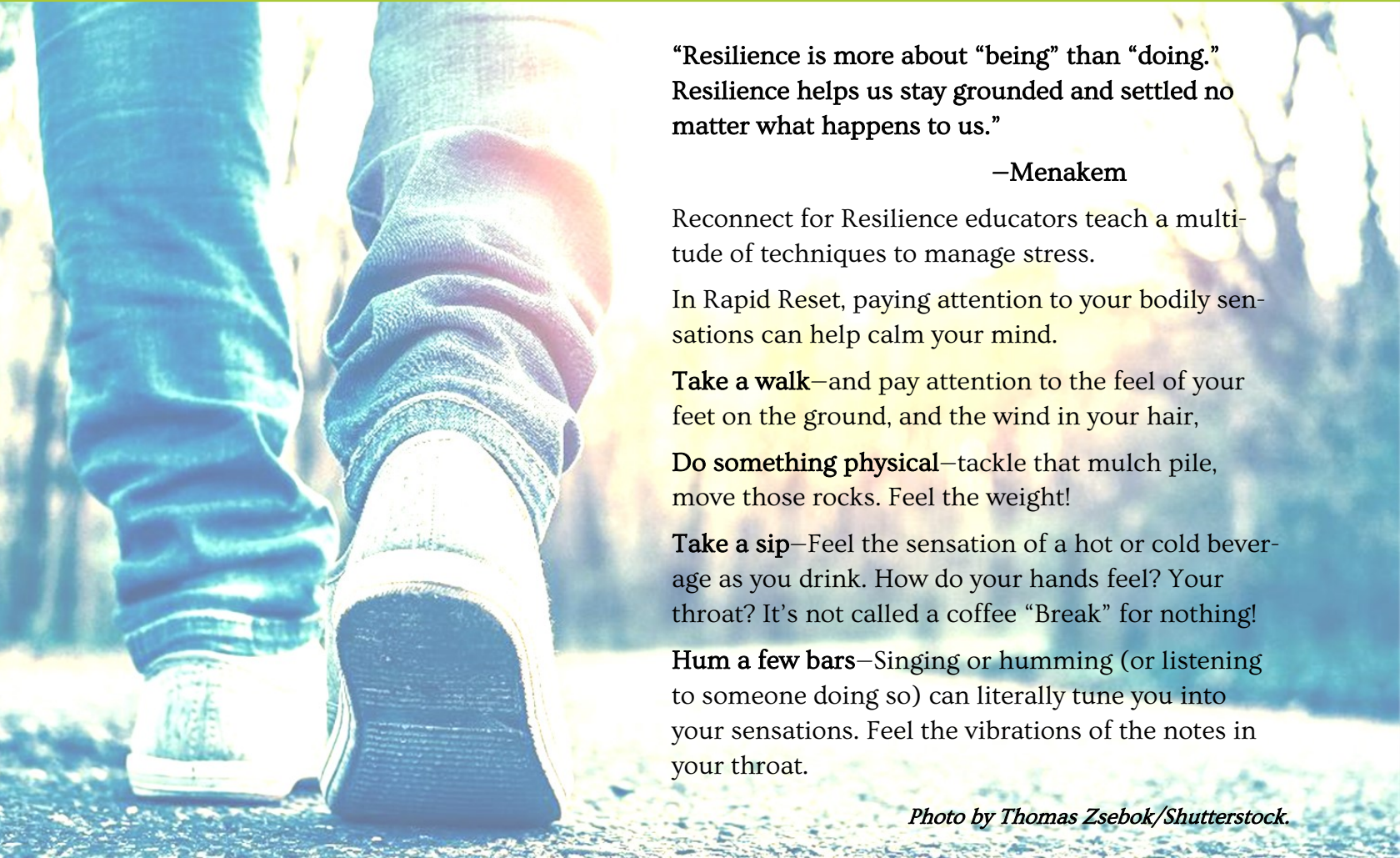
Team members packed a small trailer with tools and parts to serve as a mobile bike repair station. They set up shop at a local public housing development and quickly put a bunch of bikes back on the road with simple fixes.

These prototypes and others generated tremendous excitement. While the pandemic put further development on hold for now, we hope to keep the process rolling when it’s safe to do so.

Aside from the valuable information gained from this process, it was amazing to watch the growing confidence of our teen team members. High school student Jahad Martin helped present the team’s work to a national audience during a virtual presentation at the 2020 National Bike Summit.

The Wilkes on Wheels project is funded by the Aetna Foundation’s *Cultivating Healthy Communities* grant program. “Your support helps us attract national funding to make initiatives like this one possible,” said Heather Murphy, Executive Director. “Thanks for getting us rolling!”

Team members include David Barlow, Megan Barnett, Dave Barton, Kirstin Roberts, Reagan Hailey, Lazaro Holguin, Jahad Martin, Mahogany McCray, Saleen Miller, Kedron Nicholson, Tiger Posey, and Lanisha Williams. Heather Murphy, Tim Murphy, and Jenn Wages coached the team.



“Resilience is more about “being” than “doing.” Resilience helps us stay grounded and settled no matter what happens to us.”

—Menakem

Reconnect for Resilience educators teach a multitude of techniques to manage stress.

In Rapid Reset, paying attention to your bodily sensations can help calm your mind.

Take a walk—and pay attention to the feel of your feet on the ground, and the wind in your hair,

Do something physical—tackle that mulch pile, move those rocks. Feel the weight!

Take a sip—Feel the sensation of a hot or cold beverage as you drink. How do your hands feel? Your throat? It’s not called a coffee “Break” for nothing!

Hum a few bars—Singing or humming (or listening to someone doing so) can literally tune you into your sensations. Feel the vibrations of the notes in your throat.

Photo by Thomas Zsebok/Shutterstock.

Stress is real, and it comes in many forms. For children, it can be related to an unhealthy home environment caused by maternal depression, abuse, neglect, domestic violence, parental addiction, divorce, homelessness, or a parent’s arrest.

Certain jobs—like law enforcement, medical providers, first responders, and social workers—cause these workers to experience “secondary trauma” from repeatedly witnessing difficulties.

And whole communities can experience trauma from poverty, discrimination, lack of opportunity, and poor or unaffordable housing.

Thankfully, the ability to withstand and recover from circumstances that affect our well-being is also real, and there are simple tools and techniques that can be easily learned and practiced that are shown to significantly improve our physical, mental, and spiritual health.

Program Director Jenn Wages leads Thrive, our local resiliency efforts. In 2019 she and a group of educators, social workers, and mental health professionals attended the Adverse Childhood Experiences Southeastern Summit sponsored by Mountain Area Health Education Center. This is the third educational gathering members of the group have attended, who then bring those teachings back into our community.

The Health Foundation has sponsored thirteen Reconnect for Resilience educators who teach how to manage stress and overcome traumatic events. The education sessions are offered free of charge to the community multiple times per year, and have helped teach educators, medical professionals, social workers, and anyone whose life has been impacted by stress. For the record, that is any of us—especially due to the disruption of daily life as we once knew it related to the global pandemic.

Everyone belongs at the table.

That's how The Health Foundation approaches all its initiatives, but especially so with the Community Opioid Prevention and Education (COPE) Team, an effort funded through a Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina Foundation grant, in partnership with the UNC School of Government. Our team is composed of medical service providers from the local hospital and health department, law enforcement officials, public health experts, and people in recovery from substance use disorder.

Perhaps the most important work of the COPE initiative so far has been to bring these folks together. Each agency has a different piece of the puzzle; each person sees a different impact. Susan Bachmeier, Chief Nursing Officer at Wake Forest Baptist Health-Wilkes Medical Center, sees the impact of addiction on patients every day. Through education for staff and providers, resilience training for teams, and opportunities to rethink emergent health care approaches, "I have begun to re-imagine how we engage with community agencies addressing opioid misuse," she said.

It takes local leadership understanding local situations to design solutions that fit our community. The COPE team is addressing the stigma of addiction, expanding treatment options, promoting harm reduction strategies, and helping families develop resiliency and coping strategies not involving drugs.

Devin Lyall, Executive Director of Wilkes Recovery Revolution, is a key leader in the COPE initiative, in recovery from substance use disorder herself. She is a champion for the local recovery community, and her organization recently received a grant from The Golden LEAF Foundation for a "recovery to work" workforce development program.

Journalist and author Johann Hari says that, "The opposite of addiction is not sobriety, but human connection."

Everyone belongs at the table.



Community Opioid Prevention and Education


A HEALTH FOUNDATION INITIATIVE

Pictured right, members of the COPE Steering Committee: Graylin Carlton, Leigh Combs, MeLane Barber, Ann Absher, Devin Lyall, and Heather Murphy.



COPE's stated goals. Graph by UNC School of Government.





2019 scholarship winners. Back, left to right: Amanda Severt, Abigail Smithey, Lindsey Miller, Melia Higgins, Jessica Ball, Grayson Tuttle, Shae Chatham, Seth Longbottom, Mark Wages. Front: Paige Colbert, Lesly Fuentes, Morgan Shatley, Jamie Kilby, Adrianna Harris. Not pictured: Jayci Alexander, Jordan Campbell, Kristen Hubbard, Hannah Walker.

The Future of Healthcare in Wilkes

Healthcare professionals put the “care” into healthcare. We think about how important they are each time we visit the doctor’s office or pharmacy. That’s why, since our very start in 1991, it’s been part of our mission to increase the supply of these essential workers here.

Thanks to your gifts, we’re able to invest in the education and training of people whose hearts are set on providing care in Wilkes. They’ve grown up here, gone to school here and formed families here.

In 2019, we gave awards of \$2,000 each to 18 students in nursing, dentistry, physical therapy, respiratory therapy, radiography and other healthcare programs.

They’re the latest in a long line of budding healthcare professionals supported by The Health Foundation. With your support, we’ve awarded nearly a half million dollars to these “homegrown heroes” over the years.

We’re proud to offer scholarships from our general funds and from the endowed earnings of our named scholarships:

- ◆ **Betty Winslow Scholarship** is dedicated to students in the Radiology Technology program.
- ◆ **R.L. and Doris Melton Family Scholarship** is dedicated to Wilkes County residents in the field of nursing who plan to work in Wilkes upon achieving their degree.
- ◆ **Dr. Ray Inscore Nursing Scholarship** is also dedicated to nursing students who plan to work in Wilkes.
- ◆ **Ben Abernethy Scholarship** for students enrolled in Wilkes Community College’s Nursing program
- ◆ **Shirley and Alvin A. Sturdivant, Jr. Scholarship** for students in general health fields.



FINANCES

Summarized Statements of Activity (\$ in thousands, as of December 31st)

	<u>2019</u>	<u>2018</u>
Support and Revenue		
Contribution Income	603	483
Rental Income	1,288	1,331
Gain (Loss) on Investments	61	(14)
Other	24	419
TOTAL	1,976	2,219
Expenses		
Program Services	1,321	1,385
Fund Raising Expenses	34	49
Management and General	228	203
TOTAL	1,583	1,637
Change in Net Assets	393	582
Net Assets, Beginning of Year	4,501	3,919
Net Assets, End of Year	4,894	4,501

Summarized Statements of Activity (\$ in thousands, as of December 31st)

	<u>2019</u>	<u>2018</u>
Assets		
Cash	1,585	1,620
Receivables-Pledge & Accounts	358	152
Endowment	478	402
Fixed Assets	3,212	3,342
Other	39	34
TOTAL	5,672	5,550
Liabilities and Net Assets		
Payables-Grant & Accounts	737	972
Other	41	77
Total Liabilities	778	1,049
Net Assets	4,894	4,501
TOTAL	5,672	5,550

CRITICAL PARTNERSHIPS

Wilkes on Wheels Design Team Members

David Barlow
Megan Barnett
Dave Barton
Kirstin Roberts
Reagan Hailey
Lazaro Holguin
Jahad Martin
Mahogany McCray
Kedron Nicholson
Tiger Posey
Lanisha Williams

Healthy Wilkes Action Team Steering Committee

Ann Absher, Community Member
Graylin Carlton, Wake Forest Baptist Health - Wilkes Medical Center
Susan Cogdill, Wilkes Community Partnership for Children
Jeff Cox, Wilkes Community College
Amanda Hege, Second Harvest Food Bank
Marty Johnson, Wilkes County Schools
April Marr, Wilkes County Schools
Heather Murphy, The Health Foundation
Lindsey Roberts, Wilkes County Health Department
Thomas Salley, Wilkesboro TDA
Bob Urness, Town of Wilkesboro
Jenn Wages, The Health Foundation
Barry Wald, Wake Forest Baptist Health - Wilkes Medical Center
Caroline Whitson, Wilkes Family YMCA
Rachel Willard, Wilkes County Health Department

Reconnect for Resilience Educators

Alicia Billings, Wilkes County Schools
Angela Brooks-Livingston, Daymark Recovery Services
Danielle Dowell, Wilkes County Schools
Christyn Grant, Daymark Recovery Services
Cindy Hartley, Safe Spot
April Marr, Wilkes County Schools
Lynne Moree, CareNet Counseling
Rose Pawlyszyn, CareNet Counseling
Jenny Richardson, Wilkes Family YMCA
Meghann Roberts-Clawson, Wilkes County Schools
Jenn Wages, The Health Foundation
Katie Wagoner, Resiliency Educator
Robert Willis, CareNet Counseling

COPE Core Team

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Graylin Carlton, Wake Forest Baptist Health - Wilkes Medical Center
Jane Casarez, Project Lazarus

MeLane Childress, Mountain Health Solutions
Christyn Grant, Daymark
Logan Kerr, Wilkes County Sheriff's Office
Devin Lyall, Wilkes Recovery Revolution
April Marr, Wilkes County Schools
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Colleen Manolovich
Jerri Mayberry
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Gail Cecile, Wilkes Community Partnership for Children
Susan Cogdill, Wilkes Community Partnership for Children
Jacqueline Johnson, Wilkes County Health Department
Rachel Minick, St. Paul's Episcopal Church
Heather Murphy, The Health Foundation
Courtney Tevepaugh, Wilkes County Cooperative Extension
Jenn Wages, The Health Foundation
Caroline Whitson, Wilkes Family and Wilkes Express YMCA

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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, 2020.

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 36 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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We want to thank those who volunteered for the 2019 MedAssist Giveaway Day event and the 2020 summer feeding replacement program.

You stuck it out through crowds and bad weather to help serve your neighbors, and we couldn't have done it without you.

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Ways to Give

Our community has limitless potential, and we are inspired and deeply grateful for the wonderful difference you make each and every day in the lives of your families, friends, and loved ones. Please consider renewing your support of The Health Foundation this year!

Every gift matters. Every gift allows us to support more programs in the community that improve the lives of the folks who call Wilkes County home.

You can make a check payable to The Health Foundation and mail it to PO Box 667, North Wilkesboro, NC, 28659. You can also donate securely online at our website, www.healthywilkes.org.

Several families have honored us by selecting The Foundation to established named endowments. In addition to our scholarship endowments, Nancy Ferguson Brown has established the “Teeth in Need” fund, helping protect the healthy smiles of children in Wilkes County. The fund allows children who otherwise couldn’t afford dental care to receive help.

Thanks to a law that became permanent in 2015, a Charitable IRA Rollover allows you to donate money directly from your retirement account to the charity of your choice, without paying taxes. It strengthens the charities you love (like us!) and enables them to do the work you support, while also protecting you financially. You can contact Executive Director Heather Murphy at (336) 838-1949 or heather@healthywilkes.org to learn more.

We’re proud to be a part of the 2020 North Carolina State Employees Combined Campaign! The SECC is the only workplace giving program authorized for state employees. If you are a state employee and want your contributions to stay in Wilkes County, use our designation code **4046**! We guarantee your gifts go to programs and services that benefit *our* community.



We've never been prouder to be your Health Foundation

Rising to the 2020 Challenge

Complex problems are best solved when everyone works together. Your local, independent Health Foundation acts as a trusted, neutral convener to advance efforts to respond to Wilkes County's biggest health challenges.

The Health Foundation works closely with a variety of community organizations and they've been hit hard by the pandemic. Due to bans on mass gatherings, partner agencies have been unable to conduct major fundraising events. Many have also experienced decreases in fees for services. All this is happening as a burgeoning number of unemployed people are seeking help, many for the first time.

We responded in March 2020 by immediately releasing \$100,000 in Challenge Grants, waiving the requirement that agencies raise a matching amount.

We also launched the Community Collaborative Fund to help community partners meet heightened demand for services or implement COVID-related safety features. Over \$58,000 has been donated to the Fund to date. Here's how your gifts have helped:

- ◇ Blue Ridge Opportunities Commission (BROC) - \$12,000 to purchase food for clients
- ◇ Wilkes Circles of Care-\$5,000 to provide client services
- ◇ Wilkes County Health Department-\$4,500 to install safety barriers at clinic
- ◇ ECHO Ministries Shelter-\$2,500 to provide client services
- ◇ Wilkes Community College-\$2,000 to provide food to students
- ◇ Ronda Volunteer Fire Department-\$2,000 to provide food to their community
- ◇ Wilkes Public Health Dental Clinic-\$1,500 to purchase COVID-19 related safety and cleaning items
- ◇ Wilkes Senior Resources-\$200 to purchase a phone to communicate with clients

\$131,600 awarded so far

While Health Foundation staff members are currently working largely from home, the work of the foundation has expanded and intensified during the pandemic. The foundation has convened several virtual meetings with local non-profit organizations to discuss needs and coordinate responses. We partnered with BROC, Second Harvest Food Bank and Wilkes Habitat for Humanity to greatly expand the availability of food assistance. We worked with Habitat to host several personal protective equipment (PPE) drives for the Wilkes Health Department and local long-term care facilities. Amidst national shortages, you gave gloves and cleaning supplies, and you made masks for people who couldn't afford them.

If you need non-emergency help, call 2-1-1 (funded locally by your donations). If you are in a position to help, please consider a gift to the Community Collaborative Fund.

CELEBRATING OUR LEADERSHIP: 2019 Board of Directors and Staff

Directors

Glenda Adams
Craig Bennett, MD
Lee Bentley
William Clark
Cam Finley
Bill Harris
Cathy Huie
Beth Lovette
Richard Marlow
Jean Melton
Penny Musson
John Oliver, MD
Dariel Rathmell, MD
David Shelton
Brad Shinaman, DDS
Mary Spears
Diane Swaim

Officers

David Shelton, *President*
Richard Marlow *Vice President*
Diane Swaim, *Secretary*
Heather Murphy, *Assistant Secretary*
Jean Melton, *Treasurer*

Ex-Officio Directors

Rachel Willard
*Director of the Wilkes County
Health Department*
Chad Brown
*President of Wake Forest Baptist
Health–Wilkes Medical Center*
Heather Murphy
Executive Director

Staff

Heather Murphy, *Executive Director*
Chris Smith, *Director of Finance & Property*
Jenn Wages, *Program Director*
Holly Norman, *Development Coordinator*

ABOUT OUR COVER: Two Wilkes Fresh shoppers share a friendly hug before social distancing became a part of our lives. Photo by Destination by Design.

Contact Us!



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Our correct legal designation is The Health Foundation,
Inc., a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization.

Our Federal Tax ID Number is 56-1745194. Your contri-
bution is tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Photos by Sarah Webster and Destination by Design.