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Dear friends, colleagues and community members:

In meetings, we often receive prompts to share a one-word reflection. This activity sometimes elicits an eye roll or deep sigh but is always an effective tool to pause, give consideration, and connect. One word that continues to surface in my mind and adequately describes the Reidsville Area Foundation over the past year is the verb “shift.” Merriam-Webster offers a handful of meanings for the verb: to change gears; to assume responsibility; and, if used as a noun, a change in emphasis, judgment, or attitude.

I am so proud of how our Board of Directors, Committee members, and staff team changed gears, deliberately leaning into strategies that improve the abilities of individual leaders, community agencies, networks, and overall systems. This year, we launched numerous capacity-strengthening projects to enhance and develop new knowledge, skills, and networks that are very much needed to achieve goals, promote equity, and meet the needs of all community members.

To stay relevant and impactful, we must all continue learning. Reidsville Area Foundation acknowledges and assumes responsibility for further developing our internal muscles as we strive to embrace and model catalytic philanthropy, a mindset and approach to philanthropy where funders center knowledge and relationships to make systems change on a focused issue prioritized by the community. Catalytic funders build connections and long-term capacity in organizations and communities, often working across different sectors.

As we work, we grow, we learn, we adapt. 2023 marked a year of many “firsts” at RAF, but probably the most enlightening and trajectory-changing was our decision to host a series of community listening sessions. These sessions, facilitated by MDC Rural Forward, allowed for a 360-degree perspective of our work in the community and candid conversations regarding community needs and opportunities.

You will find information about these sessions in the “Community Development” section of the report. The findings created a positive change in emphasis and attitude within our teams, ultimately impacting how we operate alongside and in partnership with the community. RAF sincerely appreciates everyone involved in this process; we greatly value your perspectives and feedback.

This report is a small window into our community’s thoughtful, compassionate, and collaborative work over the past year, guided by an amazing team of local leaders. It is also a look forward and outlines our commitment to create transformational change, reduce disparities, and build an inclusive community. I invite you to learn more about our work, our partners, and our stewardship of endowment funds. Together, let’s make an impact and continue building a thriving Rockingham County.

Yours in Service,

Dawn Charaba

Executive Director
What We Fund

1. **Funding priority grants** align with our focus areas of education, health and wellness, and community development. These are programmatic or general operating funds that support transformative initiatives and organizations that create pathways to success for all residents.

2. **Capacity-strengthening grants** enhance an organization’s infrastructure, boosting its effectiveness, sustainability, and ability to expand services.

3. **Board-designated grants** incentivize meeting attendance and are initiated by Directors to recognize community-based organizations.

4. **Discretionary grants** are small grants distributed at the decision of the Executive Director, often in the form of rapid response or to address an urgent community issue.

Overall Totals*

$28,864,850

$100 [Minimum Grant Amount] $1.5M [Maximum Grant Amount]

$20,901 [Average Grant Amount]

139 [Total Grantee Partners]

1,381 [Total Number of Grants]

*Overall totals include information from 2002-2023.
**YEAR IN REVIEW**

**Total Active Grants:** 61
**Grantee Partners:** 45
**Multi-year Grants:** 13

**Total Grants Awarded in FY2023:** $1,510,173.63
($705,666 was multi-year)

**Top 10 Active Initiatives by Funding Amount**

1. Rockingham County Government, Connect Rockingham Broadband Initiative
   - $1,500,000

2. Rockingham Community College, Rockingham Promise
   - $1,077,271

3. Reidsville High School, International Baccalaureate Program
   - $450,750

4. UNC Health Rockingham, Student Health Centers
   - $255,000

5. Rockingham County Partnership for Children, KidsREADy Rockingham 2.0
   - $161,218

6. Reidsville High School, Community Stadium
   - $150,000

7. Cone Health Annie Penn Foundation, Healing Gardens
   - $140,000

8. UNC Chapel Hill, Carolina College Advising Corps
   - $112,000

9. Rockingham County Education Foundation, Trails for K-12
   - $105,000

10. Hospice of Rockingham County, Serious Illness Care Pilot Program
    - $102,155

*Information shown on this panel is for fiscal year 2023 (Oct 1, 2022 - Sept 30, 2023).*
Capacity Strengthening & Annual Conference

Growing and supporting our skilled community partners

Through a series of structured discussions and surveys in the summer of 2022, hosted by Kakati Consulting Group, our grantee partners identified several opportunities for Reidsville Area Foundation to improve its grantmaking:

Communication and grant assistance
Partners were interested in connecting with RAF for brainstorming meetings, discussing innovative ideas, and defining impact before, during, and after grant awards.

Response: Significant time was spent reorganizing how the team interacts and supports grantee partners. This included reducing barriers and administrative burdens through onboarding sessions, internal task checklists, connecting grantees with other funders/partners, and building trust with grantees through increased scheduled communication.

Capacity-strengthening
Partners asked for additional programming that allowed grantee partners to engage in capacity-strengthening coaching, evaluation training, and grantee convenings.

Response: RAF launched its first capacity-strengthening framework and calendar to support grantee partners better and increase community voice in our grantmaking and overall decision-making.

Map out what “grantmaking impact” means to RAF
Partners voiced that RAF could better define benchmarks important to the Foundation.

Response: RAF defines impact as improving community indicators of well-being. This involves removing systemic barriers, creating pathways to success, and creating real opportunities for all residents in the areas of health, education, and community development. We encourage grantee partners to design and determine measures of success based on what success looks like for their individual organizations. RAF continues extensive work with evaluation consultants to support our grantees better, and will soon launch evaluation consultant coaching for grant recipients.

Application differentiation
Partners requested that RAF consider differentiating application and reporting processes for small and large grants, as the large-scale application may deter new or smaller organizations.

Response: RAF contracted the Blackbaud gifts software team to update the application. Results included the differentiation of the application, acceptance, and reporting forms based on five award types: Executive Director Discretionary, Capacity-Strengthening, Funding Priority Grants, Capital Funding, and General Operating.

Strategic Planning, Coaching, and Program Support

42 Site Visits

50 Grant Consultations

11 Grantee Onboarding Sessions

230 Attending Grantee Activities & Events
Over 70 community partners gathered for Reidsville Area Foundation’s first two-day Grantee and Community Partner conference in March. The event offered our partners the opportunity to connect with other community-based organizations, share their work, learn from each other, and network.

The plenary session, *Tend: A Self-Care Check-in and Strategy Session*, hosted by author Rosie Molinary, was an interactive workshop that introduced participants to a fundamental understanding of self-care while gently guiding them in self-calming practices, reflection exercises, and planning processes to help discern what self-care they most need and how to incorporate it into their lives.

Breakout sessions included:

- Modern Racism: Revising our vision of activism and allyship, hosted by The Dialogue Company
- Community Roundtable Discussion, facilitated by MDC Rural Forward
- Family Forward Practices, hosted by North Carolina Early Childhood Foundation and Rockingham County Partnership for Children
- Telling Your Story, hosted by CTT Productions

*It was nice to take time away from work and be with like-minded individuals and in the same space as so many diverse community leaders. I was able to learn, grow, and exhale a little being outside my traditional daily space.*

— HEATHER WHITSETT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, REIDSVILLE YMCA; VICE PRESIDENT, ROCKINGHAM COUNTY YMCAS
Investing in Education

Education funding aims to increase support for public education. Reidsville Area Foundation supports curriculum enhancements and professional development opportunities in traditional public schools in Rockingham County. We also fund place-based initiatives to connect families and communities to schools to encourage students’ social and academic success.

Active education grants during the fiscal year of October 1, 2022 - September 30, 2023.

*Includes grants with start dates in previous years.
$11,943,487 TOTAL SINCE INCEPTION

25 Grants
139 Organizations
$2.3M Active Totals

All Rockingham County communities
72%

Reidsville
16%

Madison
4%

Eden
8%
KidsReady

KidsReady has a vision of all Rockingham County children thriving, regardless of who they are or where they live. Through the Rockingham County Partnership for Children, the KidsReady initiative is an ally for families and a catalyst for community change to ensure all children enter school prepared to reach their full potential.

This initiative supports the early childhood system capacity-building model that activates our community in creating and elevating solutions to address the challenges families with young children face. The greatest challenge currently is access to affordable, quality child care. With more families with young children entering the workforce, accessible, affordable, and high-quality child care is essential.

Securing child care for an infant or toddler is incredibly difficult. It is hard to find, hard to afford, and hard to provide, which creates huge challenges for families, educators, and our economy. The KidsReady Coalition is working to address this issue through an intentional action plan with practical strategies to ensure we get it right for our youngest residents.

In Rockingham County, there are 2,702 infants (one- & two-year-olds). Of that, there are 1,736 infants with both working parents (not including single parents). There are only 330 infant-toddler spaces in licensed early care and education programs.

In Rockingham County, zero programs provide second- and third-shift child care.

Every 1% invested in early education produces a 7 to 13% return.

"This [the childcare crisis] is our problem. If we don’t take responsibility and lead the charge, we cannot expect others to do it for us. After all, they are OUR children. I’m no longer bitter that this work hasn’t been done yet. I’m honored that I’m the one who gets to do it."

— DANNY TRONCOSO, FAMILY LEADER/KIDSREADY COALITION MEMBER
The Rockingham Promise Scholarship means that I can achieve my educational goals through hard work and determination, without being held back by financial costs. I plan to get my associate degree in Criminal Justice Technology and then go into the North Carolina State Highway Patrol.

I also plan to continue my education after I am hired, so the associate degree I will receive at Rockingham Community College will not only help me get hired, but also help me transfer into other schools. I am so thankful to have the opportunity to further my education through the Rockingham Promise Scholarship and Rockingham Community College.

— AUDREY PAIGE PETERS, ROCKINGHAM COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL

The partnership between Rockingham Community College (RCC) and Rockingham County Schools allows high school students to take relevant college courses on their high school campuses, earn college credits, and qualify for tuition-free scholarships at RCC. Reidsville Area Foundation provided a multi-year investment for RCC to launch the Rockingham Promise Initiative through 2024, with sustaining support from state enrollment funding and the Rockingham Community College Foundation.

81% of Rockingham Promise students successfully completed at least one college course and earned college credit they can take with them after graduation

65% earned more than three college credits

14 students have received scholarship dollars through Rockingham Promise
As a health legacy foundation, our focus is to improve the health and wellness of Rockingham County residents. Priority is given first to projects aimed at strengthening the network of care and coordination of safety net services for uninsured and underserved residents, then collaborative initiatives aimed at preventing childhood obesity and chronic disease.

Active health and wellness grants during the fiscal year of October 1, 2022 - September 30, 2023.

*Includes grants with start dates in previous years (multi-year grants).
$7,474,472
TOTAL SINCE INCEPTION

13 Grants
11 Organizations

All Rockingham County communities
92%

Grant Summary by Geographic Area Served
8%

$606,076
Active Totals
Behavioral Health

The Behavioral Health Community Assessment is the first step in a more comprehensive, collaborative, and effective behavioral health system.

Like national trends, Rockingham County is witnessing an increased demand for behavioral health services. Reidsville Area Foundation, alongside Rockingham County Department of Health and Human Services, Sandhills Center, Cone Health, UNC Health Rockingham, Rockingham County Primary Care Initiative, Compassion Health Care and Brightview Rehabilitation Services, collectively funded Crescendo Consulting Group to complete a behavioral health assessment and gaps analysis of Rockingham County. The funding collaborative emerged from discussions that began in the fall of 2022 after a series of discussions coordinated by RAF, comprising 36 individuals across 21 local organizations.

Crescendo Consulting conducted an environmental scan that provided critical insight into the county’s demographics and social determinants of physical and mental wellness. This was followed by community and stakeholder interviews, focus group discussions, and community surveys. Over 500 community members engaged in conversations around behavioral health.

Seven priority categories were identified for Rockingham County:
• Awareness and stigma reduction;
• Prevention, early intervention, and harm reduction;
• Advocacy and policy changes;
• Services for people in the criminal justice system;
• Workforce shortage, retention, and recruitment;
• Continuum of care and service gaps for youth, adults and older adults;
• Social determinants of health.

The Crescendo team introduced 24 strategies and recommendations centered on evidence-based best practices that could improve access to behavioral health services. Rockingham County Board of Commissioners heard these recommendations in early November, followed by a community attended by more than 70 individuals. The intent is for a newly established, diverse workgroup to investigate potential strategies and drive strategic plan implementation.

We look forward to continued discussions, workgroup engagement, and implementation design with our community partners. The assessment is available online at bit.ly/rockinghamcountync.

Understanding the type of services offered in Rockingham County, the quality of those services, and what services we are lacking are vital to enable all county residents to live their lives to the fullest and healthiest means possible.

— TREY WRIGHT, DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH, ROCKINGHAM COUNTY
Ancora Compassionate Care
Previously Hospice of Rockingham County

Our mission is to be a supportive presence for life’s journey.

The newest program from Ancora Compassionate Care is Serious Illness Care. Serious Illness Care (also sometimes referred to as palliative care) is specialized medical care that provides relief from the symptoms and stress of a serious illness. The goal is to improve the quality of life for both patients and their families.

Serious Illness Care is provided by a team of specialists, including physicians, nurse practitioners, and social workers, who work with a patient’s other physicians to provide extra support. Appropriate at any age and stage in a serious illness, Serious Illness Care can also be provided alongside curative treatment.

In March of 2023, Ancora Compassionate Care began a pilot program with CareAlly for 24/7 on-call support for our Serious Illness Care patients and families.

While 24/7 on-call support has long been a required feature for hospice programs, there is no such care model for palliative care. Reidsville Area Foundation partnered with Ancora Compassionate Care to pilot the initiative.

The unique partnership with CareAlly expands capacity by providing virtual visits with registered nurses and social workers during working hours and after-hours on-call support. CareAlly assesses social determinants of health needs as well as triages all patient calls. Participation in this pilot program has enabled Ancora Compassionate Care to expand the number of patients and families they support and care for.

CareAlly is invaluable in helping extend the reach of our Serious Illness Care program. They expand what we’re able to assist with when it comes to social determinants of health as well as providing in-depth education for our patients and families. With their 24/7 support, they stand in the gap between our providers and our patients and families.

— RHONDA LUCAS, AGNP-C, GS-C, SERIOUS ILLNESS CARE TEAM LEADER

978
Incoming calls during regular business hours answered by CareAlly

3,170
Outgoing calls made (related to patient needs) during regular business hours made by CareAlly

160
After-hours calls answered by CareAlly
Investing in Community

Community development funding focuses on building a more diversified, more robust economy and making our communities more livable for residents. Together, we are becoming healthy and vibrant places again.

Active community development grants during the fiscal year of October 1, 2022 - September 30, 2023.

*Includes grants with start dates in previous years (multi-year grants).
$4,115,473 TOTAL SINCE INCEPTION

23 Grants
17 Organizations
$2.1M Active Totals

Grant Summary by Geographic Area Served

- All Rockingham County communities: 65%
  - Reidsville: 22%
  - Western Rockingham: 4%
- Eden: 9%
Reidsville Tigers

The Reidsville Tigers, a featured program of the Rockingham County Champions for Education, has a mission to assist youth in developing character, discipline, and leadership skills while instilling core values.

The Reidsville Tigers program consists of four divisional football teams, a cheer squad, and a basketball league ranging from ages 4 through 14. Highly qualified staff and volunteers serve as motivated instructors who train, educate, and mentor Rockingham County youth. Tiger’s Den, the signature program, is designed to meet youth where they are and help them grow through various resources and services. The Tiger’s Den provides a place of comfort, security, and a lair where growth can manifest for student-athletes, families, coaches, mentees, and volunteers. Leadership aims to foster an environment where youth thrive and strive to participate in higher levels of competition and academics and where families engage and feel supported.

“This is my son’s first year with the Reidsville Tigers, and it has been an amazing experience! The program is very organized and well-coached, and my son has learned so much! We are now a part of the Tiger family!”

— S. Dixon, Parent of a Reidsville Tiger
Dan River Basin Association

The Dan River Basin Association (DRBA) protects and promotes the Dan River Basin through recreation, education, and stewardship. DRBA partners with local government, property owners, and businesses to create a single, countywide vision for trails, greenways, river access points, blueways, and blue trails. The Rockingham County Outdoor Recreational Master Plan (2023) includes both current and future plans for river access points, trails, and parks in Rockingham County. This 124-page Outdoor Recreational Master Plan will serve Rockingham County for many years.

Much of the success of Rockingham County Tourism can be attributed to our strong network of community partnerships. As a valued partner, the Dan River Basin Association continues to be an integral part of moving the outdoor recreation needle forward in Rockingham County.

Over the past two years, we have collaborated on various projects in an effort to improve, promote, and protect all of the wonderful outdoor recreation assets in Rockingham County.

— LINDSAY PEGG, TOURISM MANAGER, ROCKINGHAM COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, SMALL BUSINESS, AND TOURISM

100+

volunteers engaged to protect our waterways by cleaning up miles of rivers and trails and removing over two tons of garbage and debris.

DRBA has successfully constructed over five miles of trails, developed three new parks, and enhanced five river access points in Rockingham County that have engaged new visitors and residents and created a healthier community through it.
Community Listening Sessions & RAF response

Reidsville Area Foundation seeks to leverage collective voices, knowledge, and relationships on issues prioritized by the community.

Over the summer, MDC Rural Forward’s dynamic team facilitated four community listening sessions to collect community feedback on Rockingham County’s strengths, needs, and opportunities to inform the Foundation’s grantmaking practices. The selection of an external facilitator allowed Foundation staff to ensure participant responses would be reflected and documented without bias. In addition to its grantmaking, Reidsville Area Foundation hopes to leverage collective voice, relationships, and our non-grantmaking skills, such as convening and capacity strengthening, to drive systemic and social change.

Four overarching strategies emerged from discussions with over 100 community members:

1. Enrich the Foundation’s understanding of the overall needs of the Rockingham County community:
   a. Enhance presence in all Rockingham County communities;
   b. Incorporate strategies to foster collaboration, optimize resources, and avoid duplication;
   c. Build trust through relationships;
   d. Amplify the voices of non-traditional leaders and existing community partners;
   e. Strengthen support for organized movements and organizations with fewer resources;
   f. Promote multi-year investments in funding decisions.

2. Enhance Rockingham County community members’ understanding of current Foundation funding priorities:
   a. Continue to conduct a thorough assessment to ensure that the funding priorities align with the community’s current needs and challenges;
   b. Increase transparency in how funding decisions are made and what projects are supported;
   c. Explore mentorships for community development.

3. Build out and support racial equity goals externally and internally:
   a. Prioritize understanding and respecting diverse cultural perspectives;
   b. Consider narratives from marginalized communities and be specific about communities served;
   c. Continue building authentic community connections and facilitate open dialogue among community stakeholders;
   d. Confront issues directly, while challenging real and perceived fragmentation in the county;
   e. Strengthen strategies to inspire and nurture the next generation of leaders.

4. Enhance and sustain capacity-strengthening work and skill development:
   a. Continue to organize capacity-strengthening and skill-development sessions;
   b. Foster collaborative learning;
   c. Strengthen communication and marketing support, including website design and social media support;
   d. Support resources for research, grant writing, and other aspects of fund acquisition.
The Reidsville Area Foundation Board of Directors met in August to hear and address findings from the report, with the following prioritized recommendations for FY2024:

**Building relationships through trust.** We build relationships with all people and organizations by leading with our values and commitment to inclusive processes. We will advance with integrity and awareness of our resource limitations.

1. **Equity focused leadership.** RAF will challenge the status quo to advance racial equity both internally and externally in our community.

2. **RAF capacity-strengthening toolkit.** RAF will direct resources to build the independence, leadership, sustainability, and legacy of our grantee partners. We will strive to build pipelines and capacity of young board members and young professionals across the community. We are one resource that organizations can access and we strive to be responsive to community needs within our funding priorities.

3. **Awareness and perception.** RAF commits to increasing our presence and investing in collective marketing and awareness strategies. We will explore how to best challenge perceptions and realities of fragmentation in our county.

4. **Resource optimization.** RAF will prioritize diverse needs, hold grantees accountable to equity-centered strategies, and strengthen our fund allocation transparency while respecting the confidentiality of our grantee partners.

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**In addition to these overarching Board of Director focus areas, RAF staff commits to the following actions over the next year:**

- Expand overall community awareness efforts in partnership with a marketing consultant.
- Convene priority area sector leaders to increase resource sharing and service awareness.
- Continue participation in local coalitions and collaborative networks.
- Offer no-cost, focused professional development opportunities for all grantee partners, while expanding sessions to focus on various cultures and communities.
- Increase peer-to-peer learning opportunities.
- Explore the development of a local food system council to connect providers, align efforts, and encourage networking and collaboration.
- Partner with the Chambers of Commerce to create a nonprofit networking series and resource database.
- Provide evaluation and grant writing support to grantees through consulting contracts.
- Enhance explanations of the decision-making process to grantees during consultation.
- Denote geographic representation on Board and Committee lists.
- Implement a Board/Committee skills and community matrix to identify strengths and gaps in representation.
- Outline all grants and funding allocations in an annual community report;
- Consistently gather and evaluate feedback from community.
Connect Rockingham

Harnessing diverse experiences and expertise to tackle digital inclusion.

Seventeen community agencies continue to channel our collective energies towards implementing the Rockingham County Digital Inclusion Plan, a strategic plan developed in 2021 to better meet the broadband needs of Rockingham County residents and enable them to participate in the digital world fully. The Coalition meets monthly to co-create a framework for decisions that will lead to expanding broadband access to all of Rockingham County. Efforts specifically intend to address the issues of broadband availability, access, and adoption.

Collaboration is the cornerstone of our work, as it amplifies data and information sharing, enables better-coordinated funding, and tackles issues at the system level. This committee serves as a catalyst for positive, sustainable infrastructure investments and digital inclusion initiatives aimed at affordability and literacy.

Infrastructure investments

As of November 2023, over 2,335 addresses are now eligible for broadband through the collaborative Connect Rockingham grant. By the beginning of December 2023, five more geographic zones should be completed. The first phase of the project is slated for completion in January 2024, with a total of 3,250 address points securing internet access.

Affordability and literacy

The Digital Inclusion Coalition intends to apply for the Digital Champions Grant launched by the North Carolina Office of Digital Literacy and Equity. With a deadline of January 22, 2024, and award notification in the spring, this grant would help Rockingham County residents afford high-speed internet, obtain digital devices, and access digital literacy courses to safely and effectively participate in today’s digital economy.

One of the things that we have been able to do is find organizations that specialize and have specific expertise and energy in the space of digital literacy. That has given the overall project a lot of momentum.

— MERALD HOLLOWAY, NC 100 FOUNDER
FY2023 Active Grantees

Aging, Disability & Transit Services of Rockingham County
The Barry L Joyce Cancer Support Fund, Inc.
Betsy Jeff Penn 4H Center
Boys & Girls Club Eden
City of Reidsville
Cone Health Annie Penn Foundation
CORMII Community Development Corporation
Dan River Basin Association
Diabetes Task Force of Rockingham County
Eden Family YMCA
Free Clinic of Rockingham County
Good Stewards of Rockingham Help, Inc. Center Against Violence
Home of Refuge Outreach
Hospice of Rockingham County Junior Achievement of the Triad, Inc.
The Latinx L.I.F.E.
Lillian H McLaurin Good Neighbor Association
Men in Christ, Inc.
Moss Street Elementary
Morehead High School
NC One Hundred Strong
The New Reidsville Housing Authority
Piedmont Folk Legacies
Prevent Blindness North Carolina
Rae of Hope Ministry, Inc.
RAMMS Fund
Reidsville High School
Reidsville Outreach Center
Reidsville YMCA
REMMSCO Inc.
Rockingham Community College
Rockingham County Champions for Education
Rockingham County Education Foundation
Rockingham County Government
Rockingham County Partnership for Children
Rockingham County Public Library
Rockingham County Robotics
Rockingham County Schools
Ronald McDonald House of Chapel Hill
Special Olympics of Rockingham County
Theatre Guild of Rockingham County
The Salvation Army & Its Components
UNC Rockingham Health Care
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill