

# DAVIE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION



## Article #7: Healthy Davie

By Jane Simpson, President & CEO

**THIS** is the seventh article in a series about the Davie Community Foundation and our work in the county. In this article I will discuss the Healthy Davie Initiative we started with the Mebane Charitable Foundation in December 2014.

According to the 2013-2014 statistics for Davie County, only 57.7% of third grade children read on grade level; more than 37.8% of children in elementary and 46.2% of children in middle schools are considered obese based upon their BMI index; and more than 21% (1,200) of children in Davie County live in poverty. Wake Forest Baptist Health - Davie Medical Center selected Obesity as a significant health concern among Davie residents because of the overwhelming data indicating the serious nature of the problem in Davie, and chronic heart disease was selected as the second significant health need.

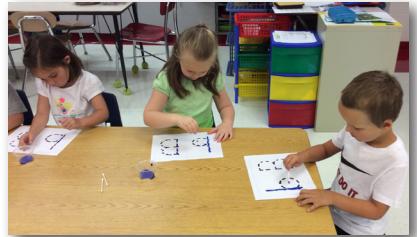
It was these statistics along with feedback from government, school and non-profit leaders that caught the Foundation Board's attention when looking at the needs in Davie County. We realized things had changed significantly in the ten years since our first needs assessment when almost everything we heard fell into two areas pretty easily, Youth or Literacy. In looking at the 2013 information, we could align the issues into three new areas, Health, Education and Poverty.

We realized that many of the issues in the specific areas were inter-related. For example, obesity is related to poverty and education about eating healthy foods. We also understood that there were many non-profits and governmental agencies working to address the issues but we weren't sure they all knew what the others were doing.

We joined forces with the Mebane Charitable Foundation and invited the leaders from all of our non-profits, government agencies, town,

and county leaders to attend the first "Healthy Davie" forum. We were excited to have 51 participants. We hosted speakers on Health, Education and Poverty and secured facilitators for smaller group discussions about each of those areas. Our challenge to the group was to discuss how to optimize the services already in place and then discuss ways to change the environment to reduce the rate of those moving into critical stages.

Each group was asked to identify the highest priority for impact in 2015 as well as the agencies that would need to play a critical role in achieving success. In 2015, a Preschool Summer Camp, five Kinder Camps, five Elementary Reading Camps, and a Read to Achieve Camp were all funded in an effort to reach children who could, or did, have reading difficulties.



Grant funding is paying to implement Healthy, Fit and Strong at Mocksville and Coolee-mee Elementary Schools. The program teaches second grade children about eating healthy and the importance of being physically active. It also includes family nights that give parents ideas for healthy meals and stresses the importance of physical activity at home.

Agencies are exploring matching grants for child care along with creative ways to solve the transportation problem that plagues so many families teetering on poverty levels.

Discussions will continue among non-profits and agencies when the group comes together in December 2015. Although finding solutions is not easy, it is important for a healthy community. The Davie Community Foundation is working diligently to meet the **5n5 Community Impact Challenge** to ensure new dollars are available when effective, creative solutions are found. Next week, I will discuss how YOU can be involved in meeting the challenge!



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