

# What Matters

MAKE A DIFFERENCE | QUARTERLY UPDATE | SPRING 2017

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## NEW FUNDS THIS QUARTER

Please welcome these new funds to the Foundation.

**Donor-Advised Funds** Johnson Fund (1/6), Philip and Jane Currier Fund (1/13), Oak Foundation Fund for Capacity Building (2/3), Hsu Family Fund (2/21), PEM Family Fund (4/5)

**Agency Funds** First Flight Fund (4/3), Book Harvest (5/1)

**Designated Funds** E.K. and Lucia Powe Future Fund for Kidznotes (12/30), Fund for Africa Yes! (2/28)

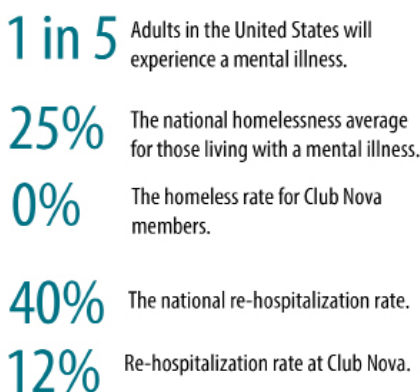
**Field of Interest Funds** Hi Mom Books/JB & Thomas M. Shelton III Charitable Fund (3/14)

**Scholarship Funds** Citrix Scholarship Fund (3/8)

## Mental Illness: The Person Behind a Diagnosis

*May is Mental Health Awareness Month. This story was written for the Foundation by Jamie Gwaltney, The Daily Tarheel, as a part of Our Focus: Community Development, in partnership with Club Nova. Gina Andersen, Triangle Community Foundation, also contributed.*

Mental illness was a barrier that kept Brent Parrish from reading fluently.



His childhood education didn't address his mental health and kept him from reaching his full potential. Parrish, who is now in his 50's, watched President Barack Obama's farewell address in January, and he didn't understand some of the complex topics.

He wanted to know more, and this time, he had the right connections. He walked into Club Nova in Carrboro and said he wanted to become better at reading. The staff there helped him find Orange Literacy, where he improved his reading, writing and computer skills. At the same time, the people around

Club Nova's clubhouse provided him with companionship and a shared sense of purpose.

"We learn things from each other," he said.

Parrish has been a member of Club Nova for about five months now, and it's already made a difference in his life. The rehabilitation center uses a clubhouse model to provide a place of solace and acceptance — but also structure and stability — for people in the community who struggle with mental illness.

Mental illness can affect every aspect of a person's life, including employment, education and social life — among other things. Maintaining relationships with family and friends or forming new relationships can be hard, said Brittany Johnson, the resource development coordinator for Club Nova.

At Club Nova, members are referred by a medical professional, but they decide how much time to spend there or which resources to seek, allowing them to rebuild their lives on their own terms.

"We see the person — not the illness," Johnson said.

Story continued on page 10



A NOTE  
FROM THE FOUNDATION  
PRESIDENT & CEO

LORI O'KEEFE



Partnering to make a difference...

I was so thrilled to see almost 600 of you at the recent What Matters Community Luncheon, where we focused on our kids. It was such a treat to hear from Sonia Manzano, of Sesame Street fame, as I spent much of my childhood and then my daughters' childhoods watching her on PBS as Maria, learning alongside the Muppets. But what struck me about her inspirational keynote address was not her anecdotes about her time with Oscar the Grouch, but her own personal journey, a struggle through poverty and education in a time when she didn't have many people to look up to and relate to that looked like her.

Sonia talked about how cultural differences and low expectations prevent some young people from growing academically, and I agree. I think it's really important that we break through the structural barriers, the bias we hold, and have meaningful conversations that spark action around helping our kids. It's up to us because, as Sonia said, "a diverse group of people come up with the best ideas." I believe that if we can come together to work towards equitable solutions for the children of our region, ensuring that they have access to quality early childhood education and intervention, we can truly make a difference in their future - and in ours.

At What Matters in April, Board Chair-Elect Pat Nathan and I introduced a new partnership we are embarking upon with United Way of the Greater Triangle and the North Carolina Early Childhood Foundation to support the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading program here, locally in our five counties. You can read more about this initiative in this issue, on page 7, and on our website at [www.trianglecf.org](http://www.trianglecf.org). I am very excited that we are working in this space to learn about and grow these programs for our kids, and I hope you'll join me in that excitement.

I hope you'll enjoy all that this expanded spring issue has to offer, as we discuss the importance of funding for mental health, combating summer learning loss, re-cap What Matters, and more. Thanks as always to our fundholders, donors, and partners for all that you do to make our community a better place.

If you have any suggestions, questions or thoughts regarding this update, contact Meg Buckingham at [meg@trianglecf.org](mailto:meg@trianglecf.org).



## Every Kid Deserves To Go To Camp



Since 1984, the Send A Kid To Camp™ program of Triangle Community Foundation has provided a safe, educational, healthy outlet for our community's at-risk children through summer camp scholarships. Your support helps us combat summer learning loss by providing camp tuition assistance funding to partner camps in our four counties. Consider making a gift today from your fund - visit our website at [www.kidstocamp.net](http://www.kidstocamp.net) to learn more and request a grant on DonorCentral!

**Donate Now!** Every dollar you give goes directly to help send a child in the triangle to summer camp.

- **\$45 will send a kid to camp for a day**
- **\$160 will send a kid to day camp for a week**
- **\$500 will send a kid to overnight camp for a week**

More than 11,500 children, ages 5 to 17, from Wake, Durham, Orange, and Chatham counties have enjoyed all camp has to offer through Send A Kid To Camp™.

The Experience Of A Life Time

## Please join us in remembering these friends. . .

**Doris Hunter Freeman** - Fundholder Doris Hunter Freeman died Friday morning, February 3, 2017, at Mayview Convalescent Center in Raleigh. Doris was very proud of her Wake County heritage. She was a lifelong member of Hayes Barton Baptist Church where she sang in the choir and taught a Sunday school class for 5-6 year olds. For 40 years she was scheduling officer for the Department of Economics and Business at North Carolina State University. She is survived by her godsons and their families.

**Richard Ruby** - Fundholder Richard Ruby, a retired Raleigh jeweler,

businessman and a past president of Beth Meyer Synagogue, died January 21 at his home in Raleigh, the city where he had lived for more than 65 years. He was 94. He was an experienced musician, member of the 62nd Army Band in World War II, and married his wife Sylvia in 1947. He is survived by his children and grandchild.

If you have an obituary you would like to share with us, please contact Laurel Shulman at [laurel@trianglecf.org](mailto:laurel@trianglecf.org).

ESPECIALLY FOR DONORS

## DONORS CO-INVEST FOR INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS



Durham Waste Revolution



Preservation Equity



UpCycle to Break the Cycle



Chatham Senior Games Training Program

Our Giving Together program increases impact by pooling Foundation and donor resources to support collaborations making a difference in our community. By encouraging collective giving with our generous fundholders for critical issues, we can better support the work of our local nonprofits. Our most recent Giving Together program focused on innovation. Each year we encourage local organizations to apply for our Innovation Award as collaboratives, raising up creative ideas to solve real issues in our region, in ways that haven't been tried before. The winner receives a grant of \$25,000 to use towards their project. Because only one project wins this award, we reach out to our generous fundholders in an attempt to raise additional funds to support each of these deserving collaboratives.

We are thrilled to announce that because of the co-investing of our donors, who saw the importance of these projects and their potential effect on the community, we have raised an additional \$24,000 to be split between the four finalist collaboratives!

### 2017 Innovation Award Finalist Projects

Durham Waste Revolution, working to reduce waste in Durham, implementing a GreenToGo program that utilizes reusable take-out food containers for Durham restaurants and their customers.

Preservation Equity, working to empower low-mid income homeowners to retain their historic homes in Durham.

UpCycle to Break the Cycle, working to create a new funding stream for Habitat for Humanity of Wake County through the creation of furniture and home accessories using reclaimed wood from deconstructed homes.

Chatham Senior Games Training Program, working to develop and model a wellness intervention for both active and non-active persons 50 and older via a year-round athletic educational and training program built on NC's Senior Games.

You can read more about the Innovation Award Winner, Bridge Builders, on page 8. [Thank you to our generous donors!](#) If you would like to learn more about these projects, or the Giving Together program, please visit our website at <http://trianglecf.org/donors/giving-together/>.



## Current Foundation Art Gallery Showcases "With Every Mile"

Triangle Community Foundation and the Durham Art Guild present "With Every Mile" featuring a photo-documentary project by DAG member artist Veronique Moses, whose work in this exhibit centers around the Moore Square Transit Station in Raleigh. This art exhibit which opened in February, will run until July 30, 2017 during business hours in our office in The Frontier, 800 Park Offices Drive, Suite 201, Research Triangle Park. Please contact us at 919.474.8370 if you'd like to stop by so that we are available to welcome you.

**Artist Statement:** Two lovers on their way home from a day of errands, a bus driver clocking off from a long shift at work helping to put his son through college, a rider waiting for the two-hour route he needs to get him to his 3rd shift job— these are just a few of the thousands of stories traveling each day along our highways and streets to intersect here at the GoRaleigh Station (formerly known as Moore Square Transit Mall). At the heart of this transit system are the people it serves daily and the community at-large that relies on the success of it.

Since opening in 1988, this downtown Raleigh transit hub has nearly gone unchanged despite the shift in the city's landscape and needs of the growing Triangle cities around it. GoRaleigh station welcomes more than 34,000 riders weekly and 22 of the city's 27 bus routes run through its door daily! "With Every Mile" project sets out to bring to life the character and the stories of the people at the center of this transit system; many whose livelihood and core welfare depend on it. This project serves to show the humanity and underscores the growing need for change at the formerly Moore Square Transit Mall and within the overall Triangle Transit System.

If projections have their way, Raleigh and its surrounding areas will continue to see a massive growth in population and the widening of its boundaries outwards past suburbia. There is no shortage of issues that will come along with this growth and the city's transit system will certainly not be immune to them. The question will remain on how well we, as a city, will continue to step up to the responsibility needed of all of us.

*The Triangle Community Artists Gallery, housed within the Foundation's office space in partnership with the Durham Art Guild (DAG), hosts juried artwork from local artists for periods of six months at a time. Triangle Community Foundation believes that a vibrant arts and cultural community is one of the region's greatest assets. The arts provide meaningful connections and communications between individuals, our community and our great region, and we are proud of this partnership with DAG and our local artists.*

## Investment Overview

It's been more than eight years since the great financial meltdown that precipitated the equity markets downturn, which caused the S&P500 to hit its low on March 9th, 2009, at 676. Fast forward today, and the S&P500 has since climbed by nearly 250%. Following are some highlights for various investment markets at the start of the bull market (the low point), and then eight years later:

	March 9, 2009	March 9, 2017	Percent Change
<b>S&amp;P500</b>	676.53	2,364.87	249.6%
<b>NASDAQ</b>	1,268.74	5,838.81	360.2%
<b>EuroStoxx</b>	1,809.98	2,409.89	88.4%
<b>Nikkei</b>	7,806.03	19,318.58	172.6%
<b>WTI Oil</b>	47.07	49.28	4.7%
<b>US 10-Yr Treas.</b>	2.86	2.61	-8.9%
<b>S&amp;P500 P/E</b>	13.7x	22.3x	62.9%

Despite being eight years into what is now the second longest bull market since 1928, strong equity returns for the first quarter of 2017 indicated a continued sense of optimism around the globe. Within the U.S., the rise in sentiment was tied to expectations of the Trump administration's ability to create a pro-growth environment through a combination of tax and regulatory reforms. The combination of job growth and increased business and consumer confidence allowed the Federal Reserve to raise its key interest rate by 0.25% in mid-March, the second time in four months.

Signs of economic growth outside the U.S. were also evident. In Europe, positive inflation numbers across the region seem to indicate that the region has turned a corner, as did news that job creation rose to its highest number in ten years. China and Japan saw positive economic data that pointed to growth in their manufacturing sectors, while emerging markets benefited from growing exports.

The optimism about economic growth translated into strong returns across all regions. The S&P500 (US large cap equities) gained 6.1% on the quarter, MSCI EAFE (Non-US developed equities) gained 7.2%, and MSCI EM (emerging market equities) gained 11.4%.

For information pertaining to specific portfolio returns ending March 31, 2017, please refer to the Investment Performance Report located on our website at: [www.trianglecf.org](http://www.trianglecf.org).

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For more information, please contact Robert Naylor, chief financial officer, at [robert@trianglecf.org](mailto:robert@trianglecf.org) or 919.474.8370, ext. 4009



# SPOTLIGHT

## 2017 What Matters Community Luncheon: Our Kids

Sonia Manzano grew up in an America where she never saw people of color on television. Where she was taught to “behave and memorize” in elementary school before struggling to catch up in a more difficult performing-arts high school. Where she made sense of the domestic violence and struggle of her home by watching “Queen for a Day.”



As Maria on Sesame Street, she went on to teach generations of Americans their ABCs, numbers, and how to be a good friend for 44 years. Her story is an example of the resilience of children and of the progress in society over the last 50 years -- progress that could be in jeopardy, she said.

“Not seeing myself made me feel invisible. What can I contribute to a society that doesn’t see me?” she told the crowd gathered for Triangle Community Foundation’s What Matters luncheon on Wednesday, April 26. She worried that her past might be the future. “I wonder if people of color are at risk of becoming invisible,” she said.

**Sonia Manzano addresses the crowd at What Matters** In her speech that was equal parts funny and poignant, Manzano talked about a life dedicated to early childhood education and social justice. She lamented the current focus on testing and measuring, both in schools and in children’s television, and instead suggested that we focus on what each child needs, when they need it, and how we can help them.

Nearly 600 attendees - the biggest attendance yet for What Matters - gathered to be inspired by Manzano. Working under the overarching topic: “Our Kids,” the Foundation fashioned the entirety of the day’s events to focus on how Triangle residents can come together to positively improve early childhood outcomes in the Triangle and the state.

Lori O’Keefe, president and CEO of Triangle Community Foundation, explained why “Our Kids” was the theme of What Matters. “Nearly half of all students in the Triangle cannot read on grade-level by the end of third grade, an early predictor of future success. And the number is higher for kids in low-wealth communities,” she said.

“Policies, and funding, and methodology do make up a portion of that statistic, but I’d like us to explore the fact that there are structures in place and other significant barriers standing in the way of our kids and their access to education,” said O’Keefe. Structures, she went on to explain, that may include poverty, hunger, homelessness, limited access to programs, and mobility for families.

“We are gathered here, rallied here, around our kids. Around the notion that it is up to all of us to help them – to ensure that they all have access to the educational opportunities they need to succeed, to ensure that they have the tools and programs in place so they can read by the end of third grade, to ensure that they can and will become successful members of our community, for their future and ours.”

Board Chair-Elect Pat Nathan closed the luncheon, asking attendees to join the Foundation in this work in three ways - by taking time to learn about and understand the issues surrounding access to opportunity in education, by spreading that knowledge and being an advocate for our kids, and by connecting with the organizations directly addressing literacy through the Campaign for Grade Level Reading.

“We can change the future for our kids. But we must choose to do that. Let’s make that choice together,” Nathan said to the crowd.

Erica Perel, Gabriella Bulgarelli, and Meg Buckingham contributed to this story.



## Can you Spot Yourself?

You can view all of the photos from What Matters at [www.facebook.com/trianglecf](https://www.facebook.com/trianglecf).



Guests greet each other before lunch



Lori Gibbs & Alice Sharpe sing together



Lori O'Keefe addresses the room



Kidznotes Performers



Guests greet each other before lunch



Nicole Gardner - Neblett



Emily Egge hugs Gale Adland



Our largest crowd ever!



Board Chair Jim Stewart



Coby Austin & Sumera Syed



Cora Harrison talks with a guest



Isabel Geffner speaks at an Opening Session

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# Learning Together: Literacy, Advocacy, and Barriers to Success

What Matters 2017 began with four dynamic morning workshops led by local issue-area experts, all surrounding the topic of our kids: who they are, and how we create a path to success for those left behind. These sessions were attended by more than half of the guests who joined the Foundation for lunch, and comprised a group engaged and dedicated to learning more about how to ensure we help all of our kids, together.

"You don't have to be an expert, you don't have to know it all," said Adam Sotak, public engagement director for NC Child, a statewide public policy and advocacy organization that has been around for more than 30 years. In North Carolina, a handful of very passionate people working tactically can make change, he said, as part of the A is for Advocacy opening session.

Focused on what issues concerning kids inspire us to act, the session led by Sotak and Matt Gross of NC Child facilitated a discussion around how parents, teachers, donors, nonprofits, and other community members can serve as advocates for effective local, state, and national educational policies and investments. Sotak and Gross taught participants how to mobilize around common goals and policies in order to affect change.

Laila Bell of NC Child spoke to a large group about who our kids are in the region, and what they need to succeed.

"All the research and evidence tells us children who are not reading by the time they reach the end of third grade are already behind academically, and are at risk of never catching up," Bell said.

As a part of the "Who are Our Kids" session, Bell took participants on a data walk and guided them through a reflective activity as they discussed what challenges families with young children face, and what resources are available to them.

Many attendees chose to spend the morning learning more about why early childhood development matters in a session of the same name with Nicole Gardner-Neblett of the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute, Ben Goodman of the Duke Center for Child and Family Policy and Donnie Charleston of the NCSU Institute for Emerging Issues. Participants interacted with the panel as they discussed what factors contribute to early learning success, what barriers prevent it, and why all community members should care.

In the largest session of the morning, NC Communities Mobilizing for Literacy, educators, leaders, administrators, donors, and nonprofits gathered to learn more about the NC Campaign for Grade-Level Reading and how 13 communities across North Carolina are a part of a 300 community strong national mobilization working to ensure that more children from low-income families succeed in school and graduate prepared for college, a career and active citizenship. Lisa Finaldi from the campaign's state lead, the NC Early Childhood Foundation, spoke about communities who are succeeding and what's launching next for reading proficiency across the Triangle.

At lunch, President and CEO Lori O'Keefe tied the Campaign for Grade-Level reading session back to the luncheon, announcing that the Foundation is partnering to invest in the local collaborations of the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading in Chatham, Durham, Johnston, Orange, and Wake Counties with United Way of the Greater Triangle and North Carolina Early Childhood Foundation. Together, these organizations have invested over a million dollars together to bring this movement to the Triangle.

"By partnering to do this work, we can strengthen these collaborations so they can provide the critical services necessary to our community's children," she said. "This partnership, and the collaborative learning that each county's program will glean from doing this work together, will allow us to learn from each other, form goals together, and ultimately increase third-grade reading scores for our kids. And we are excited to get started."

To learn more about the opening sessions of What Matters, view presentations from our speakers, or find out more about the Foundation's investment in the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading and how you can become involved, please visit our website at [www.trianglecf.org](http://www.trianglecf.org).

**Erica Perel, Gabriella Bulgarelli, Libby Richards, and Meg Buckingham contributed to this story.**



## Philanthropic Awards Presented to Dr. Wynn & Easter Maynard



Legacy Award winner Dr. Phail Wynn, Jr. with Board Member Kathryn Williams & Lori O'Keefe

This year's Legacy Award Winner was Dr. Phail Wynn, Jr. Phail is a regional historian and community collaborator. He is the Vice President for Durham and Regional Affairs at Duke University and serves in a number of volunteer leadership roles throughout the Triangle. His leadership contributions to the Foundation have been far-reaching and formative, dating back to the first conversations with Dr. Hitchings about how to build community endowments to preserve charitable assets for our region. In addition to being an active fundholder with his wife, Peggy, Phail has served in many leadership roles at the Foundation, including Board Chair, Interim CEO, and currently, Chair of Foundation Leadership Council. He continues to serve as a mentor for staff and board. Phail's contributions to our region extend far beyond the Foundation, as he has tirelessly worked to ensure that the Durham nonprofit community works together to achieve successful outcomes for all of its residents.



Catalyst Award winner Easter Maynard with Board Member Kathryn Williams & Lori O'Keefe

This year's Catalyst Award Winner was Easter Maynard. Easter is an avid philanthropist and advocate, especially when it comes to the well-being of children in our community. It takes a village to raise a child, and she dedicates endless energy and huge heart to mobilize "our Triangle village" of foundations, nonprofits, businesses, schools and families to help our most vulnerable kids. In 2012 Easter served as chair of the Foundation's Community Programs Taskforce that brought more than 60 community members together to help develop our Foundation's impact areas that include youth literacy and kids 0-8 years old. She is currently the Executive Director of the ChildTrust Foundation and the Director of Charitable Giving for IMC, parent company of Golden Corral, founder of Camp Corral, serving veteran families, and serves on numerous boards and commissions throughout our region and offers a strong civic-minded voice within the business community. Easter's dedication to the future of our region, and the Foundation's impact on it, knows no bounds.

## \$25,000 Innovation Award Presented to Bridge Builders



Award winners Bridge Builders with Aisha Lewis, American Underground & Lori O'Keefe

We know nonprofits. We know innovation when we see it, as a funder and investor of the nonprofits doing important work locally. Last year alone, we invested over \$21 million dollars in organizations that ensure our kids are reading on grade-level, keeping people healthy and out of poverty, protecting our environment for the future, enriching our lives through the art programs, and making our community a more prosperous place to live. Every aspect of our work with them through our focus areas is designed to build a thriving, caring community – because that's how we do our part to ensure that there are strong nonprofits doing meaningful and important work with our donor's charitable dollars' for the good of all of our future.

We truly believe that nonprofits are innovators too! Each year we encourage local organizations to apply as collaboratives, raising up creative ideas to solve real issues in our region, in ways that haven't been tried before. The winner receives \$25,000 to use towards their project. We received over 40 new and creative proposals being tackled by our local nonprofits this year, and the top five competed for this award in a live pitch presentation.

This year's winner, Bridge Builders, is a collaborative that is working to break the cycle of chronic isolation of refugees living in Orange County. Through personalized support, social bridging, and building pathways to opportunity, this project creates conditions to tell refugees they are safe, they are secure, and they belong. This partnership is made up of Refugee Community Partnership, No Lost Generation – UNC, UNC RCP, East Chapel Hill High RCP, and the Southeast Asian Culture Society.



A portrait of Easter Maynard, a woman with blonde hair, smiling. The text is overlaid on the top half of the image.

## A CATALYST FOR OUR KIDS EASTER MAYNARD'S RECENT BLOG POST WITH ARMSTRONG MCGUIRE

ESPECIALLY FOR DONORS

### END OF FISCAL YEAR GIVING: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

If you're considering grants to organizations to meet fiscal year-end deadlines, please ensure your grant recommendations are received by 12 noon on Tuesday, June 27. Grants received by that time will be processed and mailed on Friday, June 30.

Please contact Donor Services at 919-474-8363 if you have questions, or email [donorservices@trianglecf.org](mailto:donorservices@trianglecf.org). Thank you!

As a college student, I volunteered in a Head Start class in Winston-Salem – an amazing opportunity to see both the needs that young children face and what's possible when they have access to quality learning opportunities. That experience gave me an early and powerful impression of how critical this work is for so many children and for our communities as a whole. Now as a parent and a philanthropist, I see daily the work that so many are doing on behalf of all children in our community. I'm proud to see the power of collaboration among nonprofits and service providers to do what's best for children and families – and I'm excited to be working with other funders who are following that example of strength in partnership.

On April 26 I joined with almost 600 attendees at What Matters: Our Kids, hosted by Triangle Community Foundation. They represented nonprofits, businesses, philanthropists and public officials who dug deep to talk about ensuring that every child in our region, no matter their race or socio-economic status, has the opportunity to succeed, particularly when it comes to education and reading by the end of third grade.

We were inspired by keynote speaker Sonia Manzano, a first-generation American of Latino descent who has affected the lives of millions of parents and children since the early 1970s as “Maria” on Sesame Street. Manzano shared her unique perspective as a powerful advocate for young children and their families through her stories of her personal journey through poverty, challenge, and access to education. Attendees had the chance to participate in sessions by local experts on the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading, to take a “data walk” to discover who our kids are in the region, to learn how they can serve as an advocate for our kids, and to discuss how to develop a vision for early learning success.

At ChildTrust Foundation our investments focus on education, literacy and early childhood interventions that impact North Carolina's most vulnerable children, specifically from birth through age eight. As the charitable arm of Investors Management Corporation, the Foundation believes that strategic investments in advocacy and direct service can lead to systemic changes that will positively impact children's lives for generations to come. Our involvement with organizations across North Carolina goes beyond financial gifts to include collaboration, networking and capacity-building to ensure greater success.

As an early childhood advocate, I believe strongly that, as Lori O'Keefe said yesterday to the crowd, we cannot stand by while our kids need help. We must be their voice, and we must work together to change the landscape by learning, sharing and connecting.

- Learn. Understand the issues surrounding access to opportunity in education.
- Share. Spread what you learn. Be an advocate for our kids.
- Connect. Work with the organizations directly addressing literacy in our community. Give your time, talent and treasure.

Change begins with a choice. Let's choose – together – to change the future for our kids.

Easter Maynard, Executive Director, ChildTrust Foundation and the Director of Charitable Giving for IMC, parent company of Golden Corral, and serves on numerous boards and commissions and offers a strong civic-minded voice within the business community. Easter is the 2017 winner of the Triangle Community Foundation Catalyst Award for visionary philanthropy, presented at the annual What Matters luncheon. She serves on the Foundation's Board of Directors and leads the Community Engagement committee. Learn more at [www.armstrongmcguire.com/blog](http://www.armstrongmcguire.com/blog)

### Brittany Johnson: More like a family

Brittany Johnson walked into the dining room at Club Nova's clubhouse. She saw Brent Parrish and his friend sitting at the dining room table with empty plates. What are you up to? she asked, greeting them by name.

She repeated the question to everyone she ran into — and noticed when someone who is normally there was missing. She remembers specific things about each person, such as where they work or what they like. Their artwork hangs on the wall and their pictures sit on the mantle.

This kind of personal interaction and community is different than other nonprofits where she has worked.

"We're like a family here," Johnson said. "We like to see our family."

The clubhouse is open 6 days a week, and on most holidays. Johnson doesn't mind working on Thanksgiving and Christmas. The Club Nova community will cook a nice meal together — five turkeys — and sit together to celebrate. She helps plan trips to the beach and the mountains for the members, but she also helps them get jobs in the community or works with them in the administrative office. "We are all on the same playing field," Johnson said.

That's not to say that Johnson doesn't have her hands full with work. Club Nova has outgrown its space on Main Street in Carrboro. Part of Johnson's job is planning and fundraising for a new space — which has a price tag of \$4 million. The project is still in the quiet phase of strategizing, and it is Johnson's job to get the word out about what Club Nova is.

"My goal as the resource development coordinator is to have as many people as possible join us for tours of the clubhouse," Johnson said. "Tours are the best way to explain our unique model and offer community members the opportunities to see it in action."

### Maxine Schroeder: Using firsthand experience

Maxine Schroeder drove past the Club Nova thrift shop for years without really knowing what else was there.

Then last summer, she took a tour of the clubhouse to explore the internship opportunities and found a lot to love about its mission. Schroeder is a master's student of social work at N.C. State University, and needed an internship. But her own experiences with mental health systems made the clubhouse approach appeal to her.

"I just got such a good vibe when I first visited here," she said.

Now, as an intern, she works on different tasks around the clubhouse, wherever needed, but her main priority is to just talk to the members. The conversation topics between Schroeder and the members range from hobbies, to what they've been up to that day, to just checking in.

"After a while, you start building relationships with people," Schroeder said. Previously, Schroeder wanted to work with kids. Now, she is switching her focus to mental health.

### Eric Sullivan: Practice makes life easier

Eric Sullivan spent 20 years shutting himself off from other people. He didn't hold a steady job, he had few friends, he was unable to try to things. Working with a mental illness felt like he was keeping a secret: No one understands when your struggles keep you from coming to work, he said, and you don't feel like you can explain.

He joined Club Nova a year ago. "I've just had a lot of good, just good interactions," he said. "I don't think I've had any kind of argument with anyone. I just find the people here really accepting and not judgmental and supporting."

This story continues on our website at <http://trianglecf.org/community-resources/our-stories/>

Club Nova was selected as grantee for the Foundation's Capacity Building Partnerships program in 2016 based on their excellent track record of addressing poverty through integrated mental health and employment services. As part of the program, Club Nova completed an organizational assessment and received funding for staff training and website upgrades that will ultimately lead to increased efficiency and operational resilience. In 2016, Club Nova was also selected as a winner of a GSK IMPACT Award – a program managed by Triangle Community Foundation in partnership with GSK that recognizes outstanding organizations contributing to a healthier Triangle Region.

## Our Focus: Camp Changes Lives



Matthew (middle) with his two new "buddies"

*The Foundation believes that to combat summer learning loss, all children can benefit from a camp experience; especially those who may otherwise be unable to attend due to financial constraints, different abilities, or family situations. Our 2017 Send A Kid To Camp™ program grants scholarships to 16 local camps as part of Our Focus: Youth Literacy.*

More than anything, Matthew wanted a friend.

The transition from elementary school to middle school can be tough on any kid, but for Matthew, a child with autism, finding friends and fitting in was even more difficult.

"His mother would tell me that they felt like they'd lost him," said Kristy White said, chief development officer of the Autism Society of North Carolina. "She couldn't understand why he was unable to make a friend in middle school."

Like many parents before her, Matthew's mother turned to summer camp for help with her child. She signed him up for Camp Royall, a summer camp for children with autism led by the Autism Society of North Carolina. And like many kids before him, Matthew's camp experience changed his life. Summer camp helps students build confidence and social skills and discover what they love to learn outside of school.

Kathleen Evans knew her son Matthew was having a life-changing experience at Camp Royall when she called to check in on him. Matthew told his mom that he'd have to call his parents back. He needed to get back to his friends.

"After his week at Camp Royall, Matthew had not one, but two best buddies," Evans said. "Camp Royall is heaven on Earth for a kid who feels like they never fit in."

In middle school, many kids already had established friend groups which made it difficult for Matthew to fit in and find a friend. At Camp Royall, he was surrounded by kids just like him. "My husband and I got our son back," Evans said.

The Autism Society of North Carolina will again offer Camp Royall for the summer of 2017. "We work with campers to develop many of the skills necessary for academic success," White said. "That includes anything from cooperation, self-control, confidence, independence, curiosity, empathy and communication — all skills important in both daily life as well as in an academic setting."

Camp Royall is just one of many Triangle camps providing a connector to the classroom, and working to prevent "summer slide" for all students at-risk.

### Summer slide

Summer slide, or summer learning loss, is when students lose knowledge from the previous academic year, causing teachers to spend precious time each August reviewing. And because research shows that low-income families and families who have differently abled students have less access to stimulating and appropriate summer activities, summer can widen the achievement gap schools work so hard to close.

The rest of this story can be found on our website at <http://trianglecf.org/community-resources/our-stories/>. Davis Rhodes, Libby Richards, and Meg Buckingham contributed to this story





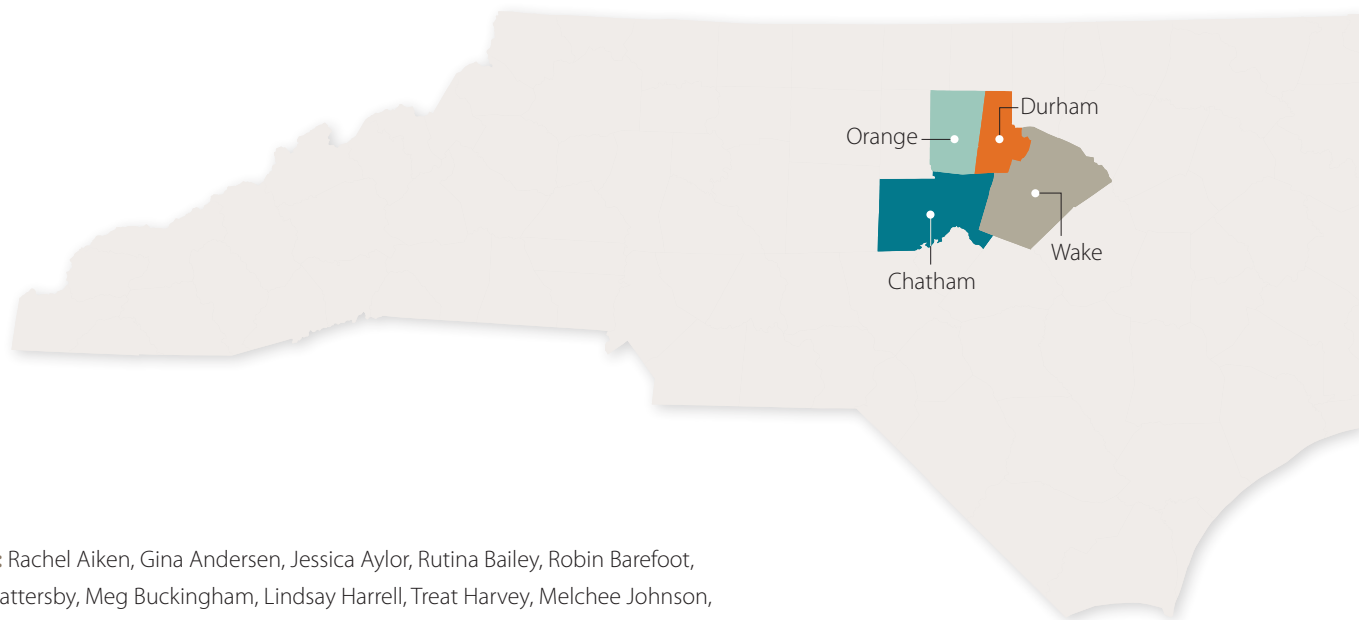
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## SPECIAL WHAT MATTERS EXPANDED EDITION INSIDE

**Triangle Community Foundation** enhances the lives of all residents in the Triangle region of North Carolina by connecting donors with causes they care about, providing funding for nonprofits, and serving as a resource for local issues. Each year the Foundation grants more than \$21 million, partnering with donors and nonprofits to make a difference, now and for the future.



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