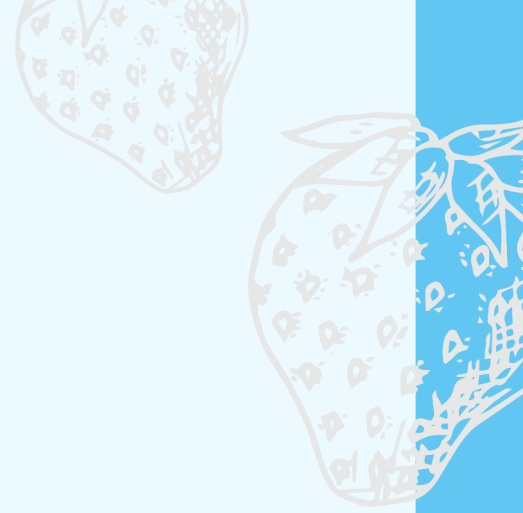


2023

ANNUAL REPORT



CENTER FOR HEALTH PROMOTION AND DISEASE PREVENTION





ABOUT US

The UNC Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention’s Food, Fitness and Opportunity Research Collaborative aims to build economic security, improve health outcomes and contribute to community-based research literature to address those affected by inequity in North Carolina. We do this through nutrition education and community-designed programs, working alongside local community partners to increase access to nutritious food, opportunities for physical activity, and community well-being.



COMMUNITY-BASED PROGRAMS



Several FFORC and CAB team members attending the Walk Fairview Day event!

Our community-based programs are designed and driven by communities. We enjoy working with local partners to make changes to policies, systems, and environments to address socioeconomic barriers and improve community health. Projects included the implementation and maintenance of community gardens, the facilitation of culturally-relevant nutrition education, and a youth-led project supporting policies and resources that improve the quality and safety of physical activity opportunities.

CHILD NUTRITION PROJECT

The Child Nutrition Project, led by the Carolina Hunger Initiative, focuses on increasing access to healthy foods for kids and their families. This year, their work included hosting nutrition and cooking classes, creating nutrition education resources, and providing training and technical assistance on strategies to increase access to healthy meals through school and summer nutrition programs.

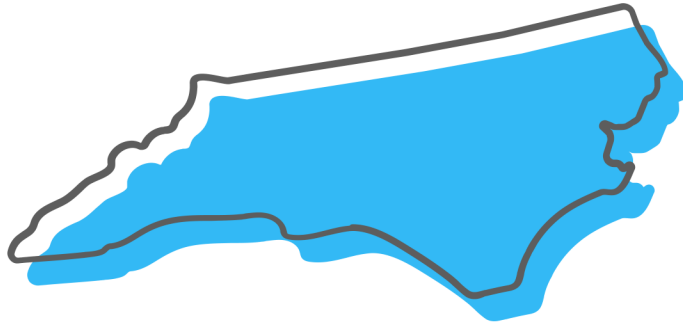


The Carolina Hunger Initiative team celebrating school nutrition professionals at the 2023 School Nutrition Association of NC Conference.



WHERE ARE WE?

We support programs in **18** Counties across North Carolina and provide free nutrition education resources and online classes statewide! We also partnered with over **13** local community organizations in our effort to improve the quality of life for North Carolina residents.



 **Our Child Nutrition Project works Statewide**



13

collaborating community partners



18

counties that have active community-designed programs



PROGRAM SNAPSHOTS



A student intern leads a class for 3rd to 5th graders in Orange County Schools, part of Carolina Hunger Initiative's Nutrition Education program.

CHILD NUTRITION PROJECT

Carolina Hunger Initiative's nutrition and cooking classes continued in person and online in 2023, including an exciting transition to a new curriculum that lets us explore more approaches to healthy eating.

BY THE NUMBERS



370

individuals received nutrition and physical activity education



79%

individuals showed improvement in learning to plan easy, healthy meals and choose healthy snacks



69%

individuals showed improvement in making healthy food choices



BY THE NUMBERS



26

UNC student interns helped lead nutrition classes

SUMMER MEALS!

When the traditional school year ends, the NC Summer Nutrition Programs help make sure there are still meals available at no cost for kids who need them. The Child Nutrition Project team provides training and technical assistance to organizations operating summer nutrition programs around increasing access to healthy meals for kids when school is out of session. The team also visited summer nutrition program sites and provided fun nutrition education activities and resources to kids attending.



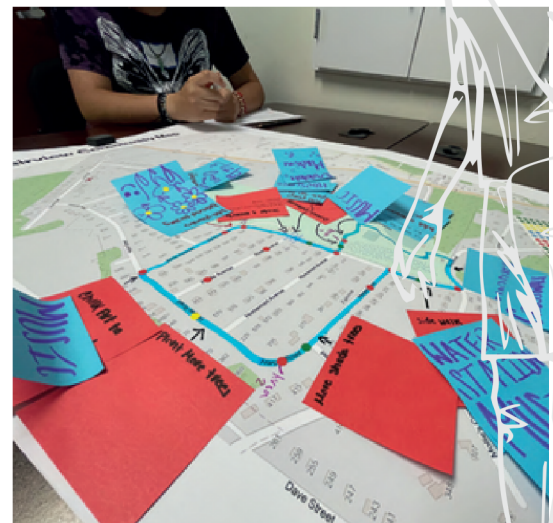
Carolina Hunger Initiative staffers and interns pose with Ray, the mascot for the NC Summer Nutrition Programs, at a summer meals for kids site in Durham.

"School lunch is how students get most of their vitamins and nutrition for the day."

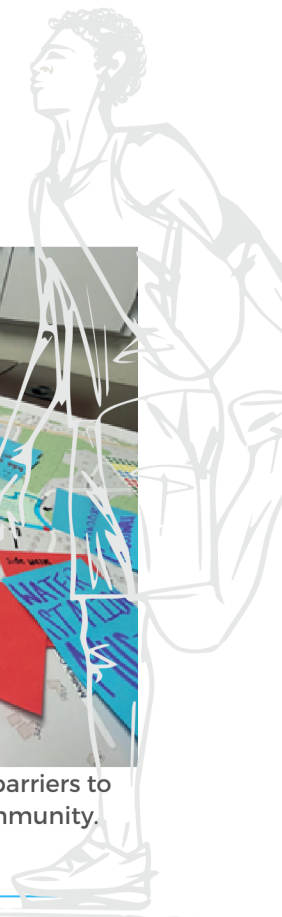
~ UNC Intern

COMMUNITIES ON THE MOVE!

Communities on the Move is a program that facilitates the creation of social and physical environments that promote opportunities for safer physical activity in Orange County. As part of this effort, the Fairview Youth in Action program, which enlists local young adults to become civically engaged in their community to advocate for changes to the built environment, continued to work closely with neighbors and the Town of Hillsborough to implement several improvements as outlined in their Activate: Fairview Active Living Plan for 2022 - 2027 (aka: "Activate"). This plan, developed by interns over the last four summers, outlines several recommendations to improve their neighborhood.



Youth in Action intern assessing barriers to active living in the Fairview community.





THIRD ANNUAL WALK FAIRVIEW DAY

In August, the interns hosted the 3rd annual Walk Fairview Day, a neighborhood walk and pop-up demonstration aimed at advocating for necessary active living improvements. Some built environment improvements successfully installed this year included new street striping! A bike rack! Street trees that bear fruit!

BEFORE



AFTER



A before and after photo of the newly installed bike rack at the Dorothy P. Johnson Community Center in Fairview.

Other 2023 successes include several improvements to the Dorothy Johnson Community Center, including fresh paint, new benches and picnic tables, installation of an accessibility ramp, and a bike rack. Additionally, the Town of Hillsborough officially adopted the “Activate” plan for community recommendations into the Town’s existing comprehensive plan. The FFORC team also led three Traffic Calming workshops to improve safety for all road users; including pedestrians, cyclists and motorists.



The 2023 cohort of Fairview Youth in Action interns along with the FFORC program coordinators, Judit and Kevin, and members of Fairview Community Watch, a supporting program partner.

"I think the best part about my internship experience is getting to interact with different people and places. I got to learn more about myself and other communities in the process."

~ Youth Intern

BY THE NUMBERS



3,773

individuals reached by efforts to improve the built environment



DIVERSITY NURTURES ACHIEVEMENT (DNA)

Located in Duplin County, Diversity Nurtures Achievement (DNA) Community Youth Center is a safe haven for the greater Duplin County area, providing support for local youth, their families, and the greater community. DNA offers a safe, supportive, and nurturing environment for youth participants, where they receive individualized care and engage in activities and opportunities, gaining both academic and life skills. Gardening, agriculture, and physical activity are at the center of their after-school and summer youth programming.



“Together, we are and will continue making a difference in our communities.”

~ Earlean Rivers, DNA Executive Director

Left: DNA staff and youth participants harvesting tomatoes at DNA’s on-site community garden during their summer youth program. Right: DNA summer youth program participants learning a song and dance to be performed for friends, family, and community members at DNA’s end-of-summer celebration.

Throughout the year, DNA engaged about **35** youth in various nutrition and physical activity opportunities, consisting of the utilization of the Choose Health: Food, Fun, and Fitness curriculum along with Zumba instruction and other physical activities, nutrition and agricultural education through an on-site community garden and farming animals, and other off-site learning and engagement opportunities.



Residents of Fairview Women on the Move during one of their community fitness classes!

WOMEN ON THE MOVE (WOTM)

Women on the Move provides physical activity opportunities and nutrition classes to women in the Fairview Community. The women completed 75 classes totaling over 4,500 minutes of physical activity and were able to attain 80% of the recommended amount of physical activity through the programming alone! The women completed a series of 8 nutrition education classes offered by NC Steps to Health while their children completed nutrition classes offered by our Carolina Hunger Initiative partner.





GOLDEN JOURNEYS

Golden Journeys is a nutrition, health and wellness program that provides opportunities to engage in nutrition and cultural education learning experiences primarily to ~12-15 older low-income, rurally located, older Black women of Warren County. This year's program activities included:

Oldways' A Taste of African Heritage nutrition education lessons, exploration and presentation of each participant's personal genealogical histories through reflections, engagement with local community guest speakers whose expertise range in cooking, gardening, juicing, and other nutrition, health and wellness activities, and more.



Members of the Golden Journeys health and wellness program.

"This program is vital to our community. As an older woman, it provides me a source of community."

~ Golden Journeys participant

BY THE NUMBERS



13

community gardens were supported



A Mineral Springs summer harvest.

COMMUNITY GARDENS

Our FFORC team continues to work alongside community partners in rural counties to maintain community gardens in an effort to increase access to fresh fruits and vegetables, increase physical activity, and encourage community engagement. These gardens increase access to fresh produce and opportunities for physical activity and offer many other social benefits. Furthermore, in 2024, several of these gardens will be take part in a Participatory Grant Making process, whereby participant gardens will be able to design their own projects (within the bounds of SNAP-Ed priorities) and vote on each other's proposed projects. We look forward to seeing the results of these efforts next year, so stay tuned!



Volunteers harvesting kale at Green Duke Community Garden in Warren County, NC.



Youth harvesting potatoes at the Fairview Community Garden in Orange County.



Coharie community harvesting potatoes together.

BY THE NUMBERS



38,383

pounds of fresh produce were harvested



1,441

community members received community garden produce



385

volunteers supported our community programs

*All reported data is from the SNAP-Ed grant fiscal year, Oct 1, 2022 - Sept 30, 2023

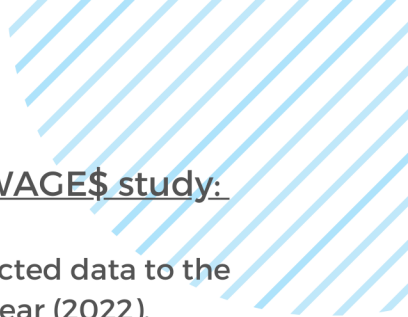
This garden "is a food supply for our people and an opportunity to feel like, hey, I am really investing in myself and my community."

~ Coharie community garden volunteer

WAGE\$ STUDY

On February 15th, 2023, our Minnesota and Raleigh teams completed our final interview for our final year (year 5) of our WAGE\$ Study exploring the impact of a living wage ordinance in Minneapolis. Ultimately, we were able to get 58% of our original participants from Year 1 back in year 5 (that's 63% in Raleigh and 53% in Minneapolis)!

We have also conducted two rounds of interviews with a smaller set of our participants in both Minneapolis and Raleigh. The main reasons for these interviews were to learn about our participants' lived experiences of changes in wages, changes in benefits (like SNAP benefit levels) and with the pandemic. Here is a link to a short, five-minute, video that summarizes some of what we learned from our first round of interviews (<https://hpdp.unc.edu/fforc/wages-study/>).



Here's some things we have learned so far from our WAGE\$ study:



- SNAP benefit receipt decreased from the first year we collected data to the second year in both sites (2019 to 2020), but by the fourth year (2022), SNAP benefit receipt had increased at both sites.
- By year 4, 29.8% of participants were unemployed, and 61.5% received SNAP benefits.
- Only about 50% of our participants who have children reported receiving child tax credit payments, given during the height of the COVID pandemic.
- Having a bank account was associated with the receipt of a pandemic-related stimulus check, suggesting that people without bank accounts had difficulty receiving the benefits they were entitled to.

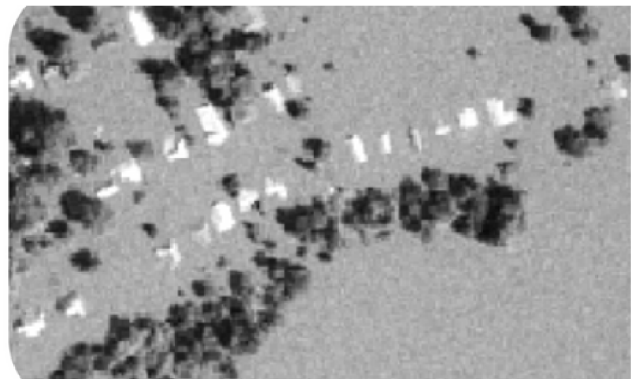
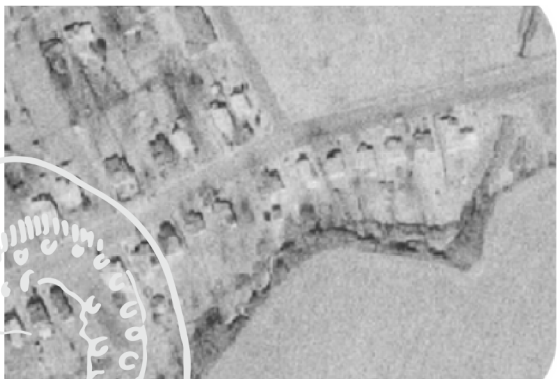
➔ **NEW TARBORO GARDEN PARTNERSHIP**



Pictured are partnership members left to right: Rev. William Kearney, Dr. Danielle Purifoy, Aerhealle Chase, Dr. Molly De Marco, Kendrick Ransome, Loretta Draughn, and Brett Sheppard.

Our FFORC team obtained outside funding to build a partnership with a new organization to create a community garden on flood buy-out land in East Tarboro, North Carolina to engage this low-resource community. The Town of Princeville (one of the first towns founded by formerly enslaved peoples, and East Tarboro communities were devastated by Hurricanes Floyd and Matthew. Flooded land, that had once been owned by families and held their homes, was bought out by the federal government and lay abandoned. An organization called Freedom Org (<https://freedomorg.org>), created to 'invest in disinvested communities,' obtained the right to rent part of this buy-out land from the City of Tarboro to create a community garden.

Panola Heights in East Tarboro 1977 vs 1999



Buy-out land before the flooding of the Tar River due to Hurricane Floyd and after.





Molly, Brett and Rev. Kearney partnered with Dr. Danielle Purifoy (professor of Geography at UNC) and Freedom Org to apply for a grant from UNC’s Whole Communities Connection (<https://wcc.unc.edu>) to develop this land for a community garden. We were awarded a one-year grant for \$40,000 to develop this partnership and this garden. The grant ended on November 30, 2023, although we will continue this work with carry-over funds. Through this grant, we obtained soil testing to make sure the soil was safe, developed community engagement strategies and created a garden layout to take into account the need to live with water. (Pictured: Kendrick Ransome and Marquetta Dickens, founders of Freedom Org, standing in the Tar River, which frequently floods.)



Participatory Grant Making (PGM)

After several years of planning, the FFORC team will be launching its first round of Participatory Grant Making (PGM) with several community garden partners and the help of our Community Advisory Board (CAB). PGM, a process whereby existing partners will opt-in to a democratic granting process that provides participants decision-making power around the prioritization of projects funded and funding amounts, is designed to meet the capacity needs of the partners involved, while encouraging growth in organizational capacity and skill building, and building community within the network of grantees. We look forward to continuing that as we begin 2024.



SNAP-Ed Toolkit Website

The SNAP-Ed Toolkit website is a dynamic online resource center for State and local SNAP-Ed providers that offers evidence-based interventions, an interactive Evaluation Framework and Interpretive Guide for collectively tracking and sharing SNAP-Ed program results, a clearinghouse of peer-reviewed literature on outcome- and process-related articles from SNAP-Ed funded projects, as well as an extensive library of other helpful resources. 2023 will be our last year managing this project and is supporting its migration into the USDA SNAP-Ed Connection website.

2023 SummerPalooza!

The Child Nutrition Project team partnered with the NC Department of Public Instruction to host three regional SummerPalooza! Summits, which were trainings for summer nutrition program sponsors, in both January 2023 (planning for summer 2023) and November 2023 (planning for summer 2024). Over 200 individuals attended each of the two series of trainings!



LEADERSHIP

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Scan to
visit our
website!

A HUGE **THANK YOU**
TO ALL OF OUR
PARTNERS AND
VOLUNTEERS FOR
SUPPORTING THESE
PROGRAMS AND THE
COMMUNITIES THEY
SERVE! WE ARE EXCITED
TO SEE WHAT WE CAN
ACCOMPLISH TOGETHER
IN 2024!

NC CHILD HUNGER LEADERS CONFERENCE



The Carolina Hunger Initiative, which the Child Nutrition Project team is part of, hosted the 12th annual NC Child Hunger Leaders Conference on February 22, 2023 in Chapel Hill, NC. This was the first time the conference was held in-person since February 2020. The conference highlighted strategies and success stories for addressing child hunger in North Carolina. Approximately **350** individuals attended the conference.

NEW TEAM MEMBERS!

We also want to recognize and welcome three new hires: Kevin and Edith will support our community-based project, Communities on the Move. Edith will be coordinating youth programming in Fairview, and Kevin will be working to support the implementation of the Activate plan and general program development. Jana Saur will be a program specialist supporting our SNAP-Ed Child Nutrition Project activities.



Jana Saur



Edith DeJesus-Sanchez



Kevin Giff