



2014- 2015
ANNUAL REPORT

The Early Years:

Where
potential
meets
opportunity





Our Mission:

**Wake County SmartStart
works to ensure children,
birth to five, are prepared for
success in school and in life.**

Wake County SmartStart Core Values

RESPECT

We honor the unique experiences and needs of each young child and family.

CULTURAL SENSITIVITY

We value diversity, promote inclusive practice and support community empowerment.

ADVOCACY

We provide a strong, united voice for those most vulnerable — our children.

RESPONSIVENESS

We respond to the individual needs of children and families with regard for our larger community as a whole.

COMMUNITY

COLLABORATION

We support community collaboration through authentic relationships characterized by honesty, integrity and compassion.

INNOVATION

We value flexibility, actively seek new approaches in practice and regard challenges as opportunities for growth.

ACCOUNTABILITY

We value our role as public stewards through the use of best business practices, strong internal controls and accurate documentation of our efforts.





“

Free the child's
potential,
and you will
transform him
into the world.

MARIA MONTESSORI

”

The NC Pre-Kindergarten Program



EVERY CHILD HAS THE **POTENTIAL** TO DO GREAT THINGS.

It's a familiar scene for me: a parent waits anxiously as I examine and assess the development of their child. Is the child on track? Is there a concern? I can often see which child has had opportunities for learning and nurturance and which child has not. As a pediatrician in practice for thirty-two years, I have had the privilege of watching hundreds of young children develop into young adults. I have also seen how **decisions made in the early years can affect a child's entire future.**

Children have almost boundless *potential* to thrive and achieve—particularly if they have an enriching environment and the right resources early in life. **Young children who enjoy good health, live in supportive families and participate in high-quality learning experiences are poised for lifelong success.** And it's not only about laying the groundwork for academic achievement. It's also about ensuring that young children develop the needed social and emotional skills that allow them to effectively communicate and work with others, in school and eventually, in our community.

This “prescription” for a strong early childhood foundation and a bright future benefits every child in Wake County. It's backed by significant evidence collected over more than forty years. That's why **Wake County SmartStart is committed to ensuring that as many young children as possible have the opportunity to flourish**—we understand the need and, with our partners and community members, can deliver on these components of success.

With limited funding and an abundance of need, it is critical to build a means to serve as many children and families as possible. This year, we have added a fourth agency goal,

Children and families are supported by a strong, diverse integrated early childhood system.

To that end, we're coordinating more effectively and efficiently with our agency partners to fund and implement a wide range of programs that reflect the diverse needs of our community. As Board Chair of Wake County SmartStart, I invite you to read about our progress and to join us in building a vibrant community. **With your support, we have the opportunity to unlock so much potential.**

Michael Smith

Wake County SmartStart Board Chair



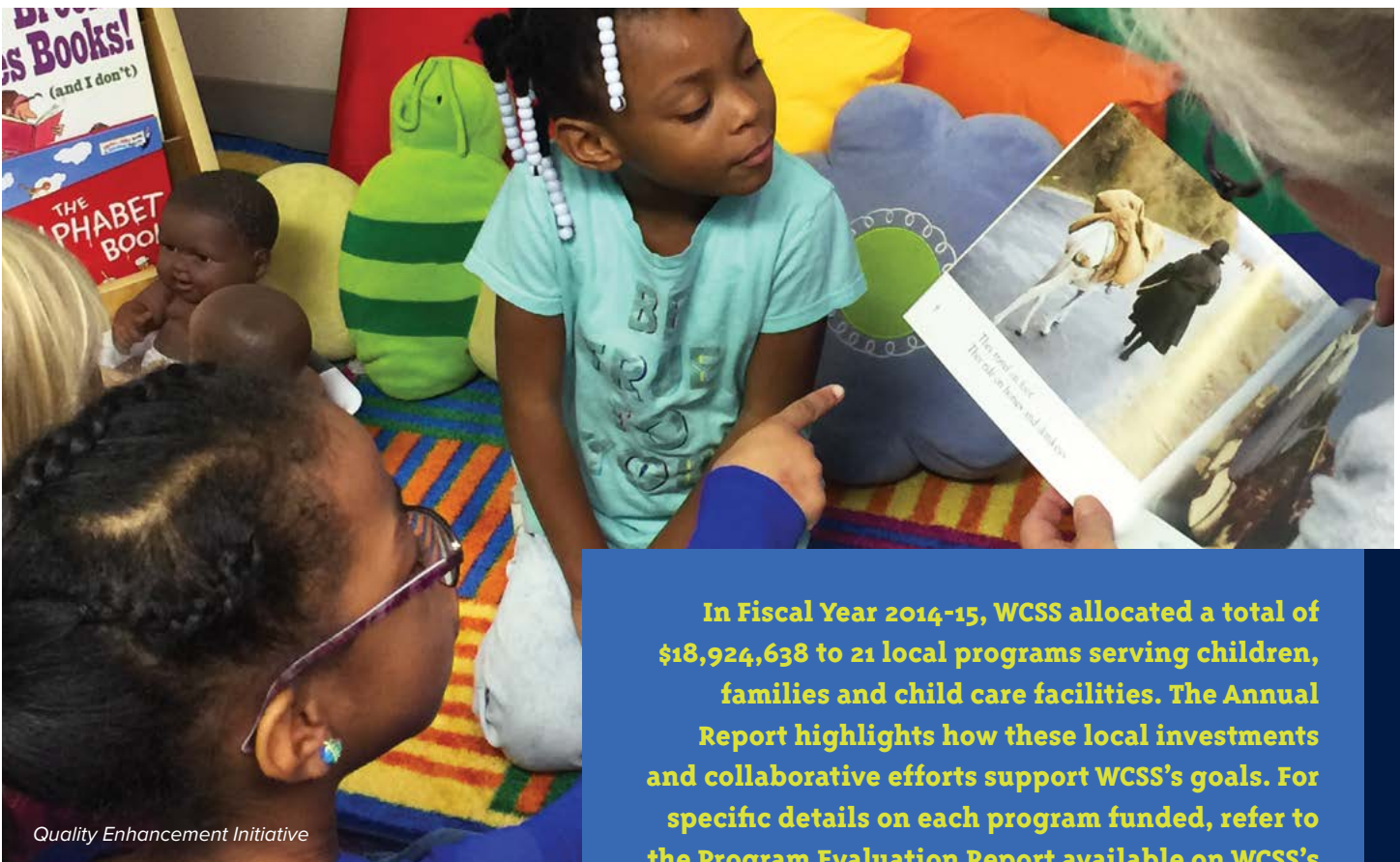
When we look across the landscape of a generally prosperous Wake County, it is often easy to overlook the impact poverty has on its youngest residents, especially the 16% of children age birth to five, who in 2014-15, lived in poverty.

Research shows that living in poverty has more influence on Kindergarten success than race, ethnicity or language barriers. Without early access to resources that address their health and developmental needs, economically disadvantaged children often begin Kindergarten lagging behind their more affluent peers, and remain behind for life.

Lagging behind translates into many things over time, including higher dropout and incarceration rates, poor health and difficulty with employment. It directly impacts the child, his or her family—and Wake County's future prosperity.

But it doesn't have to be that way.

All children have the potential to excel, provided they have access to an enriching environment. We know that children living in low-income households who participate in early childhood programs are more self-sufficient in the future. They grow up to earn more money, pay more taxes and are less dependent on government programs. Wake County's success will be determined by how well we close those gaps in school readiness and enable all children to succeed—in school and in life.



In Fiscal Year 2014-15, WCSS allocated a total of \$18,924,638 to 21 local programs serving children, families and child care facilities. The Annual Report highlights how these local investments and collaborative efforts support WCSS's goals. For specific details on each program funded, refer to the Program Evaluation Report available on WCSS's website. Private funds of over \$2.1 million were leveraged through four multi-year collaborative grants to address high priority community needs. WCSS expended \$174,541 of these funds in FY 2014-15.

Quality Enhancement Initiative

Unlocking Human Potential

What provides the foundation for the lifelong success of our youngest children?

Good health. High-quality care and education. Strong families.

Unlocking the potential of our youngest children requires that we work together to:

Remove barriers to accessing services that enable the early identification of individual needs. Supporting programs that improve referrals and link children and families to professional resources is one important step towards Kindergarten readiness.

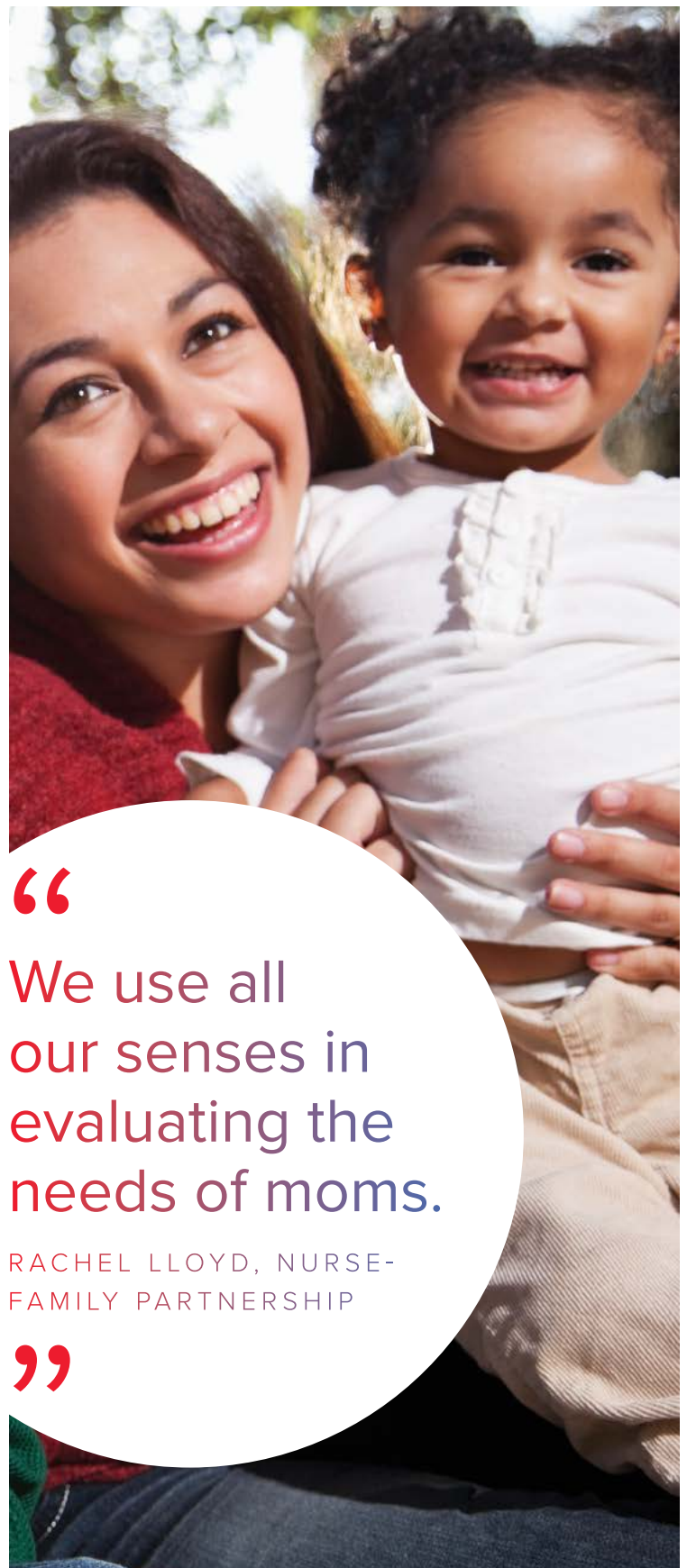
Continually improve the quality of early care and education. Funding for programs that provide on-site mentoring and consultations, assistance with accreditation and professional development opportunities enables educators to confidently implement best practices.

Expand access to programs. With the demand for programs far exceeding current budgets, we must look to additional funding sources. In an historic June 2015 vote, the Wake County Commission expanded the Pre-Kindergarten program using County funds.

Coordinate programs and systems. Creating an effective and efficient system that streamlines connections to appropriate resources is fundamental to unlock the potential of our youngest children.

Creating Opportunities

Wake County SmartStart builds on potential by targeting resources and prioritizing services, particularly for children in families with limited resources and/or additional challenges that may impact school readiness. To create opportunities for success, we rely on evidence-based programs and best practices that yield a strong return on investment.



“
We use all
our senses in
evaluating the
needs of moms.”

RACHEL LLOYD, NURSE-
FAMILY PARTNERSHIP

”





Good Health

Delivering services in the home enables easily-accessible opportunities for good health. WCSS provides home visiting programs because they

offer sound and consistent outcomes, including: better prenatal health, fewer childhood injuries, reduced cases of abuse and neglect and improved parenting ability.

The path to good health begins before birth. In FY 2014-15, Wake County's infant mortality rate dropped to its lowest level in 12 years. One highly-effective WCSS-funded program, **Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP)**, empowers low-income, first-time mothers to become confident parents by partnering them with nurses early in their pregnancy and continuing until the child is two years old. NFP nurses help expectant mothers find prenatal care, develop strong parenting skills and prepare emotionally for the birth of their child. From its beginning, NFP's effectiveness has demonstrated positive health outcomes, including babies born with a normal birthweight (nearly 90% of all participants) and children having up-to-date immunizations (over 95% of all participants).

New to WCSS' program portfolio, **Assuring Better Child Development and Health (ABCD)** is based on a successful national model that extends our reach into primary care medical practices to better integrate developmental screenings and referrals into preventative care. ABCD conducted over 350 technical assistance sessions and on-site group trainings at 25 medical practices, with the potential to impact the lives of one in three low-income children in Wake County.

Through programs such as ABCD, a growing number of children in Wake County were able to receive early intervention or special education services in FY 2014-15.

Seeing a family in their home setting presents unique opportunities not possible in health clinics. "In the clinic setting we ask if the mom smokes," notes Rachel Lloyd, Nurse-Family Partnership RN. "She might report 'no,' but at a home visit, we can smell there is smoke and may discover that other household members smoke. We use our sight to observe the level of safety the family lives in. Are there dogs, stairs, people coming in and out—is the setting **SAFE** for a child?" The warm and trusting relationship built with expectant and new mothers allows nurses to listen and identify needs, look for progress and challenges and offer information and support.



Nurse-Family Partnership



High-Quality Care and Education

With an improving economy and employment rate, Wake County has seen an increase in demand for child care. In FY 2014-15, 31% of children age birth to five attended regulated child care; 72% of these children attended centers served by WCSS-funded programs. Commitment to quality remains high; 75% of Wake County children in regulated child care were enrolled at a 4- or 5-star facility.

WCSS prioritizes supporting children with the greatest need, many of whom receive a subsidy to afford child care. In FY 2014-15, 85% of the centers serving children on subsidy received WCSS-funded services to improve quality. Despite our community's best efforts to provide access to high-quality care and education for all children, more than 2,800 children were on the waiting list for a subsidy in June, 2015.

RAISING THE BAR ON QUALITY

WCSS' Quality Enhancement Initiative (QEI) works with 1- to 3-star licensed child care centers that wish to improve their star quality rating. Typically a multi-year process, specialists work one-on-one with directors, classroom teachers and staff, first by observing interactions with children, the use of language, classroom set up and other practices to establish a baseline for improvement. Specialists then make recommendations that may involve group trainings or guidance on equipment and match resources to those needs.

The ongoing commitment to offering high-quality care is evident among program participants; 95% of the centers that participated in QEI and were relicensed in FY 2104-15 either maintained or improved their quality rating.



The HIPPY program





Through QEI, Kids Educational Center I attained its 4-star quality rating and has since doubled its enrollment.

“

Wake County SmartStart and our Quality Enhancement Specialist were my backbone throughout the whole process. The Specialist was my mentor, my confidant, my teacher. Without this support, I would never have made it through the assessment process so successfully.

MICHELLE COPELAND, DIRECTOR,
KIDS EDUCATIONAL CENTER I

”

ENHANCING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Another new WCSS-funded program, **Administrator/Quality Development** provides opportunities for child care directors seeking professional growth. Through a year-long Leadership Academy and on-site mentoring and consultation, directors set personalized improvement goals—in areas that may include budget management, staff development, child assessment and program planning and evaluation. In FY 2014-15, 100% of Leadership Academy participants improved program administrative practices and positively impacted the quality at their centers.

Johnson Pond Learning Center Director Laurie Morrison worked with her Leadership Academy mentor to develop a vision for taking her center to the next level, focusing on enhancing documentation and delivery of staff performance appraisals.

In addition to promoting excellence across the child care spectrum, WCSS continued to fund its flagship of early education, the **NC Pre-Kindergarten Program**. In FY 2014-15, WCSS funded 74 preschool classrooms that served 1,217 four-year-olds in Wake County.

“

Developing a more structured approach to delivering appraisals made me realize how much staff loves getting feedback from me. Not only is it a way to acknowledge that I know what they're doing in the classroom; it is also a great opportunity to affirm the good things already going on at our center, make suggestions for improvements and share best practices across all classrooms.

LAURIE MORRISON, DIRECTOR,
JOHNSON POND LEARNING CENTER

”



NC Pre-Kindergarten Program





Strong Families

Families remain the greatest influence on the success of children. That's why WCSS funds programs that empower parents to provide a supportive

home environment, such as **Social/Emotional Interventions for Young Children (SecurePath)**.

SecurePath is the only comprehensive mental health service for young children in Wake County provided at the child's home or preschool. Staff offer mental health assessments, interventions and therapy for young children whose parents need help with their child's social, emotional or developmental challenges.

SecurePath enables parents to develop structure, consistency and routine in their day-to-day life so that their child knows what to expect, which has a positive impact on behavior. Says SecurePath therapist Alison Silver, "We help the child and the parent feel more in control of their self, so they can function and benefit from a classroom environment—opening up learning experiences that have been out of reach before."

Four-year-old Rosa was overwhelmed by everyday sounds and sensations—even the sound of a car radio—and would cry much of the day. Unable to be comfortable in the world around her, Rosa's mounting phobias caused her to become silent and timid.

SecurePath's therapist observed the issues at school and at home and created a plan that included parenting strategies as well as classroom support. Working with several therapists, Rosa overcame her phobias and tantrums. She began to love school and became more social. Rosa's mom and dad were grateful to see their child get back on track and family life balance restored.

CREATING CONFIDENCE

In FY 2014-15, WCSS grew by 23% the number of parent education and training sessions offered through SecurePath and other programs, including: Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY), The Nurturing Program for Spanish Speaking Families, Parents as Teachers, School Readiness Services for Hispanic Children, Supporting School Readiness and The Family Literacy Program. When parents can confidently engage in positive interactions with their young children, they are better able to address challenging behaviors and deal with stressful situations, reducing the likelihood of neglect and abuse.

FINDING THE RIGHT RESOURCES

Parents may sense that they need help with the daily challenges of raising a child, but finding the right resources can be overwhelming. Funded by The John Rex Endowment, **Wake Connections** matches families' needs with home-based services through a single referral system. Working with eight partner programs, Wake Connections links pregnant mothers, new moms and families with children birth to five living in Wake County with services for parenting skills, school readiness, family support and more.



Tying It All Together

With a growing demand for services, it is essential to find ways to align and coordinate resources to maximize their impact. In FY 2014-15, WCSS added a new goal that emphasizes the importance of efficient and effective collaboration.

Coordinating complementary programs can bring far-reaching benefits to children and their families, as well as to child care center staff. For example, at a time when childhood obesity is on the rise, it is important to provide opportunities to ensure that good health and nutrition are practiced—at school and at home. The synergy between two programs supported by The John Rex Endowment—**Farm to Child Care (F2CC)** and **Preventing Obesity by Design (POD)**—demonstrates the potential to positively impact community health.

F2CC connects local food resources to child care providers serving low-income families to help improve eating habits and fight early childhood obesity, while POD transforms playgrounds into outdoor learning environments with active play areas and edible gardens.

Wanda Davis' vision was to improve nutrition and health at her center. What started as a way to offer locally grown foods has blossomed into a curriculum that touches children, their families and center staff. Childcare Network #61 was participating in POD when Ms. Davis learned about F2CC. F2CC connected her with resources and training, enabling her to incorporate locally-grown produce into everything—meals, the curriculum and information for families to use at home. Today, Childcare Network #61 has cut the number of canned products used in half and provides high-quality, fresh foods to every child at no additional cost to the center or families. Families and staff have been enthusiastically using recipes provided by F2CC to prepare healthy meals at home.

WCSS' portfolio of programs reflects the breadth of strategies needed to address the needs of Wake County's youngest children. In addition to funding and managing programs, WCSS works to engage the community as a partner through volunteering and advocacy work so together, we can ensure that all children are successful in school and in life.



Farm to Child Care cooking class

“

It was magic when the two programs came together -- bringing us the needed tools for better food and healthier play.

WANDA DAVIS, DIRECTOR,
CHILDCARE NETWORK #61, RALEIGH

”



Partners, Programs and Collaborative Projects

CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF THE DIOCESE OF RALEIGH

- School Readiness Services for Hispanic Children

CHILD CARE SERVICES ASSOCIATION

- Administrator/Quality Development

COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS OF WAKE COUNTY

- Children's Collaborative of Wake at Kentwood

COMMUNITY CARE OF WAKE and JOHNSTON COUNTIES

- Assuring Better Child Health and Development Program (ABCD)

FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER OF RALEIGH

- Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPIY)

LUCY DANIELS CENTER FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD

- Social/Emotional Interventions for Young Children (SecurePath)

MOTHEREAD

- Literacy Invites and Nurtures Kids Success (LINKS)

SAFECHILD

- The Nurturing Program for Spanish Speaking Families

TELAMON CORPORATION

- The Family Literacy Program

WAKE COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES

- Child Care Health Consultant Program
- Child Care Subsidy Program
- Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP)

WAKE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM OFFICE OF EARLY LEARNING

- Parents as Teachers Program
- Supporting School Readiness
- Wake Up and Read

WAKE COUNTY SMARTSTART

- Child Care Program Quality Supplements
- Community Outreach and Education
- Improving and Sustaining Quality Child Care
- Farm to Child Care*
- NC Pre-Kindergarten Program
- Program Coordination and Evaluation
- Reach Out and Read
- Wake Connections*

Collaborative Projects

NATURAL LEARNING INITIATIVE NC STATE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF DESIGN

- Preventing Obesity by Design – Wake County

LUCY DANIELS CENTER FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD

- Project SEED (Social and Emotional Early Development for Child Care Quality)

**Funded by The John Rex Endowment*



Donors 2014-15

Laura Abraham
Angela Ballard
Debi Bartholomew
Angkana Bode
Myrtle Bunch
Kelly Caldwell
Sean Cassidy
Dale Cousins
La Veta Davidson-Waller
Anastasia Dennis
Sandra Dietrich
Robert and Pam Dowdy
Mattie Fleener

Frances Graham
Kaplan Early Learning
Company
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Viswanathan Krishnan
Robert Lasson
Kalesha Maldonado
James Matthews
Cathy Moore
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Deborah Noel
Valeria Oruma
Melissa Pasquinni

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Jahmal Pullen
Janice Russ
Camille Schaffer
Michael Smith
Allis Talley
The John Rex Endowment
Charlotte Turpin
Michael Wasilick
Whole Foods Market
Deloris Williams
Catherine Wooten
David Zonderman

Volunteers 2014-15

A
Paula Adenji
Sandra Aguilar
Sheila Ahler
Fumni Ajani
Nichelle Allen
Christine Alvarado
Ahmed Ammar
Gerry Andino
Nannette Ausby

B
Michelle Baldwin
Stacey Barbee
Krista Barbour
Lorie Barnes
Nell Barnes
James Bartlett
Mamta Batra

Connie Batten
Mary Lou Bennett
Dumisha Binns
Mick Bodino
Ana Maria Bonell
Brian Bowcock
Caren Bullock
Sharon Burney
Spencer Busby
Amy Bush
Melissa Butler
Arvelis Byrd

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Kelly Caldwell
Pamela Carlton
Anna Carter
Esther Choi
Chris Clark

Jane Clark
Jordan Clark
Bruce Clarke
John Coggin
Nichelle Cole
Dale Cousins
Dan Coutine
D
Lynne Daniel
Shawna Daniels-Ash
Dawn Dawson
Terri DeHart-Burris
Jennifer Delaney
Carla Delcambre
Dan DeLeo
Titania Delgado
Carolyn Dickens
Sandra Dietrich
Freida Dixon

Volunteers 2014-15 CONTINUED

Lorraine Dixon
 Brian Donnelly
 Julie Donnelly
 Carolyn Driggers
 Sara Droegemeier
 Vicki Droegemeier
 Tom Drohan

E

Christian Eaddy
 Eeshea Easley
 Chris Edwards
 Adalia Elliott

F

Crystal Felton
 Maty Ferrer
 Brandie Fintchre
 Ryan Fitzgerald
 Sheila Frye
 Teresa Fudge
 Jim Fletcher
 Corrine Fulp
 Bobbie Furr

G

Al Garcia
 Susan Gates
 Gisela Gaztambide
 Carlo Gonzales
 Irene Gonzales
 Gary Greene
 James S. Greene
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 Sarita Griggs
 Jessica Guerrero
 Suzanne Guthrie

H

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 Nikki P. Haywood
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 Dana Healy
 Donna Hedgpeth
 Kristen Hernandez
 Tim Hinton
 Katy Hipp-Burgwyn
 Sybil Carpenter Hobbs

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 Mary Jo Holmes
 Paul Huber
 Liz Hurst
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 Tricia Jackson
 Gina Jiampetti
 Debbie Johnson
 Allen Jones

K

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 Jacqueline Kehinde
 Connie Kennedy
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 Leah King
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L

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 Mark Langford

Debi LaVine
 Maureen Lewis
 Cassandra Liles
 Juanita Linton
 Deborah Lofton
 Nayeli Luna
 Gay Lytton

M

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 Patrick Madigan
 Angela Majette
 Bonnie Malone
 Marcia Mandel
 Carolyn Manley
 Sue Mannion
 Beth Marks
 Ward Martin
 Bethany Martino
 Amanda Mateus-Rodriguez
 Sonya May
 Ellie Mayes
 Patricia McCarter
 Susan McCullen
 Beckie McGee
 Neill McLeod
 Shana Meadows
 Suzanna Menjivar-Rodriguez
 Shaundreka Mewborn
 Carol Mitchell
 Adam Mobarek
 Eugene Molnar
 Cathy Moore
 Barbara Morales Burke
 Peter Morris

Volunteers 2014-15 CONTINUED

Laurie Morrison
Mary Mulleady
Bettie Murchison

N

Tameka Newkirk
Jack Nichols

O

Joe Owens
Melina Owens

P

Gaurav Patel
Kaila Patel
Kimberly Peebles
Matt Peedin
Kelli Peele
Latina Perry
Christine Peterson
Heather Petrovich
Regina Petteway
Matt Polinchak
Hannah Poteat
Jessica Price
Rhonda Privette
Ferali Puerta
Michelle Putterman

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Lisa Quin

R

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Deanna N. Randle
Waltye Rasulala
Karen Ray
Susan Richardson
Janee Roach

JeToya Robinson
Joyce Robinson
Tara Robinson
Suree Rogers
Ramon Rojano

S

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Jason Sanko
Yvonne Schaefer
Camille Schaffer
Chris Schmidt
Brian Schroepfer
Christina Serafino
Phylis Sharpe
Kimberly Shaw
Lisa Shook
Lara Siffer
Betsy Simmons
Brian Simmons
Vincent Simorelli
Luv Artis Sinclair
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Katie Spalding
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Andrew Stark
Jennifer Stark
Cheryl Stephenson
Henry Stewart
Meredith Stewart
Suzanne Stroud
Lindsay Stubbs
Linda Sturdivant
Caroline Sullivan
Sandra Sweeney

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CaraLynn Telford
Christy Thalheimer
Karla Theobald
Paige Todd
Robyn Trueblood DeHart
Charlotte Turpin
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Elizabeth Weichel
Judith Weinbren
Michael Weisel
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Grant Wiest
Lesley Williams
Tyrone Williamson
Azita Wilson
Val Wilson
Shante Winborne
Allison Wrenn

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Wake County SmartStart FY 2015 Financial Statements

STATEMENTS OF RECEIPTS, EXPENDITURES, AND NET ASSETS MODIFIED CASH BASIS

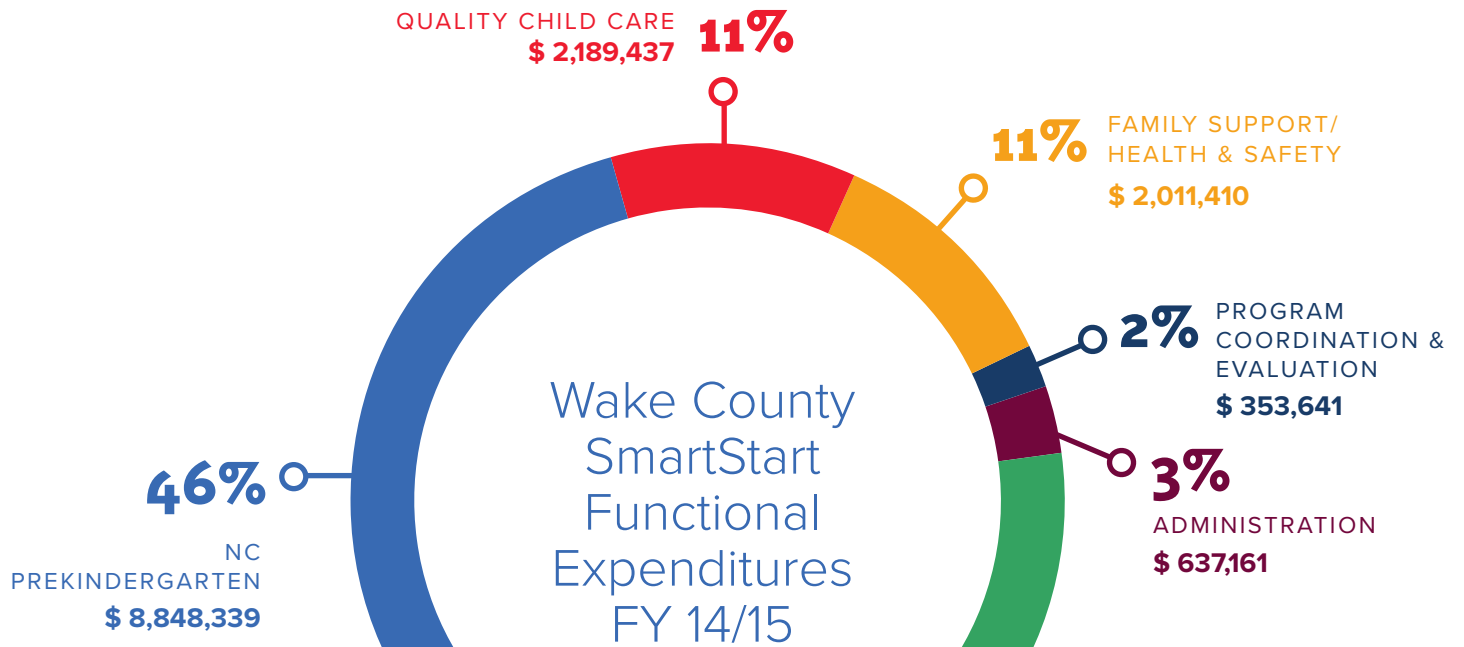
	Unrestricted Funds			
	Smart Start Funds	Other Funds	Temporarily Restricted Funds	Total Funds
Receipts				
State Awards <i>(less refunds of \$ (2,534))</i>	\$ 7,539,191	\$ 6,254,775	0	\$ 13,793,966
Private Contributions	0	107,672	229,812	337,484
Interest and Investment Earnings	0	5,928	0	5,928
Sales Tax Refunds	0	8,013	0	8,013
Other Receipts	0	39,470	0	39,470
Total Receipts	\$ 7,539,191	\$ 6,415,858	\$ 229,812	\$ 14,184,861
Net Assets Released from Restrictions:				
Satisfaction of Program Restrictions	0	79,463	(79,463)	0
Expiration of Time Restrictions:				
	\$ 7,539,191	\$ 6,495,321	\$ 150,349	\$ 14,184,841
Expenditures				
<i>Programs:</i>				
Child Care and Education Quality	2,091,751	97,686	0	2,189,437
Family Support	1,339,957	12,972	0	1,352,929
Health and Safety	658,481	0	0	658,481
NC Pre-Kindergarten	2,794,467	6,053,872	0	8,848,339
<i>Support:</i>				
Management and General	412,697	216,741	0	637,161
Program Coordination and Evaluation	241,838	111,803	0	353,641
Total Expenditures	\$ 7,539,191	\$ 6,500,797	\$ 0	\$ 14,039,988
Excess of Receipts Over Expenditures	0	(5,476)	150,349	144,873
Net Assets at Beginning of Year	0	1,852,581	104,679	1,957,260
Net Assets at End of Year	\$ 0	\$ 1,847,105	\$ 255,028	\$ 2,102,133
Net Assets Consisted of:				
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$ 13,935	\$ 1,852,692	\$ 255,028	\$ 2,121,655
Refunds Due from Contractors	16,483	0	0	16,483
	\$ 30,418	\$ 1,852,692	\$ 255,028	\$ 2,138,138
Less: Due to State	27,035	0	0	27,035
Funds Held for Others	3,383	5,587	0	8,970
Net Assets at End of Year	\$ 0	\$ 1,847,105	255,028	\$ 2,102,133

Note: During FY 2015, the NC Partnership for Children and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) entered into a contract with and made payments to a service provider selected by Wake County SmartStart. This service provider contract is not reflected on this statement. However, a summary of the service provider contract entered into by the NC Partnership for Children and DHHS is presented here:

Schedule of State Level Service Providers Contracts For the Year Ended June 30, 2015

Wake County Human Services Child Care Subsidy.....	\$ 5,066,914
Total Expenditures – Wake County SmartStart (See above).....	14,039,988
Grand Total Expenditures by and through Wake County SmartStart	\$ 19,106,902







2014-2015 ANNUAL REPORT

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*Wake County SmartStart is a 501(c)(3)
nonprofit organization.*

*Writing/Editing: **Patty Williams***

*Design: **Top Shelf Design***

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