



## **First Lady of North Carolina Kristin Cooper Joins United Health Foundation and Whole Kids Foundation to Award 22 Garden Grants to North Carolina Schools and YMCAs**

- *Grants will enable schools to create vegetable gardens and teach students about nutrition and healthy eating*
- *Foundations' initiative supports nutrition education statewide*

**RALEIGH, N.C. (Sept. 18, 2017)** — First lady of North Carolina Kristin Cooper joined United Health Foundation and Whole Kids Foundation today to award 22 grants totaling \$44,000 to schools and YMCAs statewide.

Each organization will receive a \$2,000 grant to build or expand an existing vegetable garden and provide educational resources about agriculture, caring for the environment and maintaining healthy lifestyles. The grants stem from an initiative by United Health Foundation and Whole Kids Foundation to address hunger and support nutrition education.

Grant recipients include:

- Gouge Elementary School, Bakersville
- Bunn Elementary School, Bunn
- Blessed Sacrament School, Burlington
- Culbreth Middle School, Chapel Hill
- Garinger High School, Charlotte
- Langdon C. Kerr Elementary, Clinton
- Conover School, Conover
- Reaching All Minds Academy, Durham
- James B. Dudley High School, Greensboro
- Third Street Education Center, Greenville
- Woodson Branch Nature School, Marshall
- Socrates Academy, Matthews
- North Duplin Jr. Sr. High School, Mt. Olive
- Perry W. Harrison Elementary, Pittsboro
- St. Timothy's School, Raleigh
- Lead Mine Elementary School, Raleigh
- Harris Creek Elementary, Raleigh
- Hunter Elementary School, Raleigh
- Long Mill Elementary, Youngsville
- YMCA Blue Ridge Assembly, Black Mountain
- YMCA of Northwest North Carolina, Statesville
- YMCA Camp Harrison, Boomer

Cooper, UnitedHealthcare of North Carolina Medical Director Dr. Robert Waterhouse, Whole Kids Foundation President and Executive Director Nona Evans, School Principal Brockton Ahrens, and other education and health care leaders hosted a roundtable about health care challenges facing their communities at North Duplin Junior Senior High School in Raleigh, one of the grant recipients. A ground-breaking ceremony for the school's new garden, which will be maintained by its FFA organization, preceded the discussion.

“We see in gardens across the nation the magic that happens when a child plants a seed that grows into something natural and healthy to eat,” said Evans. “These grants will help give many children the opportunity to grow their own nutritious food, and this experience will shape healthy eating choices for the rest of their lives.”

“Nourishing minds and bodies is critical to helping children succeed in school,” said First Lady Cooper. “Research shows that eating a healthy school breakfast and lunch improves student attendance, discipline and academic performance.”

Studies show school gardening, combined with a healthy lunch program or nutrition education, encourages healthier food choices, and children are more likely to eat fruits and vegetables they have grown themselves.

“These schools and YMCAs are creating a positive environment where young people can make healthy choices that will sustain them for a lifetime,” said UnitedHealthcare of North Carolina CEO Anita Bachmann. “On behalf of United Health Foundation, we are grateful for the opportunity to be a part of this initiative to give students the tools they need to succeed and become healthy, productive adults.”

### **About United Health Foundation**

Through collaboration with community partners, grants and outreach efforts, United Health Foundation works to improve our health system, build a diverse and dynamic health workforce and enhance the well-being of local communities. United Health Foundation was established by UnitedHealth Group (NYSE: UNH) in 1999 as a not-for-profit, private foundation dedicated to improving health and health care. To date, United Health Foundation has committed nearly \$358 million to programs and communities around the world. We invite you to learn more at [www.unitedhealthgroup.com/SocialResponsibility](http://www.unitedhealthgroup.com/SocialResponsibility).

### **About Whole Kids Foundation<sup>®</sup>**

Whole Kids Foundation, a Whole Foods Market foundation, is based in Austin, Texas, and operates as an independent, nonprofit organization. By empowering schools and inspiring families, the Foundation aims to help children reach optimal health through the strength of a healthy body fueled by nutritious food. For more information on the Foundation’s programs, including school gardens, salad bars and nutrition education for teachers, visit [wholekidsfoundation.org](http://wholekidsfoundation.org).

### **About UnitedHealthcare**

UnitedHealthcare is dedicated to helping people nationwide live healthier lives by simplifying the health care experience, meeting consumer health and wellness needs, and sustaining trusted relationships with care providers. The company offers the full spectrum of health benefit programs for individuals, employers, military service members, retirees and their families, and Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries, and contracts directly with 1 million physicians and care professionals, and 6,000 hospitals and other care facilities nationwide. UnitedHealthcare is one of the businesses of UnitedHealth Group (NYSE: UNH), a diversified Fortune 50 health and well-being company. For more information, visit UnitedHealthcare at [www.uhc.com](http://www.uhc.com) or follow @UHC on Twitter.

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