



WAKE COUNTY



Smart Start

Building Bright Futures

2022-2023 ANNUAL REPORT

Letter from the Board Chair

Dear Community-

2022-2023 was a year of both celebration and challenge at Wake County Smart Start (WCSS).

In fall 2022, we proudly launched the pilot year of Wake ThreeSchool, an early learning program for 3-year-olds. Funded by Wake County and administered by Wake County Smart Start, this new program served 100 children at 8 sites across Wake County. And due to its success, over 200 slots (a 100% increase) were funded for the following school year.

In May 2023, we celebrated 25 years of collaborative work in the early education community with an in-person fundraising event, *Building Bright Futures*. It was an evening to remember as our stakeholders gathered at Raleigh Convention Center to enjoy interactive booths, a station-style dinner, basket raffle, and a program featuring keynote Sonia Manzano, best known for portraying Maria on “Sesame Street”.

The year was not without its challenges. As we came out of the height of the pandemic, it became clear we were facing a child care crisis across our community and the entire country. Families are now paying more for child care than the cost of in-state North Carolina college tuition, and child care facilities are struggling to find quality educators because many have left the field due to low wages and difficult working conditions. WCSS helped tackle this

system-wide issue by raising awareness in newsletters, media interviews, in-person advocacy events, and our social media channels. We also partnered with Wake Tech,

WCPSS, and North Carolina Business

Committee for Education to launch an early education apprenticeship program that enables early educators to take courses and be paid to teach in the classroom at the same time.

We are proud of all we’ve done to bring children and families the services they need to succeed in kindergarten and life ahead. Together with our early education network, **Wake County Smart Start served over 40,000 children** this past fiscal year.

Thank you for your enduring support and helping us create a brighter future where ALL children learn, parents are supported, and educators succeed.

Sincerely,

Sherry Heuser

Wake County Smart Start Board Chair



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Preparing Children for Success in Kindergarten and Life Ahead



The Mission

Wake County Smart Start (WCSS) works to ensure that children, birth to five years old, are prepared for success in Kindergarten and life ahead.

The Vision & Goals

Wake County will be a community of strong, nurturing families which respects and values its young children and ensures that each child is happy, healthy, and:

1. Children are in safe, supportive home environments.
2. Children are in high-quality care that contributes to positive child outcomes.
3. Children are healthy and developmentally ready for school.
4. Children and families are supported by a strong, diverse, connected and integrated early childhood system that promotes results.



Our Priorities

Advancing
Racial and Ethnic
Equity

MISSION

Enhancing
Family
Engagement
and Leadership

Improving
Data Driven
Decision-Making



The Need

All children are born ready to learn, but many do not have access to the experiences and resources that they need to thrive. Studies show that when children start behind, they stay behind. By investing in early learning, we level the playing field so that all children are prepared for kindergarten.

- About 1/3 of all 4-year-olds in Wake County are living in poverty.
- 101 million dollars is the estimated price tag for adequately serving all 69,000 children ages 0-5 in Wake County. Currently, the State allocates ONLY 160 million for ALL of North Carolina's early childhood education programs. Our early childhood system is critically underfunded, leaving children and families behind.

Our Why

We dream big! We want to create an early childhood educational system where everyone, including children, parents and educators, thrive. We know that investing in early childhood has an enormous impact. Reaching children in their earlier years sets them up for a lifetime of better outcomes.

We have the power to lift children out of poverty, create a pipeline for a well-trained workforce, reduce future societal costs and make our county a desired destination for both working families and growing businesses. At Wake County Smart Start, we believe that poverty is not destiny and that every child should be valued. If we come together, we can create a brighter future for all children in Wake.

WCSS Outreach

The WCSS outreach team goes into the community, meeting families where they are, to help provide access to Wake County Smart Start's programs, services, and other resources.



Recruitment at a Wake Tech early childhood education career fair.

Former NC Pre-K student helps the outreach team at an application event at a grocery store, "El Mandado".

Our Work

We are the leading early childhood agency helping families access much needed programs, from parenting classes that empower parents, to placements in free, high-quality preschools. We invest in the whole child, ensuring children are emotionally and physically healthy and have support in classrooms and at home. We manage and fund multiple partnerships, to deliver life-changing services on a local level and to leverage our connections to make system-wide improvements, including:

- **Promoting fairness – ensuring that children from low-income and marginalized households receive equal opportunities to learn.**
- **Managing free, high quality preschool programs for eligible 3- and 4-year-olds.**
- **Improving the quality of child care centers in our county and supporting higher compensation for early educators at privately owned centers to increase teacher retention.**
- **Supporting literacy, teaching healthy habits, funding parent education and at-home services to ensure that children thrive wherever they are.**

Family Engagement and Leadership (FEL)

Through FEL, we strive to establish authentic relationships with families to help children grow and succeed in the future. Our goal is to empower parents as family leaders and then help community partners incorporate these new leaders into their work.



Staff member, Marta Maldonado (right), with community leader, Martha Forbes (left), doing Family Leadership and Engagement (FEL) work in the community.



Pre-K parent speaks at Wake County Budget Hearing to advocate for funding to expand Wake ThreeSchool and maintain NC Pre-K.

2022-23 At A Glance

1,477



4-year-olds served by free, high-quality Pre-K.

131



3-year-olds served by Wake ThreeSchool.

312



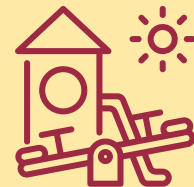
Referrals made for family support through Wake Connections, an intake system which links families to home visiting and group services throughout Wake County.

28



Provider and educator trainings held to improve child care quality, including healthy initiatives.

79%



Of child care facilities in Wake County benefited from our programs.

54



Outreach and resource events where we connected families with education, literacy and other programs.

2,442

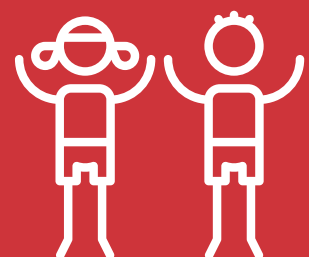


Children served by the 18 early childhood community organizations we help fund.

14



Community presentations given to raise awareness about WCSS and the value of early childhood programs and services.



Wake County Smart Start served over **40,000 children** in fiscal year 2022-23.



WCSS Pilots Wake ThreeSchool

NEW! Early Learning Program for 3-year-olds

August 2022 marked the pilot year of Wake ThreeSchool (WTS), an early learning, play-based program for Wake 3-year-olds administered by WCSS in 8 sites across Wake County. With financial support made possible by the Wake County Commissioners, the free program is available to families with low incomes and other needs including educational/developmental needs, homelessness, chronic health conditions and English proficiency. WTS also addresses the county gap that exists between early learning programs for infant/toddlers and Pre-K for 4-year-olds. Due to the high need and success of the program, Wake ThreeSchool will double in size for school year 2023-24.



County Commissioner, Sig Hutchinson, speaks at a press event about Wake ThreeSchool, a new early learning program for 3-year-olds.



Commissioner Calabria visits a ThreeSchool classroom at Wakefield Creative, one of 8 sites to host the program across the county.



In the news! WRAL reports on opening day of Wake ThreeSchool.

Ana

PARTICIPANT, HOME VISITOR PROGRAM HOME INSTRUCTION FOR PARENTS OF PRESCHOOL CHILDREN (HIPPI), FUNDED PARTNER

Ana enrolled her younger son, Dylan, in HIPPI after seeing her older son, Miguel, benefit from the program the previous year. Ana frequently struggled with Dylan's behavior and was concerned because he didn't engage in age-appropriate activities. The HIPPI family support specialist came to Ana's home and taught her methods for regulating Dylan's behavior and how to provide a conducive learning environment for him. Within weeks of participating in the home visiting program, Ana noticed significant changes in Dylan's developmental progress, such as repeating words and developing a passion for reading.



"HIPPI gave me the tools and encouragement to help Dylan and to enhance his education and behavior."

— Ana (HIPPI participant)

Talia

GROUP PARTICIPANT PROGRAM FOR EARLY PARENT SUPPORT (PEPS), FUNDED PARTNER

Talia, mother to a one-year-old, was the only person in her friend group with a child. She was searching for a program that offered parent support and friendship with other young parents. PEPS offered Talia a safe place to be vulnerable and talk with other parents about the real parts of motherhood. Throughout her time with PEPS, Talia participated in all the group activities and enjoyed making friends.



Renee

PARTICIPANT, HOME VISITOR PROGRAM PARENTS AS TEACHERS (PAT), FUNDED PARTNER

Renee, a first-time parent, chose to participate in PAT with her daughter, Ava, because she wanted to improve her life and learn more about early childhood development to help improve her parenting skills; previously, she struggled with substance abuse and homelessness. During home visits, the parent educator from PAT facilitated developmentally appropriate activities with Renee and her daughter and shared various parenting community resources. Consequently, Renee began attending a gardening group where she learned about healthy eating and cooking and started participating in a parent-child group program with Ava. Renee's participation in Parents as Teachers has allowed Renee to give Ava a stable environment to learn and grow.



"I am learning about age-appropriate activities and how to be patient with Ava."

— Renee (PAT participant)

Mario

STUDENT NC PRE-K PROGRAM, FUNDED PARTNER

Mario, an NC Pre-K student at Method Child Development Center, had difficulty adjusting to the program environment when he started later in the school year. At first he couldn't speak English and often isolated himself from his classmates and teachers. However, after a short time attending the NC Pre-K program, Mario began to develop social and communication skills. Now, he walks into the classroom by himself every morning, washes his hands, and greets his teachers and friends. He has developed relationships with his peers and can express his accomplishments with a big smile and thumbs up.



25th Anniversary Celebration

Building Bright Futures Event

On May 13, we donned our fancy party clothes and gathered with stakeholders at the Raleigh Convention Center for our 25th Anniversary fundraising gala. The evening's theme, *Building Bright Futures*, represented 25 years of shared work in the community helping build up young children to succeed in kindergarten and life ahead. Guests enjoyed a champagne reception, basket raffle, station-style dinner, and engaging in hands-on booths designed to educate about our programs in an interactive way. The culminating element was a stage program featuring remarks from supporters and special guests, Senator Rachel Hunt and keynote, Sonia Manzano, who played Maria on *Sesame Street*. To top it off, we treated guests to the World Premiere of our 25th Anniversary impact video, "Building Bright Futures". It was truly a night to remember.



Special guests and supporters, Senator Rachel Hunt (left), and keynote, Sonia Manzano (right), deliver remarks.





WAKE COUNTY
Smart Schools
CELEBRATING
25
YEARS

WATCH ME!

*View the Building Bright Futures
25th Anniversary Impact Video*

3:44 / 3:57



Our Funding Process

Every three years WCSS evaluates community needs and selects local partner organizations to fund that will provide much-needed early childhood programs and services. Some are administered by other Wake County organizations, and others are administered directly by WCSS. All the programs and services we fund are carefully monitored and evaluated. Our Board of Directors makes allocation decisions using a set of criteria focused on greatest needs and informed by a racial equity lens. Our WCSS Strategic Plan outlines priorities for each funding cycle.



Funded Organizations and Programs 2022-2023

CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF THE DIOCESE OF RALEIGH

- Language is the Key
- School Readiness Services for Hispanic Families

CHILD CARE SERVICES ASSOCIATION

- Advancing School Readiness
- Improving Access to the Early Care and Education System for Latinx Families

FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER OF THE SOUTH ATLANTIC

- Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPPY)

FIESTA CRISTIANA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

- Building Family Support

LUCY DANIELS CENTER

- SecurePath

PASSAGE HOME

- Resilience, Empowerment, Access for Children Experiencing Homelessness (REACH)

SAFECHILD

- Crianza con Cariño

TRIANGLE AREA PARENTING SUPPORT

- Program for Early Parent Support

WAKE COUNTY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

- Child Care Health Consultation
- Child Care Subsidy
- Nurse-Family Partnership

WAKE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM - OFFICE OF EARLY LEARNING

- Parents as Teachers

WAKE COUNTY SMART START

- Early Literacy Initiatives
- Quality Enhancement (for child care centers)
- NC Pre-K and NC Pre-K Quality Enhancement
- NC Pre-Kindergarten
- Systems Improvement and Public Engagement

Our Collaborations

Healthy Initiatives

REACH project – WCSS, GoNAPSACC and CEFES-Farm2ECE

Wake County Cooperative Extension

Wake County Government/Food Security Office – ECE Food Hub project

Collaborative Projects

Wake County Apprenticeships – Wake Tech, WCPSS, Building Bright Futures

Participatory Research Project

Strategic Planning Committee

Wake ECAP Executive Committee and Working Groups

Community Coalitions

Wake Pre-K Collaborative

Wake Up and Read - Leadership Team

Wake ECAP (Early Childhood Action Plan)

Family First Community Network

Wake Connections Advisory Committee

Early Literacy and Outreach Community of Practice

Southern Regional Center CAC

WAKE Up and Read



Brenda Howerton, Durham County Commissioner, Gayle Headen, WCSS Executive Director, and Susan Evans, Wake County Commissioner, present "Collaborating and Leading on Early Childhood Together" at the 2023 Smart Start Conference.

ALPES

Salvation Army - Project CATCH

Wake BRT (Bus Rapid Transit) Stakeholders Group

Wake Collaborative Meeting

WC Community Collaborative for Children and Families

Wake Up and Read - Family as Partners Committee

NC Coalition for Inclusion, Not Expulsion

Members of the NC Coalition for Inclusion, Not Expulsion meet to review the statewide plan and vision to eliminate racial inequities in preschool suspensions, expulsions, and exclusionary practices. This work is part of a larger effort to create a system where Black children and families have equitable opportunity to participate in early care and education settings.



Pictured here: members of the NC Coalition for Inclusion, not Expulsion

Crosby Garfield CAC

Wake LICC

WCHS- Western Wake CAC

NC Latino Health Alliance Meeting

Raleigh Wake Partnership to End Homelessness

WCHS - Community Development Coalition

WCHS - Departure Drive/Millbrook CAC

Participatory Research Project

In Spring 2023, The Program Coordination and Evaluation (PCE) and Early Childhood Initiatives (ECI) departments began collaborating on a participatory research project to develop community definitions of quality and culturally affirming practices in early childhood programs. The Spring 2023 focus was to gather a diverse research team from the early childhood community, including families, to ensure we were supported in our research methodology. The resulting team consisted of WCSS staff from PCE and ECI, five community and family co-investigators, and Dr. Allison De Marco and Dr. Iheoma Iruka from UNC's Frank Porter Graham. For its first task, the team co-developed a research plan and focus group discussion guides to help answer the following research questions:

- **What does child care quality mean to families and caregivers?**
- **What does a family need to feel a sense of belonging in that child care community?**



Pre-K
Graduation
2022-23



*Pre-K Graduates from
school year 2022- 2023.*



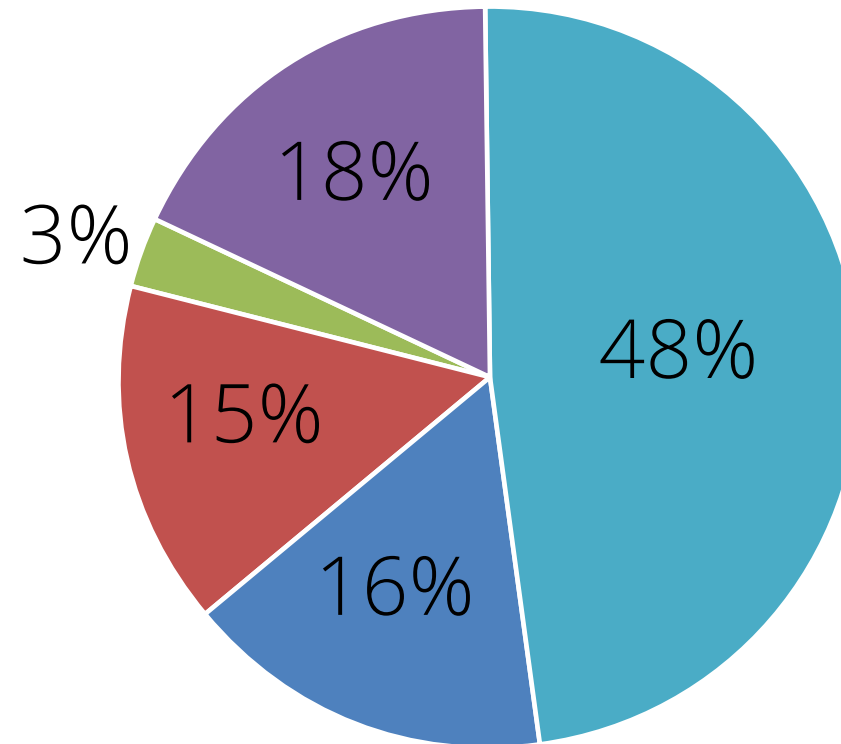
Finances

Wake County Smart Start Revenue FY 22/23

TOTAL \$27,918,454*

*Includes \$4,983,458 of pass-through funds, Child Care Subsidy

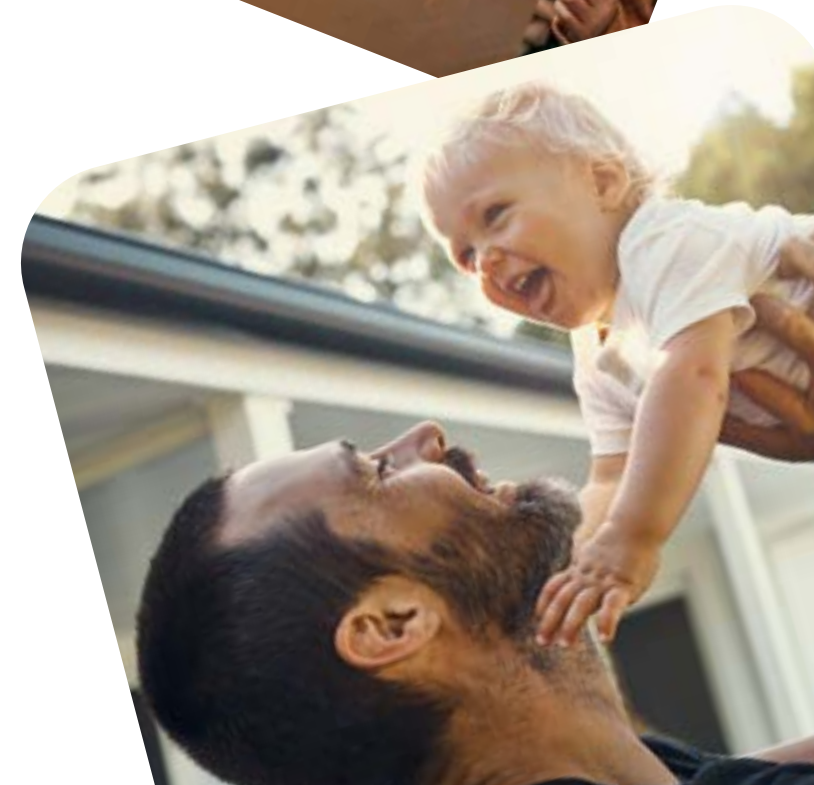
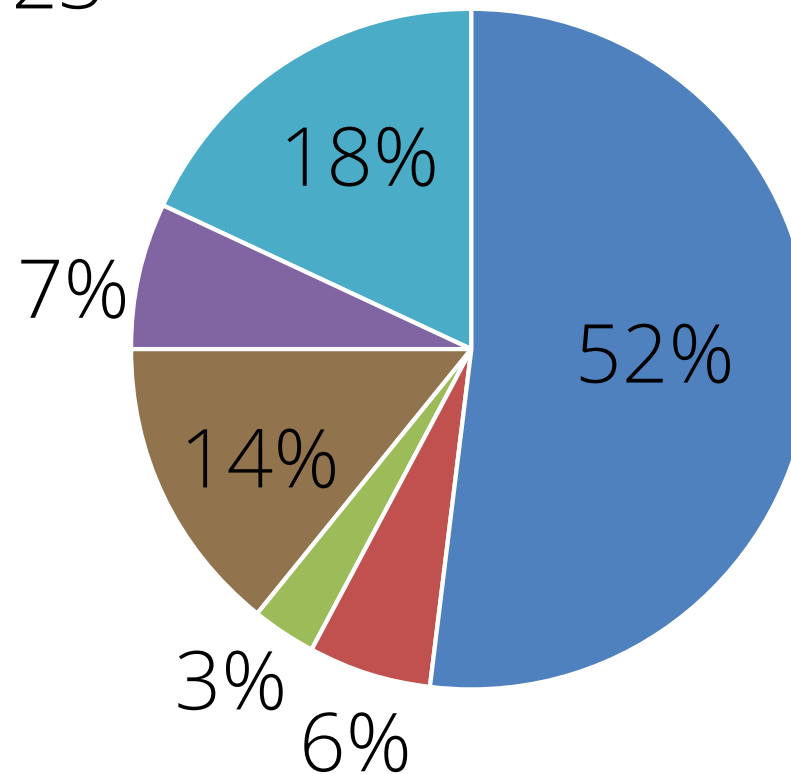
State Awards and Contracts	\$13,319,301
Federal Awards.....	\$4,611,999
Local Awards	\$4,242,605
Private Contributions and Interest.....	\$761,091
Smart Start funds, Child Care Subsidy (through Wake County Human Services)	\$4,611,999



Wake County Smart Start Functional Expenditures FY 22/23

TOTAL \$27,373,894

NC PreKindergarten	\$14,285,841
Wake ThreeSchool	\$1,656,625
Child Care and Education Quality	\$829,493
Family Support/Health and Safety	\$3,783,329
Program Support	\$1,835,147
Child Care Subsidy	\$4,983,458
(through Wake County Human Services)	



Affordable Child Care and Labor Crisis

As we moved out of the COVID-19 pandemic, we found ourselves facing a serious child care crisis. The cost of child care is unbearably high in our county and country, rising far above what most can afford. On top of that, there is an early childhood labor shortage as early educators leave the field because of low wages and difficult working conditions.

Did you know?

- The average price of center-based infant child care in North Carolina is more than the average annual tuition and fees at a public 4-year college or university.
- On average, early educators make between \$10-12 an hour—far below the county’s living wage of \$18.95 an hour for a single adult with no children.

Wake County Smart Start has been taking the following actions to combat these issues:

- Providing affordable public Pre-K to families in Wake
- Raising awareness about the crisis through media interviews and newsletters
- Holding conversations about it with policy makers and early education leaders
- Increasing teacher pay at private sites to match WCPSS



“I’m a well-educated professional with one child in child care, and the \$1300 a month [bill for child care] is very hard on my budget. I try to do the best for my son, and I couldn’t work if not for his school.”

— Anonymous Parent

Joel Brown, ABC11, interviews Gayle about the affordable child care crisis.

Let Your Voice Be Heard

We hope this report conveys the varied work we accomplished in 2022-23 to help pave the way for children to succeed in kindergarten and life ahead. Together, along with our community partners, we CAN build a brighter, more prosperous future for our county by investing in children, families and the early childhood system.

Please consider our Call to Action: **Help us advocate for increased public investment for child care.** Become informed about the child care crisis across our county and nation. Speak out, write to your elected officials, and value the providers and the educators in the early education field.

We need everyone's help to be the megaphone for this critical issue. In the words of JFK, "**If not us, who? If not now, when?**"

Donate and help families with young children access the programs and services they need to thrive: www.wakesmartstart.org/donate



Donors

A

Amelia Abrams
Lana Abutabanja
Jeffrey and Jennifer Adams
Richard Adelman, MD
Rafe Aiello
Christine Alvarado
Rocio Anderson
AmazonSmile Foundation
Catherine Atchison

B

Phyllis Barbour
Helena and Burley Barthell
Marsha Basloe
Debrah Bell
Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina Foundation
Tonya Boddie
Hawkins Bolton
Mcgrath Bonilla
Jerry Brooks
Cassandra Brooks
Michael Brunson
Virginia Burks Draughon

Saralynn Busch
Susan Bush
Derrick Byrd

C

Gary Carr
Katrina Chance
Diane Chima-Orji
Ebere Chukwuezi
Cisco
Nikia Coates
Dale Cousins
Veronica Creech
Matthew Crotty

Amy Cubbage
Austin Curran-Bennett

D

Lucy Daniels
Teresa Dickens
Lorraine Dixon
Ann Marie Dlott
Oneal Dougherty
Pam and Robert Dowdy
Heather Drennan
Sally Duncan

E

Matthew Ellinwood
Hardin Engelhardt
Susan Evans

F

Morgan Faison
Diana Fenves
Bill Fletcher
Ines Freile
Jocelyn Friedman

G

Karen Gallagher
Jill Galuten
Ines Garcia
Megan and Grant Gill
Vanessa Glova
Matthew Glova
Judy Godwin
Sasha Gomez
Brittany Gregory
Wesley Griffin
Jack Guba
Vanessa Guzman

H

Connie Hacker
Petra Hager

Elizabeth Hamner
 Rhonda Hampton
 Katie Hardersen-King
 Susan Hatch
 David & Kella Hatcher
 Sean and Gayle Headen
 Shirley Herndon
 Sherry Heuser
 Keith and Katrina Hicks
 Hiester Cares Foundation
 Thomas Hogan
 Caroline Holloway
 Jessica N. Holmes
 Mickey and Jack Holt
I
 Ebere Igboko
 IAT Insurance Group, Inc.
 Gizem Imece
J
 Safiyah Jackson
 Joe John
 John Rex Endowment
 Benita Jones
 Phyllis Jones
 Nadah Joseph
K
 Tonya Kangkolo
 Kaplan Early Learning Company
 Donna Kelly
 Mary Kay Kennedy
 Ajsha Kester
 Emily King
 Sheen Klaus
 Charles Kronberg
 Lori Krzeszewski

L
 Paul and Virginia Lanier
 Catherine Lassiter
 Robert Lasson
 Catherine Lee
 Lifetime Asset Management
 Arleen Linzau
 Alma Livas
 Alejandra Livas-Dlott
 Diana Lloyd
 Molly Ludwig
M
 Jennifer MacPherson
 Arletta Marshall
 Viv Marshall
 Lizzie Martin
 Valdez Mayer
 Wanda McCargo
 Deidre McCullers
 Sabrina McKennies
 McKim & Creed
 Alexis Miller
 Kerry and Joanne Miller
 Michele Miller-Cox
 Christina Mitchell
 Doyle Mooney
 Catty Q. Moore
 Barbara Morales Burke
 Bettie Murchinson
 Moses Musilu
N
 Georgiana Nderitu
 Jenna & Steve Nelson
 Jack Nichols
 North Carolina Partnership for Children

North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Child Development and Early Education
 Ebere Nwoji
 Barbara Nyman
O
 Chinwe Okoronkwo
 Chinedum Orji
 Carol Orji
 Claudia Oviedo
 Tsiaousopoulos
P
 Fred Palmore
 Quintala Parham
 Huston Paschal
 Ronetta and Donald Pearsall
 Harrison Peatross
 Mercer Peck
 Nancy Peck
 Antonia Pedroza
 Regina Petteway
 Lisa Pineiro
 Pledgeling Foundation
 Lynn Policastro
 Karen Ponder
 Jahmal Pullen
R
 Escobar Ramsey
 RBC Foundation
 Berta Rice
 Colleen Roache
 Pilar Rocha-Goldberg
 Willie Rowe
S
 Ketsia Saint-Armand
 Maria Sanchez



WRAL visits Happy Face Preschool to highlight our Wake ThreeSchool early learning program and its plans for expansion in School Year 23-24.

Camille Schaffer
 Kimberly Shaw
 Shawn Shefte
 Tanya Simmons
 Michael K. and Jolene Smith
 Paul Smith
 Jackie Speller
 Marianne Stapleton
 Shawn Stefte
 Gabriela Stein
 Joe Stewart
 Carter Stewart
 Sullivan Swanson
T
 Kristi Tally
 Frank Tarczynski
 Taylor's Daycare Home
 Christy Thalheimer
 Donald Thompson
 Florianna Thompson

Rob Thompson
 Lidia Tiller
 Tobacco Road Marathon
 Carole Trone
 Charlotte Turpin
U
 United Community Bank
V
 Tonya Venable
 Julie von Haefen
 Jay Vora
 Kristen Vosburgh
W
 Wake County
 Wake County Human Services
 Michael and Rosemary Wasilick
 Joel Wasserman
 Cindy Watkins
 Karen Weaver

Salas Webster
 Angie Welsh
 Joe White
 Taushua and Reginald Wilkinson
 Katherine Williams
 Meredith Williams
 Rebecca Williams
 Natasha Williams
 Patricia Williams
 Tyrone Williamson
 Hunter Willis
 John Wilson
 Charmaine Winston
 Chris Woodling
Y
 Michael Yahyapour
Z
 David Zonderman

2022-23 Volunteers

A

Angela Alger-Walker
Louise Alfredson
Christine Alvarado
Dinah Arthur

B

Tonya Baldwin
Kirsten Bankhead
Krista Barbour
Connie Batten
Jacquie Biehl
Deanna Bledsoe
Kimly Blount
Kevin Bobbitt
Dallas Bonavita
Jordan Bowles
Teresa Boykin
Veronica Brown
Nicole Butters
Derrick Byrd

C

Bridgette Campbell
Tara Carroll
Kellie Chaney
Ana Claros
Anne Clemmons
Daisy Clemmons
Nikia Coates
Gloria Cook
Kellie Cook
Dolores Cruz

D

Dawn Dawson
Nikole DeBrauer
Gladys D'Estefano
Cristin DeRonja
Eluvia Diaz
Laura Dieudonne

E

Cam Ellis
Hardin Englehardt
Isabel Estrada
Michelle Ezzell

F

Silvia Medina Fernandez
Maty Ferrer
Dr. Theresa Flynn
Marta Forbes
Martha Forbes
Wanda Fowler
Corrine Fulp

G

Kim Girourard
Laura Goulian
Krystal Grady



Rep. Julie von Haefen shows off a handmade valentine, created by our Pre-K/ThreeSchool children, to say THANK YOU for supporting early education.



Muffy Grant

Camerina Guzman
Francisco Guzman

H

Gladys Hairston
Cherkeitha Hallman
Kim Harris
Jessica Daniels Harrison
Kella Hatcher
Holli Hemby
Ana Maria Hernandez
Sherry Heuser (Board chair)
Reverend Keith Hicks

Tenisha Hillsman

Shay Hinton
Michele Hirsch
Yvette Holmes
Lisa Horton-Burt
Latasha Hopkins
Maty Ferrer Hoppmann
Dr. David Horowitz
Caroline Hundley

J

Janae Jackson
Leslie Ann Jackson (chair)
Maya Jackson
Sharmaine Joyner

K

Tonya Kangkolo
Kim Keith
Rashawn King
Lori Krzeszewski

L

Shirley Lacy
Katie Landi
Catherine Lassiter
Suzanne LeDoyen
Elizabeth Lester
Katie Lewis
Mashea Lewis-Gould
Betty Liverman
Niki Leonard



Board Member Nikia Coates with Wake ThreeSchool students during media event.

M

- Amanda Malone
- Caren Maloy
- Cindy Liseth Mendoza Marin
- Lizzie Martin
- Kerry McCarthy-Adams
- Lisa McCoy

- Valerie Person
- Lynn Policastro
- Erica Porter
- Wendy Price

- Dauline Singletary
- LeAnne Simpkins
- Caitlin Smith
- Marissa Smith
- Syreeta Smith
- Adam Sproles
- Aviva Starr

W

- Jessica Weaver
- Willi Webb
- Erin Wells
- Katie Whitehall
- Shannon White
- Antionette Williams
- Beverly Williams
- Katherine Williams (Board vice chair)
- Claudette West
- Shantel White
- Kim Wimberly

N

- Jesse Norris
- Bettie Murchison
- Maria Nelson
- Heather Noe

Q

- Sarah Quaint

R

- Jenice Ramirez
- Jenna Ramsey
- Iraika Rangel
- Dr. MariaRosa Rangel

T

- Jenna Tarleton
- Lisa Terry
- Christy Thalheimer
- Kristin Thornburg
- Lidia Tiller
- Laura Tirado
- Lany Tomey

O

- Claudia Oviedo

K

- Kelly Rappi
- Karen Ray
- Thomas Ray
- Berta Rice
- Yazmin Rico

V

- Alika Vail
- Tonya Venable
- Mayra Vitela

P

- Maria Pannese
- Crystal Parker

S

- Stephannie Senegal
- Kim Shaw



2022-23 Staff

Gwendolyn Adair	Emily Diaz	Stephanie Jenkins
Kinrecka Anderson	Diana Fenves	Kashama Leo-Henry
Gabrielle Barnard	Lisa Flores	Alejandra Livas-Dlott
Johanna Betancourt	Ana Gallo	Jennifer MacPherson
Sue Bush	Sasha Gomez	Marta Maldonado
Gary Carr	Vanessa Guzman	Ramona Maldonado
Vanessa Celayos	Gayle Headen	Arletta Marshall
Joan Crutchfield	Jennifer Hoch	Madalyn Marshall
Gloria Daniels	Caroline Janes	Bryce McClamroch



WCSS Staff enjoys some putt-putt golf bonding time at Frankies.



WCSS staff at Wake ThreeSchool media event.

Tamiko McCullough	Christina Mitchell	Alex Setzer
Nikki McDougald	Carol Orji	Gina Soceanu
Sabrina McKennies	Nancy Peck	Taushau Wilkinson
Deidra McMillan	Lynn Policastro	Natasha Williams
Kimberley McNeil	Melissa Radice-Peguero	Taylor Young
Brandis Miller	Denise Rossi	



BETTER TOGETHER 2022

WCSS hosts its annual "Better Together" community partner appreciation event at Union Special Bakery. Over 80+ educators, partners, providers, elected officials, Board members and staff gather so we can say, "Thanks for all the work you do in Wake County!"

2022-23 Board of Directors

Christine Alvarado
East Coast Migrant
Head Start Project

Maria Cervania
Wake County Board of
Commissioners

Nikia Coates
PNC Financial Services

Veronica Creech
Advance Community
Health

Heather Drennan
Wake County

Matthew Ellinwood
North Carolina Justice
Center

Susan Evans
Wake County Board of
Commissioners

Matthew Glova
Lifetime Asset
Management

Elizabeth Hamner
SAS

Sherry Heuser
Capability Company

Mickey Holt
Food Bank of Central
and Eastern North
Carolina

Leslie Ann Jackson
Camber Foundation

Tonya Kangkolo
Blue Ridge Daycare

Catherine Lassiter
Wake Technical
Community College

Sharon Loza
NC Infant-Toddler
Program/NC Div. of
Public Health

Barbara Morales Burke
Inter-Faith Food Shuttle

Catty Q. Moore
Wake County
Public School System

Antonia Pedroza
Wake County Human
Services

Colleen Roache
Wolfspeed

Kimberly Shaw
A Safe Place Child
Enrichment Ctr.

Cheryl Stallings*
Wake County Board of
Commissioners

Tonya Venable
NC Head Start,
Telamon Corporation

Michael Wasilick
Wake County Public
Library

Joe White
NCSU Libraries

Katherine Williams
NC Cooperative Extension/
Wake County Center

**Cheryl Stallings is
alternate member*

*Early Childhood
Professionals share
what they love
about their work.*



"WATCHING FAMILIES BECOME EMPOWERED TO SUPPORT THEIR CHILDREN GROW AND THRIVE. I LOVE SEEING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARENTS AND CHILDREN FLOURISH. IT IS POWERFUL WHEN FAMILIES TAKE ADVANTAGE OF OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN AND GROW AT HOME!"

"I'M ALWAYS ENCOURAGED BY CHILDREN'S JOY!" - ANONYMOUS

"BEING ABLE TO SEE PARENTS/CAREGIVERS BE CONFIDENT IN PROVIDING THEIR CHILDREN A NUTRITIOUS MEAL." - DAVID JULIEN, EFNEP, WAKE COUNTY COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

"WATCHING CHILDREN GROW AND LEARN. THE PRIDE THEY FEEL AT GRADUATION IS THE BIGGEST REWARD! I LOVE THAT EVERYDAY IS A NEW CHANCE TO LEARN AND CONNECT." - MARTINIQUE MCLAUGHLIN, METHOD CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER IN RALEIGH

"I ENJOY HELPING CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES EXPLORE ALL OF THE MANY AREAS OF DEVELOPMENT AS THEY LEARN AND GROW IN THEIR EARLY CHILDHOOD YEARS." - DEIDRA, WAKE COUNTY SMART START

"I LOVE LISTENING TO THE STORIES OF CONFIDENCE, COURAGE AND GROWTH THAT ARE A RESULT OF COMMUNITY SUPPORT."

"BEING ABLE TO PROVIDE FAMILIES WITH BOOKS, TOYS AND DIAPERS. THINGS THAT SO MANY SEE AS SIMPLE, BUT FOR THESE FAMILIES AND CHILDREN IT REALLY CHANGES THEIR LIVES. MOST OF ALL - SEEING THEM HAVE HOPE AGAIN FOR WHAT'S TO COME IN THEIR CHILDREN'S FUTURE!" - NICOLE HADAD, WAKEMED PEDIATRICS

"I LOVE THE ENERGY IN THE EARLY CHILDHOOD COMMUNITY!"