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Wake County SmartStart Receives More Than \$675,000 from John Rex Endowment for Farm to Child Care Project

RALEIGH, N.C. (Aug. 7, 2014) – The John Rex Endowment has awarded Wake County SmartStart (WCSS) \$675,639 for a Farm to Child Care project to help more than 160 child care facilities make changes so it becomes the norm to prepare and serve fresh, local produce for snacks and meals throughout growing seasons. WCSS will focus on child care facilities in Wake County that serve low-income families and children who need improved access to healthy, nutritious food.

Child care facility directors and other staff will learn how to access local food and prepare seasonal produce. Age-appropriate curriculum resources and training will also be provided to help educate children and families about fruits and vegetables.

Advocates for Health in Action and Wake County Cooperative Extension will partner with WCSS to educate and train child care providers, facilitate connections with growers, and provide systems-level support to help improve healthy eating for children.

“The Farm to Child Care project aligns with the goals of our five-year plan to increase children’s access to healthy food,” said Kevin Cain, president and CEO of the John Rex Endowment. “We are focused on supporting work that helps shape policies and environments to create healthy changes across a broad range of community settings, such as child care centers, neighborhoods, places of worship and schools.”

Pam Dowdy, executive director of WCSS, echoes Kevin Cain’s enthusiasm for the possibilities this program brings to the community. “This generous grant from the John Rex Endowment for the Farm to Child Care program takes a successful pilot project to implementation and supports WCSS’s mission to ensure young children birth to age 5 are healthy and ready for school. We look forward to continued collaborative work with our community partners as we 'grow' this program to the next level.”

About the John Rex Endowment:

The John Rex Endowment supports an environment where children and families in greater Wake County live healthy lives. Guided by the belief that all children should reach their full potential, the John Rex Endowment works with the community to support the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of children. For more information, contact the Raleigh, N.C. office at 919-838-1110 or visit www.rexendowment.org

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