

**August 7 Durham Herald-Sun Column**  
Partnership for a Healthy Durham Column

Two years ago Durham County was recognized as a national leader in building a culture of health and community collaboration. In June 2014, the county received the *RWJF (RWJF) Culture of Health Prize* for its efforts in uniting the power of leaders, partners and community members. The recognition was the results of those forces seeking to build long-term solutions to address health issues, resulting in a positive impact on the health of our society.

The community received a \$25,000 award. Durham County residents and members of the Partnership for a Healthy Durham decided the best use of funds would be to support community projects through mini-grants. Four Durham-based projects were selected that promoted health and equity around Durham's health priorities and aligned with Partnership for a Healthy Durham's committee action plans. Between July 2015 and June 2016, projects made great strides and leveraged additional funding.

**The Health Equipment Loan Program (HELP)** through Project Access of Durham County received \$10,000 to offer free durable medical equipment for loans to Durham County residents. Objectives include reducing medical equipment waste and assisting those in need. During the mini-grant period, about 200 donations were expected, but HELP received a total of 467 items. Survey results show that 90% of customers stated that they would recommend the program to others.

**Durham Knows**, a public health campaign to increase HIV testing among Durham County residents and encourage everyone to know their HIV status was awarded \$5,000. The campaign created videos, began social media messaging efforts and conducted outreach and testing at community events. Physicians with the Durham Knows campaign and Duke Health worked together to implement a change to electronic medical records which prompts HIV testing during medical visits. After the change was made, testing increased from about 100 per day to more than 200. The campaign leveraged additional funding for three more years through a partnership with the North Carolina Central University Criminal Justice Institute.

**Safe Routes to School** received \$5,000 to offer bicycle and pedestrian safety "Let's Go, NC!" curriculum and provide bicycles and equipment to 200 fourth grade students at three Durham Public Schools (DPS). As a result, basic safety skills and rules of road knowledge scores increased among participating students. Lessons will be given at three additional elementary schools in the fall. A fleet of 12 bikes purchased with the mini-grant will be donated to DPS to continue the lessons.

**Double Bucks for Seniors** received \$5,000, to help Grocers on Wheels increase access to fresh local fruits, vegetables, dairy, and meat for seniors through its mobile market. The Double Bucks program provides those with Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits with a dollar-to-dollar match to purchase healthy foods. Over the past year, Grocers on Wheels sold approximately 1,429 pounds of meats, dairy and produce to 232 participants in three senior housing communities and the Durham Center for Senior Life.

“We are extremely happy with the success of the mini-grant programs and look forward to the continuous impact those programs will have in Durham County,” said Marissa Mortiboy, coordinator for the Partnership for a Healthy Durham.

The Partnership for a Healthy Durham is a community coalition that works closely with the Durham County Department of Public Health to identify the greatest health needs in the county and then forms action teams to address those needs. For more information about the *RWJF Culture of Health Prize* mini-grant projects or to get involved with the Partnership for a Healthy Durham, visit [www.healthydurham.org](http://www.healthydurham.org) or call 919-560-7833.

**Clip and Save:**

The Partnership has five committees which meet monthly:

- Access to Care
- Communications
- HIV/STI
- Obesity and Chronic Illness
- Substance Use/Mental Health

All meetings are open to the public. The Partnership asks anyone interested in addressing these issues to join us!

For a full committee meeting schedule, visit [www.healthydurham.org](http://www.healthydurham.org).

Social media sites:

[www.facebook.com/healthydurham](http://www.facebook.com/healthydurham)

[www.twitter.com/healthydurham](http://www.twitter.com/healthydurham)