



tarheel

Orange County to improve Family Success Alliance to help families in poverty

By [Maggie Monsrud](#) | Published 9 hours ago

Orange County officials are engaging the community to improve the Family Success Alliance, a program that focuses on addressing the needs of Orange County families and children that live in poverty.

Meredith McMonigle, project coordinator for the [Family Success Alliance](#), said the program is in the beginning stages, which makes community engagement crucial.

"We want to tap into the local knowledge and wisdom of the community," she said. "It's important that it be a community driven project."

The program concentrates on two zones of Orange County — Zone 4 and Zone 6.

Zone 4 is located between Interstate 40 and Interstate 85 in central Orange County. Zone 6 extends southwest from downtown Chapel Hill to N.C. Highway 54.

Volunteers visited both zones Saturday to survey residents, asking a wide range of questions about topics like health, transportation, feelings of safety and child care.

Stacy Shelp, spokeswoman for the Orange County Health Department, said 20 surveys were completed on Saturday and 200 more were left at doorsteps. Residents are also able to complete the survey online at the county's website.

Shelp said the data from these surveys will help the program's advisory council determine which priorities to focus on.

"We're hoping this information coming straight from the community will tell us where the biggest needs are and where the biggest strengths are," she said.

Orange County Commissioner Bernadette Pelissier, who is a member of the advisory council, said the survey will help the council evaluate the efforts that already exist in the county.

"You can't implement a program for families to succeed and address child poverty without addressing what's happening in that specific area," she said, "It's not going to be the same everywhere and needs may be different."

Pelissier said the feedback might not demonstrate a need for new programs, but a need to integrate the existing programs.

"You want to integrate so you have a system in place so people can easily navigate the services," she said.

Pelissier said the council is also looking at the Harlem Children's Zone, a similar program that operates in New York City's Harlem neighborhood, to gain more input on what they can do for the program.

Shelp said all of the data will be compiled and analyzed by the beginning of April, when there will be two community zone prioritization meetings to announce the county's next step with the program.

The Zone 4 meeting will be April 8 at Stanback Middle School in Hillsborough, and the Zone 6 meeting will be April 9 at Carrboro Elementary School. Both meetings are from 5 to 7 p.m.



The Herald-Sun

Orange County Health Department workers step up

Mar. 24, 2015 @ 04:32 PM

[Keith Upchurch](#)



Orange County Health Department Preparedness Coordinator Ann Zellmer and her dog, Alli, take a walk on an Orange County trail. (Special to The Herald-Sun/Orange County Health Department)



Meredith Stewart (from left), Tiffany Mackey and Colleen Bridger (from left to right) hold a walking meeting as they leave the Orange County Health Department. (Special to The Herald-Sun/Orange County Health Department)

CHAPEL HILL —

Step by step, staff members at the Orange County Health Department are inching closer to their goal of “walking” to California.

They’re doing it without leaving North Carolina, tracking every inch they walk from the time they awaken until bedtime.

It’s part of an eight-week “cross-country” walking challenge designed to highlight the importance of physical activity.

The challenge involves about 20 staff members who plan to walk a total of 3,000 miles — the distance to that “other” Orange County — the one in California.

The Health Department has created an online map of the journey to help track their progress and connect with communities along the way. Each week, the team calculates their individual steps using pedometers and other devices, adds them and identifies how many miles they've completed.

The interactive map highlights health departments along the way, which will be tagged to encourage interaction on social media. The map can be found on the department's web page at www.orangecountync.gov/health/. Click on "Walking the Walk."

"We are very excited to embark on this health journey as a staff," Colleen Bridger, Orange County health director, said. "It is a great way for us to practice what we preach every day and raise awareness of public health."

The challenge began the first of March and has generated friendly competition among the staff, according to Stacy Shelp, public information officer for the department.

Some participants have "standing desks" at the office that let them take stationary steps as they work, she said. One staff member brought a treadmill from home and fitted it to her desk so she can walk and work at the same time.

"The biggest benefit of this challenge is improvement in the overall health of employees," Shelp said. "We know that workplace wellness is really important. It increases morale and productivity."

Shelp said the department wants to convey that message to the entire community.

"We often talk about the importance of physical activity, and we want to show the community that we're actually walking the walk," she said.



tarheel

Prescription boxes installed to curb drug abuse

By [Mengqi Jiang](#) | Published 11 hours ago

To further its effort to curb prescription drug abuse, Orange County is opening two more drop boxes for prescription drugs in Hillsborough Wednesday.

In 2011 the county's Mental Health and Substance Abuse Committee conducted a community health assessment and found that prescription drug abuse and misuse has contributed to the county's increased suicide rate. The committee has made its primary focus the reduction of drug abuse and misuse.

One box will be located in the lobby of the Orange County Sheriff's Office and the other will be in the lobby of the Orange County Courthouse, said Orange County Sheriff Charles Blackwood.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony at 10 a.m. today at the sheriff's office will accompany the opening of the drop boxes.

Blackwood said installing the boxes was important to allow residents to conveniently discard their unwanted and unused medication in safe locations in the county.

"Some people go to the police department and others are able to come to the sheriff's office," he said.

Ashley Mercer, coordinator of Healthy Carolinians of Orange County, said there is a drop box installed in every police department in Orange County. She said Healthy Carolinians helped implement the installation of prescription drop boxes in the county's law enforcement buildings to lower prescription drug abuse.

Lt. Josh Mecimore, spokesman for the Chapel Hill Police Department, said having the drop boxes available protects the Chapel Hill and Orange County communities from the risks of medication misuse.

"We installed that drop box to provide a consistent and constant location for people to drop off prescription medication, to keep them out of the water supply, out of landfills and out of the hands of people who might abuse them or accidentally overdose or misuse them," Mecimore said.

Mercer said Healthy Carolinians advertises the boxes and educates residents about what should be dropped in the box and what should not.

She said the first drop box was installed at the Chapel Hill Police Department in the summer of 2013 and was followed that same summer by drop boxes in the police departments of Carrboro and Hillsborough.

Mercer said the boxes are monitored to keep them secure.

“We have accomplished our goal,” she said. “We have all of our law enforcement engaged into the process.”

Mecimore said Chapel Hill Police Department employees clean out the drop box weekly and dispose of the medication to leave room for drop-offs.

“Disposing these properly is important — not only to people, but to the environment,” Mecimore said. “We have an obligation to try to help with that process.”

Orange County Health Department workers step up

By Keith Upchurch / The Herald-Sun, Durham, N.C. (TNS)

Published: Wednesday, March 25, 2015 at 10:15 AM.

CHAPEL HILL — Step by step, staff members at the Orange County Health Department are inching closer to their goal of “walking” to California.

They’re doing it without leaving North Carolina, tracking every inch they walk from the time they awaken until bedtime.

It’s part of an eight-week “cross-country” walking challenge designed to highlight the importance of physical activity.

The challenge involves about 20 staff members who plan to walk a total of 3,000 miles — the distance to that “other” Orange County — the one in California.

The Health Department has created an online map of the journey to help track their progress and connect with communities along the way. Each week, the team calculates their individual steps using pedometers and other devices, adds them and identifies how many miles they’ve completed.

The interactive map highlights health departments along the way, which will be tagged to encourage interaction on social media. The map can be found on the department’s web page at www.orangecountync.gov/health/. Click on “Walking the Walk.”

“We are very excited to embark on this health journey as a staff,” Colleen Bridger, Orange County health director, said. “It is a great way for us to practice what we preach every day and raise awareness of public health.”

The challenge began the first of March and has generated friendly competition among the staff, according to Stacy Shelp, public information officer for the department.

Some participants have “standing desks” at the office that let them take stationary steps as they work, she said. One staff member brought a treadmill from home and fitted it to her desk so she can walk and work at the same time.

“The biggest benefit of this challenge is improvement in the overall health of employees,” Shelp said. “We know that workplace wellness is really important. It increases morale and productivity.”

Shelp said the department wants to convey that message to the entire community.

“We often talk about the importance of physical activity, and we want to show the community that we’re actually walking the walk,” she said.

The Herald-Sun

Literally 'walking the walk'

Mar. 26, 2015 @ 06:36 AM

Hats off -- and running/walking shoes on -- for the workers at the Orange County Health Department. They are setting an example for us all.

Here's the thing: We all know, even if we often want to avoid the knowledge that we're in the midst of what can only be called an obesity epidemic. We all know that those New Year's resolutions we made a scant three months ago to exercise more, eat less and choose our food more wisely, to shed those extra pounds we've put on and reduce our stress in the process -- we know they've long since gone in the dead-letter pile with last year's, and the ones from the year before.

We know we should spend a lot less time on the couch, that another evening of binge-watching a season of "Game of Thrones" while binge-eating mint chocolate chip ice cream is not good for us.

Still, we persist.

And if people who work for the health department aren't going to set an example, well, who is?

That's why we're impressed with the Orange County Health Department team. They are, as The Herald-Sun's Keith Upchurch reported Wednesday morning, "walking" to California.

Not literally, of course. We couldn't spare them for the time that cross-country trek would take. And not individually -- this is a team sport.

About 20 staff members, though, have committed to walk a total of 3,000 miles during an eight-week period (roughly the distance to the West Coast Orange County). They're toting up their mileage each week, recording their individual distances with pedometers and other devices. They'll collectively burn close to 300,000 calories.

"We are very excited to embark on this health journey as a staff," Colleen Bridger, Orange county health director, said. "It is a great way for us to practice what we preach every day and raise awareness of public health."

The participants have been inventive. Some are using "standing desks" so they can take stationary steps as they work. One worker has hooked a treadmill up to her desk and walks while she works. Colleagues have been seen holding "walking meetings," which sounds not only healthier but more interesting than being trapped around a conference table.

"We often talk about the importance of physical activity, and we want to show the community we're actually walking the walk," said Stacy Shelp, the department's public information officer.

Good for them -- and many of us could benefit from joining them on that walk.

Orange is Healthiest County in State

By [Blake Hodge](#)

Posted March 26, 2015 at 9:34 am



County-by-County Health Reports were released by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, on Wednesday.

Orange County is the healthiest county in the Tar Heel state, according to the newly-released data.

Andrea Ducas, Program Officer with Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, says there is more to the report than a ranking.

“What we really hope folks will do is, in addition to looking at where their counties rank, is really digging into the data,” she says, “to get a better sense of how where we live, where we work, and where we’re playing have to deal with how healthy we are.”

Ducas says Orange County is excelling in areas including premature deaths, adult smoking rate, and an increased rate of physical activity.

She adds having a healthy county extends far beyond immediate access to high-quality medical care.

“Individual health behaviors – whether folks in a community smoke, whether they have good access to diet and exercise opportunities,” Ducas says, “and also some social and economic factors like employment rates, graduation rates, what income looks like in a county, and physical environment conditions all go into a county’s rank.”

Dr. Colleen Bridger, Director of the Orange County Health Department, says they were not surprised to be ranked at the top of the scale for county-by-county health.

“The health of a community is essentially determined by two things,” she says. “One is how well educated the community is. And two is how wealthy the community is.

“Folks who follow Orange County statistics understand that, pretty typically, Orange County leads the state in both of those categories.”

While Orange County is well positioned, it also is an area that sees higher disparity between residents. And that can play a big role on the health of different segments of the community.

“One of the indicators in these rankings is what they call income inequality,” Bridger says. “Orange County’s income inequality was higher than average.

“Basically, what that means is we have a lot of people at the top of the income scale, and we have a lot of people at the bottom of the income scale.”

To battle income inequality, Bridger credits programs including the [Family Success Alliance](#) for helping children in low-income families succeed through high school and beyond.

Other obstacles that present themselves for Orange County include [affordable housing](#) – which Bridger says can lead to difficult decisions for residents. She adds she has been surprised binge drinking for adults was higher in our area when compared with national rates.

Bridger says there were plenty of highlights for Orange County to be proud of, including limited tobacco use.

“12 percent of our population uses tobacco, and that’s one of the best percentages in the entire nation,” she says.

She adds other areas where Orange County excels include teen birth rate and increased use and availability of healthcare services.

You can see the full rankings [here](#).

Orange County Looks to Harlem Initiative to Help Kids in Poverty

By [Danny Hooley](#)

Posted April 8, 2015 at 8:32 am



Orange County is taking steps to address the effects of poverty on children, “from cradle to college” and beyond.

A county initiative called the Family Success Alliance is modeled after the Harlem Children’s Zone, an acclaimed New York program that works to keep Harlem kids on the track toward college graduation.

“We were inspired by the work of the Harlem Children’s Zone,” said Meredith Stewart, program manager of the Orange County Health Department, “because of their focus on picking a specific geographic area and saying, ‘How do we work with families and children in that geographic area or zone, to really create changes at scale?’

“So we want to see changes in the community, not just at the individual level, but at the community level.”

Two out of six local zones being considered were selected as pilot zones for the project.

Wednesday, from 5 until 7, partners from Zone 4 – the area between I-40 and I-85 in central Orange County – will join members of the FSA for a public meeting at A.L. Stanback Middle School, at 3700 NC 86 South, in Hillsborough.

They'll discuss the findings of door-to-door surveys in Zone 4, which includes Stanback and New Hope Elementary. Fifty-five percent of Zone 4 students receive free or reduced lunch.

“What I might see on a daily level is a parent calling me and telling me they don't have a place to live,” said Aviva Scully, a social worker at Stanback Middle School, “or they need help paying a bill; they've had a shutoff notice; they need help with clothing; lots of calls for help with food.”

A similar meeting will be held Thursday for Zone 6, from 5 until 7 p.m. at Carrboro Elementary School, at 400 Shelton St. The zone stretches from downtown Chapel Hill southwest to Highway 54, and has the highest number of the county's children under 18 living in poverty – nearly 900.

Child care, a light dinner and interpreters will be available at both meetings.

FSA prioritizes needs for central Orange County

By Katie Jansen / The Herald-Sun, Durham, N.C. (TNS)

Published: Thursday, April 9, 2015 at 09:19 AM.

HILLSBOROUGH — The Family Success Alliance on Wednesday night shared preliminary data gathered from 68 survey responses collected in central Orange County between I-40 and I-85.

The region, known as Zone 4 to the Family Success Alliance, is one of two pilot zones selected to begin work in creating a pipeline that supports children from the cradle to college or a career.

Mayor Tom Stevens thanked those for their interest in the community's needs and for their work to meet those needs.

"It's not right if the things that make us a cool town and a great place to live are not available to everyone," he said.

To gather the data, volunteers went door-to-door administering surveys, and the survey was also available online.

Input was received from youth, parents, community leaders and service providers, said Meredith McMonigle of the Orange County Health Department.

Focus groups also had discussions about needs in the community. Groups included a group of service providers, a group of Latina mothers and a group of middle school girls.

Allison Young of the Orange County Health Department and Jennifer Walters, a social work researcher at RTI, presented some of the trends found from the data.

Many families surveyed expressed a need for early childhood resources, such as easier access to child care.

EOG scores also showed potential problems within schools. The average third-grade reading proficiency for Zone 4 was 19 percentage points lower than the average third-grade reading level across the entire school district.

However, Walters said, most parents surveyed did feel that students were supported when in school. They also felt the district offered a wide variety of after-school programs, although parents cited several challenges that inhibited participation: cost, transportation and lack of communication — meaning that parents simply don't know what's available to their children.

Some of the challenges were specific to the Hispanic and Latina community.

New Hope Elementary, a school within Zone 4, currently has a student body that is 42 percent Hispanic or Latina. This may suggest a shift in the demographics of the population.

But many Latina mothers expressed concern about communicating with their children's schools and about transportation. If they were to take their children to afterschool activities, they said they would be afraid of getting stopped by the police in routine traffic stops.

Sandra Blefko, ESL family outreach specialist for Orange County Schools, said she was not surprised by the data presented and that many of the families she works with voice similar concerns.

“That’s probably why (parents are) not that involved,” she said. “Not that they don’t care. They just don’t know how.”

Once the data had been presented, McMonigle asked the crowd gathered to help prioritize the trending problems that had been drawn from the survey responses.

The themes listed were: transportation, support for Latino families, college and career preparation, readiness for kindergarten, mentoring, childcare, out of school time, family support and academic support.

Those in the audience were allowed to vote for what they felt were the most pressing needs for their community. Each person was allotted 10 votes and could not use more than four votes for any single topic.

Once all the votes had been cast, four needs came out on top: transportation, childcare, readiness for kindergarten and support for Latino families.

Individuals were then voted to cast votes for suggested strategies to meet these needs — or to suggest their own strategies.

The crowd voted for the following strategies or solutions:

- Transportation: Expand existing bus services, allow more transportation for after-school or summer programs
- Child care: Increase child care subsidies
- Readiness for kindergarten: Expand Pre-K enrollment
- Support for Latino families: Provide more opportunities for Latino parents to learn English.

McMonigle said the votes and the written suggestions would be taken into account as the Family Success Alliance continues to compile data.

Surveys will still be received for another two weeks, and McMonigle said the alliance plans to continue surveying in future years as time passes and needs shift.

“We’re here. We’re staying. We’re committed,” she said of the relatively new initiative.

A similar meeting — with a different set of data that reflects the needs of Zone 6, or Chapel Hill and Carrboro — will be held Thursday, April 9 at Carrboro Elementary School from 5 to 7 p.m. Child care and a light meal will be provided.

The priorities chosen from both zones will be presented at a meeting of the Family Success Alliance Advisory Council on April 20 from 1 to 2:30 p.m. The meeting will be held at the Carrboro Century Center, and it is open to the public.

The Herald-Sun

FSA prioritizes needs for central Orange County

Apr. 08, 2015 @ 08:33 PM

[Katie Jansen](#)

HILLSBOROUGH —

The Family Success Alliance on Wednesday night shared preliminary data gathered from 68 survey responses collected in central Orange County between I-40 and I-85.

The region, known as Zone 4 to the Family Success Alliance, is one of two pilot zones selected to begin work in creating a pipeline that supports children from the cradle to college or a career.

Mayor Tom Stevens thanked those for their interest in the community's needs and for their work to meet those needs.

"It's not right if the things that make us a cool town and a great place to live are not available to everyone," he said.

To gather the data, volunteers went door-to-door administering surveys, and the survey was also available online.

Input was received from youth, parents, community leaders and service providers, said Meredith McMonigle of the Orange County Health Department.

Focus groups also had discussions about needs in the community. Groups included a group of service providers, a group of Latina mothers and a group of middle school girls.

Allison Young of the Orange County Health Department and Jennifer Walters, a social work researcher at RTI, presented some of the trends found from the data.

Many families surveyed expressed a need for early childhood resources, such as easier access to child care.

EOG scores also showed potential problems within schools. The average third-grade reading proficiency for Zone 4 was 19 percentage points lower than the average third-grade reading level across the entire school district.

However, Walters said, most parents surveyed did feel that students were supported when in school.

They also felt the district offered a wide variety of after-school programs, although parents cited several challenges that inhibited participation: cost, transportation and lack of communication — meaning that parents simply don't know what's available to their children.

Some of the challenges were specific to the Hispanic and Latina community.

New Hope Elementary, a school within Zone 4, currently has a student body that is 42 percent Hispanic or Latina. This may suggest a shift in the demographics of the population.

But many Latina mothers expressed concern about communicating with their children's schools and about transportation. If they were to take their children to afterschool activities, they said they would be afraid of getting stopped by the police in routine traffic stops.

Sandra Blefko, ESL family outreach specialist for Orange County Schools, said she was not surprised by the data presented and that many of the families she works with voice similar concerns.

“That’s probably why (parents are) not that involved,” she said. “Not that they don’t care. They just don’t know how.”

Once the data had been presented, McMonigle asked the crowd gathered to help prioritize the trending problems that had been drawn from the survey responses.

The themes listed were: transportation, support for Latino families, college and career preparation, readiness for kindergarten, mentoring, childcare, out of school time, family support and academic support.

Those in the audience were allowed to vote for what they felt were the most pressing needs for their community. Each person was allotted 10 votes and could not use more than four votes for any single topic.

Once all the votes had been cast, four needs came out on top: transportation, childcare, readiness for kindergarten and support for Latino families.

Individuals were then voted to cast votes for suggested strategies to meet these needs — or to suggest their own strategies.

The crowd voted for the following strategies or solutions:

- Transportation: Expand existing bus services, allow more transportation for after-school or summer programs
- Child care: Increase child care subsidies
- Readiness for kindergarten: Expand Pre-K enrollment
- Support for Latino families: Provide more opportunities for Latino parents to learn English.

McMonigle said the votes and the written suggestions would be taken into account as the Family Success Alliance continues to compile data.

Surveys will still be received for another two weeks, and McMonigle said the alliance plans to continue surveying in future years as time passes and needs shift.

“We’re here. We’re staying. We’re committed,” she said of the relatively new initiative.

A similar meeting — with a different set of data that reflects the needs of Zone 6, or Chapel Hill and Carrboro — will be held Thursday, April 9 at Carrboro Elementary School from 5 to 7 p.m. Child care and a light meal will be provided.

The priorities chosen from both zones will be presented at a meeting of the Family Success Alliance Advisory Council on April 20 from 1 to 2:30 p.m. The meeting will be held at the Carrboro Century Center, and it is open to the public.

Family Success Alliance Advisory Council creates anti-poverty programs for Orange County

BY [CLAIRE NIELSEN](#) | January 7, 2015

Members of the new Family Success Alliance Advisory Council are making headway in creating services to address the needs of Orange County children and families living in poverty.

On Dec. 16, the advisory council, made up of 22 representatives from local governments and non-profit organizations across the county, chose two zones within the county to pilot a cradle-to-career program for children in low-income families.

The two zones were chosen from six original zones that were determined by data such as the number of children in Orange County qualifying for free or reduced lunches and those eligible for Medicaid, said Stacy Shelp, spokeswoman for the Orange County Health Department.

“The specific reason the health department became interested was because of research about the long-term effects poverty has on people’s health outcomes,” she said.

Orange County is one of the wealthiest counties in the state, but it also has some of the highest rates of income inequality, said Orange County Commissioner Bernadette Pelissier. According to data provided by the Orange County Health Department, the number of children living in poverty in Orange County increased by 7.4 percent from 2001 to 2011.

“Sometimes families that are struggling within Orange County can fly under the radar,” said Dr. Michael Steiner, chief of the Division of General Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine at UNC Hospitals and chair of the advisory council.

He said poverty is one of the most effective predictors of a person's overall health and life expectancy.

"A very small portion of people's overall health is related to the quality of the medical care they receive," he said. "A big part of people's overall health is related to what we call social determinants of health."

The advisory council chose Zone 4 and Zone 6 to pilot the program.

Zone 4 is between Interstate 40 and Interstate 85 in central Orange County, and it includes A.L. Stanback Middle and New Hope Elementary schools.

Zone 6 spans downtown Chapel Hill southwest to N.C. 54. Schools in Zone 6 include Phoenix Academy, Carrboro Elementary School, Northside Elementary School, Culbreth Middle School and Carrboro High School.

In the coming months, the Family Success Alliance will conduct a needs assessment in each of the zones.

"We aren't identifying what kind of programs are going to happen yet because we haven't really done that in-depth dive into the communities," Shelp said.

The Orange County Board of Commissioners has allocated \$100,000 from its social justice funds for the future programs and services, Pellissier said.

FSA prioritizes needs for central Orange County

By Katie Jansen / The Herald-Sun, Durham, N.C. (TNS)

Published: Thursday, April 9, 2015 at 09:19 AM.

HILLSBOROUGH — The Family Success Alliance on Wednesday night shared preliminary data gathered from 68 survey responses collected in central Orange County between I-40 and I-85.

The region, known as Zone 4 to the Family Success Alliance, is one of two pilot zones selected to begin work in creating a pipeline that supports children from the cradle to college or a career.

Mayor Tom Stevens thanked those for their interest in the community's needs and for their work to meet those needs.

"It's not right if the things that make us a cool town and a great place to live are not available to everyone," he said.

To gather the data, volunteers went door-to-door administering surveys, and the survey was also available online.

Input was received from youth, parents, community leaders and service providers, said Meredith McMonigle of the Orange County Health Department.

Focus groups also had discussions about needs in the community. Groups included a group of service providers, a group of Latina mothers and a group of middle school girls.

Allison Young of the Orange County Health Department and Jennifer Walters, a social work researcher at RTI, presented some of the trends found from the data.

Many families surveyed expressed a need for early childhood resources, such as easier access to child care.

EOG scores also showed potential problems within schools. The average third-grade reading proficiency for Zone 4 was 19 percentage points lower than the average third-grade reading level across the entire school district.

However, Walters said, most parents surveyed did feel that students were supported when in school. They also felt the district offered a wide variety of after-school programs, although parents cited several challenges that inhibited participation: cost, transportation and lack of communication — meaning that parents simply don't know what's available to their children.

Some of the challenges were specific to the Hispanic and Latina community.

New Hope Elementary, a school within Zone 4, currently has a student body that is 42 percent Hispanic or Latina. This may suggest a shift in the demographics of the population.

But many Latina mothers expressed concern about communicating with their children's schools and about transportation. If they were to take their children to afterschool activities, they said they would be afraid of getting stopped by the police in routine traffic stops.

Sandra Blefko, ESL family outreach specialist for Orange County Schools, said she was not surprised by the data presented and that many of the families she works with voice similar concerns.

“That’s probably why (parents are) not that involved,” she said. “Not that they don’t care. They just don’t know how.”

Once the data had been presented, McMonigle asked the crowd gathered to help prioritize the trending problems that had been drawn from the survey responses.

The themes listed were: transportation, support for Latino families, college and career preparation, readiness for kindergarten, mentoring, childcare, out of school time, family support and academic support.

Those in the audience were allowed to vote for what they felt were the most pressing needs for their community. Each person was allotted 10 votes and could not use more than four votes for any single topic.

Once all the votes had been cast, four needs came out on top: transportation, childcare, readiness for kindergarten and support for Latino families.

Individuals were then voted to cast votes for suggested strategies to meet these needs — or to suggest their own strategies.

The crowd voted for the following strategies or solutions:

- Transportation: Expand existing bus services, allow more transportation for after-school or summer programs
- Child care: Increase child care subsidies
- Readiness for kindergarten: Expand Pre-K enrollment
- Support for Latino families: Provide more opportunities for Latino parents to learn English.

McMonigle said the votes and the written suggestions would be taken into account as the Family Success Alliance continues to compile data.

Surveys will still be received for another two weeks, and McMonigle said the alliance plans to continue surveying in future years as time passes and needs shift.

“We’re here. We’re staying. We’re committed,” she said of the relatively new initiative.

A similar meeting — with a different set of data that reflects the needs of Zone 6, or Chapel Hill and Carrboro — will be held Thursday, April 9 at Carrboro Elementary School from 5 to 7 p.m. Child care and a light meal will be provided.

The priorities chosen from both zones will be presented at a meeting of the Family Success Alliance Advisory Council on April 20 from 1 to 2:30 p.m. The meeting will be held at the Carrboro Century Center, and it is open to the public.

Chapel Hill News

County's Family Success Alliance wants to learn about needs, challenges for children in poverty

By Tammy Grubb
tgrubb@newsobserver.com
03/10/2015 3:30 PM

CHAPEL HILL

Orange County needs volunteers to survey Carrboro families this weekend about the challenges they face and what they think are the community's strengths.

The survey, organized by the Family Success Alliance, starts at 9 a.m. Saturday with training and breakfast. Volunteers will meet at Carrboro Town Hall, 301 W. Main St. in Carrboro, said Stacy Shelp, with the Orange County Health Department.

Volunteers will work in two-person teams, going door-to-door to conduct the surveys between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. They hope to have at least one person on each team who speaks Spanish, Shelp said. Volunteers will be given nametags and red vests, she said.

The Family Success Alliance has identified two Orange County zones for its pilot project aimed at creating a pipeline of success from the cradle to college or a career for children living in poverty.

A survey already was completed in Zone 4, located between I-85 and I-40 in the area surrounding New Hope Elementary School. Saturday's survey will cover Zone 6, which surrounds downtown Carrboro.

The survey also is available online in English and Spanish at nando.com/p5.

County officials will report the results of both surveys at community meetings in April and work with those communities to decide what action to take.

If you'd like to help, call Meredith McMonigle at 919-245-2071  919-245-2071. Last-minute volunteers also can show up Saturday at Carrboro Town Hall.

More information about the Family Success Alliance is available online or follow the changes on Twitter at [@FSA_OC](https://twitter.com/FSA_OC).

Read more here: <http://www.newsobserver.com/news/local/community/chapel-hill-news/article13212569.html#storylink=cpy>

Orange County's anti-poverty program zeroes in on downtown Chapel Hill

BY [AREN BESSON](#) | PUBLISHED 8 HOURS AGO

More than 20 Orange County officials and residents came together Thursday to brainstorm strategies for reducing poverty.

The kickoff meeting was the first of many needs-assessment sessions for [the Family Success Alliance anti-poverty program](#) created last year.

The Family Success Alliance Advisory Council, a group of 22 representatives from local governments and non-profit organizations across the county, hopes to lower the rates of child poverty in Orange County through grassroots outreach and action.

In December, the council decided to target its efforts in Zone 4 and Zone 6 of Orange County. That progress continued with the kickoff meeting, which focused on the needs of Zone 6.

Zone 4 is located between Interstate 40 and Interstate 85, while Zone 6 covers the area from downtown Chapel Hill southwest to N.C. 54.

Stacy Shelp, spokeswoman for the Orange County Health Department, said the meetings will identify where the cracks are in the system and determine the best strategies for fixing those cracks.

"The common goal will obviously meet the needs for specific zones, but then reach out to other zones to provide different support so we don't see kids falling through the cracks," she said.

Carrboro Alderman Damon Seils said the program will more effectively coordinate social services to increase access to education, food and health care for lower-income residents of Orange County.

"We are in the phase where we are figuring out what the needs are so we can decide what to do next," Seils said.

Meredith McMonigle, Family Success Alliance project coordinator, said the data collection is a participatory process.

“We don’t want to come in as outsiders — we are inviting the community to participate in this process,” she said.

Shelp said the needs assessment phase is expected to take two to three months.

“It’s going to be fast, and we want to get it moving quickly in an impactful way,” she said.

Members of the community can give input by coming to needs-assessment sessions, including the Zone 4 session tonight from 5 to 6:15 p.m. at A. L. Stanback Middle School in Hillsborough.

Earl McKee, chair of the Orange County Board of Commissioners, said the county is at a good starting point.

“Any effort that Orange County can make towards ensuring the success of our residents is something we are all obligated to look at,” he said.

city@dailytarheel.com



tarheel

Orange County to improve Family Success Alliance to help families in poverty

By [Maggie Monsrud](#) | Published 9 hours ago

Orange County officials are engaging the community to improve the Family Success Alliance, a program that focuses on addressing the needs of Orange County families and children that live in poverty.

Meredith McMonigle, project coordinator for the [Family Success Alliance](#), said the program is in the beginning stages, which makes community engagement crucial.

"We want to tap into the local knowledge and wisdom of the community," she said. "It's important that it be a community driven project."

The program concentrates on two zones of Orange County — Zone 4 and Zone 6.

Zone 4 is located between Interstate 40 and Interstate 85 in central Orange County. Zone 6 extends southwest from downtown Chapel Hill to N.C. Highway 54.

Volunteers visited both zones Saturday to survey residents, asking a wide range of questions about topics like health, transportation, feelings of safety and child care.

Stacy Shelp, spokeswoman for the Orange County Health Department, said 20 surveys were completed on Saturday and 200 more were left at doorsteps. Residents are also able to complete the survey online at the county's website.

Shelp said the data from these surveys will help the program's advisory council determine which priorities to focus on.

"We're hoping this information coming straight from the community will tell us where the biggest needs are and where the biggest strengths are," she said.

Orange County Commissioner Bernadette Pelissier, who is a member of the advisory council, said the survey will help the council evaluate the efforts that already exist in the county.

"You can't implement a program for families to succeed and address child poverty without addressing what's happening in that specific area," she said, "It's not going to be the same everywhere and needs may be different."

Pelissier said the feedback might not demonstrate a need for new programs, but a need to integrate the existing programs.

"You want to integrate so you have a system in place so people can easily navigate the services," she said.

Pelissier said the council is also looking at the Harlem Children's Zone, a similar program that operates in New York City's Harlem neighborhood, to gain more input on what they can do for the program.

Shelp said all of the data will be compiled and analyzed by the beginning of April, when there will be two community zone prioritization meetings to announce the county's next step with the program.

The Zone 4 meeting will be April 8 at Stanback Middle School in Hillsborough, and the Zone 6 meeting will be April 9 at Carrboro Elementary School. Both meetings are from 5 to 7 p.m.

The Herald-Sun

FSA prioritizes needs for central Orange County

Apr. 08, 2015 @ 08:33 PM

[Katie Jansen](#)

HILLSBOROUGH —

The Family Success Alliance on Wednesday night shared preliminary data gathered from 68 survey responses collected in central Orange County between I-40 and I-85.

The region, known as Zone 4 to the Family Success Alliance, is one of two pilot zones selected to begin work in creating a pipeline that supports children from the cradle to college or a career.

Mayor Tom Stevens thanked those for their interest in the community's needs and for their work to meet those needs.

"It's not right if the things that make us a cool town and a great place to live are not available to everyone," he said.

To gather the data, volunteers went door-to-door administering surveys, and the survey was also available online.

Input was received from youth, parents, community leaders and service providers, said Meredith McMonigle of the Orange County Health Department.

Focus groups also had discussions about needs in the community. Groups included a group of service providers, a group of Latina mothers and a group of middle school girls.

Allison Young of the Orange County Health Department and Jennifer Walters, a social work researcher at RTI, presented some of the trends found from the data.

Many families surveyed expressed a need for early childhood resources, such as easier access to child care.

EOG scores also showed potential problems within schools. The average third-grade reading proficiency for Zone 4 was 19 percentage points lower than the average third-grade reading level across the entire school district.

However, Walters said, most parents surveyed did feel that students were supported when in school.

They also felt the district offered a wide variety of after-school programs, although parents cited several challenges that inhibited participation: cost, transportation and lack of communication — meaning that parents simply don't know what's available to their children.

Some of the challenges were specific to the Hispanic and Latina community.

New Hope Elementary, a school within Zone 4, currently has a student body that is 42 percent Hispanic or Latina. This may suggest a shift in the demographics of the population.

But many Latina mothers expressed concern about communicating with their children's schools and about transportation. If they were to take their children to afterschool activities, they said they would be afraid of getting stopped by the police in routine traffic stops.

Sandra Blefko, ESL family outreach specialist for Orange County Schools, said she was not surprised by the data presented and that many of the families she works with voice similar concerns.

“That’s probably why (parents are) not that involved,” she said. “Not that they don’t care. They just don’t know how.”

Once the data had been presented, McMonigle asked the crowd gathered to help prioritize the trending problems that had been drawn from the survey responses.

The themes listed were: transportation, support for Latino families, college and career preparation, readiness for kindergarten, mentoring, childcare, out of school time, family support and academic support.

Those in the audience were allowed to vote for what they felt were the most pressing needs for their community. Each person was allotted 10 votes and could not use more than four votes for any single topic.

Once all the votes had been cast, four needs came out on top: transportation, childcare, readiness for kindergarten and support for Latino families.

Individuals were then voted to cast votes for suggested strategies to meet these needs — or to suggest their own strategies.

The crowd voted for the following strategies or solutions:

- Transportation: Expand existing bus services, allow more transportation for after-school or summer programs
- Child care: Increase child care subsidies
- Readiness for kindergarten: Expand Pre-K enrollment
- Support for Latino families: Provide more opportunities for Latino parents to learn English.

McMonigle said the votes and the written suggestions would be taken into account as the Family Success Alliance continues to compile data.

Surveys will still be received for another two weeks, and McMonigle said the alliance plans to continue surveying in future years as time passes and needs shift.

“We’re here. We’re staying. We’re committed,” she said of the relatively new initiative.

A similar meeting — with a different set of data that reflects the needs of Zone 6, or Chapel Hill and Carrboro — will be held Thursday, April 9 at Carrboro Elementary School from 5 to 7 p.m. Child care and a light meal will be provided.

The priorities chosen from both zones will be presented at a meeting of the Family Success Alliance Advisory Council on April 20 from 1 to 2:30 p.m. The meeting will be held at the Carrboro Century Center, and it is open to the public.

The Herald-Sun

Volunteers sought for childhood poverty initiative survey

Mar. 10, 2015 @ 04:42 PM

[Katie Jansen](#)

CHAPEL HILL —

The Orange County Health Department is seeking volunteers who can help gather data Saturday for the newly launched Family Success Alliance.

The Family Success Alliance is an effort to bridge gaps in education and alleviate childhood poverty across the county. But before the gaps can be bridged, the Health Department needs to know what they are.

Six zones were originally designated as geographical areas that needed help, and two of those were selected as pilot zones in December.

Surveying has now begun to determine the most pressing needs for the two zones chosen, the area east of I-40 (Zone 4) and Chapel Hill/Carrboro (Zone 6).

Last weekend, about 28 volunteers canvassed the zone east of 40, going door-to-door to speak with residents and administer surveys.

Stacy Shelp of the Orange County Health Department said they were able to collect about completed surveys and tag doors of people who weren't home.

They surveying of Chapel Hill and Carrboro was delayed because of inclement weather, but it has been rescheduled for this Saturday.

Shelp said only 10 volunteers are signed up so far.

"We would love for some volunteers to come out and help and be part of the community and part of the effort this weekend," she said.

After the surveys are completed, needs will be assessed and compiled so that stakeholders and groups involved in the Family Success Alliance can determine which goals to prioritize.

Community meetings will be held next month to discuss the future for both zones.

The meeting for Zone 4 will take place on April 8 from 5 to 7 p.m. at A.L. Stanback Middle School.

The meeting for Zone 6 will take on April 9 from 5 to 7 p.m. at Carrboro Elementary School.

Child care and a light meal will be provided at both meetings.

In the meantime, people are encouraged to take the survey, either in paper form or online at <http://orangecountync.gov/health/fsa.asp>. Surveys are available in English and Spanish.

To volunteer to help on Saturday, call 919-245-2071  919-245-2071.

Family Success Alliance targets poverty in children, families

Posted: Wednesday, January 14, 2015 7:00 am

By Amanda VanDerBroek, News of Orange staff writer, a.vanderbroek@newsfororange.com

The voice of poverty is all too often a quiet one.

But the Family Success Alliance hopes to forge change in Orange County by creating a pipeline of success for children.

On Tuesday, Dec. 16, the group made a step toward that goal by choosing two zones out of six identified within the county to pilot the program.

Those selected were zone 4, an area located between Interstates 40 and 85 in central Orange County—which includes A.L. Stanback Middle School and New Hope Elementary—and zone 6, a densely populated area that encompasses downtown Chapel Hill and Carrboro southwest of N.C. 54.

“The idea is to increase outcomes for children and families that are struggling in Orange County,” Meredith McMonigle, Family Success Alliance project coordinator, said. “There’s not a real deep awareness about the existence of those families in Orange County. I think part of that initial priority is just to start that conversation that those communities exist here, and this project is designed to support those children and families.”

How it started

McMonigle said Family Success Alliance grew out of discussions in spring of 2014 when the county commissioners sought to address the increasing rate of child poverty.

Data provided by the Orange County Health Department shows the percentage of children living in poverty has increased in both the county and state in recent years. In 2011, 16.8 percent of children were living in poverty compared to 9.4 percent in 2001.

McMonigle said looking at successful models across the nation combating poverty like the Harlem Children’s Zone and the Promise Neighborhoods, the county set out to initiate its own program—and Family Success Alliance was born.

Health Department Communications Manager Stacy Shelp said six zones were identified as being locations in the county that had higher rates of poverty.

“The purpose of the Family Success Alliance was, once those zones were identified and then the two selected from the application process, was to really create a pipeline where kids aren’t falling through the cracks anymore, that’s kind of a cradle to either college or career success stream for them,” Shelp said. “So it’s going to be an ongoing, this is going to be a long-term project for the county.”

McMonigle said another key component is that it’s a collaboration based on research.

“So the health department is the catalyst for getting the project off the ground, but we’re sort of serving behind the scenes as a backbone structure to bring together this collaboration,” McMonigle said. “Anybody and any entity that is working to support children and families we’ll want at the table.”

Creating and choosing the zones

Using data on poverty, zones were identified, including four in the northern part of the county.

“So looking at, for example, the number of children using the Orange County Health Department clinics, the number of kids on free or reduced lunch, the number of kids on Medicaid, a couple of other data points, pulling that together and seeing which neighborhoods have the highest concentrations, those indicators,” McMonigle said. “There’s a written application and we spent September and into October doing community outreach to let folks know that this was an opportunity.”

In the end, six zones were identified.

As the alliance started its public phase, members of the grassroots Initiative on Poverty, an effort involving local churches, started taking interest in the project.

“There’s great synergy between these two projects,” McMonigle said. “A number of the people involved in the Initiative on Poverty have participated in submitting zone applications, became zone champions.”

On Dec. 16, the Family Success Alliance Council—an array of representatives including those from the school systems, local government, health care, civic and nonprofit groups —voted to choose two of the proposed zones.

McConigle said each of the zones were scored before the meeting, and members of the alliance then heard presentations from the zone champions—a person representing an assigned zone.

“I think the applications were due sometime in November, and then the council members basically had a month to grade or score each application,” she said. “So all of those scores were compiled and presented at the beginning of the Dec. 16 meeting. Basically it was one round of scoring the applications, then the zones gave their oral presentation, and after that the council members had an opportunity to revise their initial score based on what they learned in the presentation. ... The fact is that the scores didn’t change.”

Zones 4 and 6 were selected—one from each school district—to pilot the program.

“There were six identified, and then two were selected to pilot the project, recognizing that we could not start in all six at the same time,” McMonigle said. “Even though it’s pretty clear that there is a real interest to support each zone over time.”

Where to go from here

McMonigle said the next phase will be looking at the chosen zones even more closely.

Performing a gap analysis, conducting needs assessment and developing a zone identity are all on tap to understand the areas better.

“We will pull all of that information together, present it to the zones,” McMonigle said. “We’ll have a community meeting in March and say this is a snapshot of the things happening in the zones.

“So they will bring the priorities to the council, and then it will be working together—the council and community—to set those priorities and begin, whether it’s specific interventions or policy changes, and that will happen after the April 20 council meeting.”

OC Family Success Alliance Seeks Outreach Volunteers

By [Elizabeth Friend](#)

Posted March 10, 2015 at 2:02 pm



This Saturday, volunteers with the [Family Success Alliance](#) will visit homes in Chapel Hill and Carrboro to help assess community needs.

“We’ll be asking folks questions about how well connected they are with their neighbors and also do they have trouble getting childcare or medical services?” says Orange County Health Department Program Manager Meredith Stewart. “Generally, what do they think are the strengths or challenges in their community to children and families being successful?”

The Family Success Alliance is a new initiative designed address issues of child poverty, health and education through community-specific programs.

“We are doing this as part of a gap analysis for the Family Success Alliance and that gap analysis is looking at the cradle-to-college or career pipeline for children and families in Orange County,” says Stewart.

Last week, volunteers visited Zone 4 in Hillsborough. This weekend, the focus will shift to Zone 6, which spans the boarder between Chapel Hill and Carrboro.

“We will be in Western Chapel Hill into Carrboro,” says Stewart. “We’re talking about the Highway 54-Jones Ferry intersection and around the Northside and Pine Knolls area, that downtown Chapel Hill and Carrboro residential area.”

But in order to make contact with all the homes in those neighborhoods, Stewart says more help is needed. If you’d like to help, call Meredith McMonigal at 919-245-2071  919-245-2071.

Volunteers will meet at Carrboro Town Hall at 9 o'clock Saturday morning to go over the survey and receive red vests and name tags. "We will pair people up into teams of two and give them a designated area to go out to," says Stewart.

The survey is also available online in English and in Spanish:

<http://orangecountync.gov/health/fsa.asp>

The data collected from the outreach effort will be presented back to the community for discussion at a meeting on April 9 at Carrboro Elementary.

Orange County Looks to Harlem Initiative to Help Kids in Poverty

By [Danny Hooley](#)

Posted April 8, 2015 at 8:32 am



Orange County is taking steps to address the effects of poverty on children, “from cradle to college” and beyond.

A county initiative called the Family Success Alliance is modeled after the Harlem Children’s Zone, an acclaimed New York program that works to keep Harlem kids on the track toward college graduation.

“We were inspired by the work of the Harlem Children’s Zone,” said Meredith Stewart, program manager of the Orange County Health Department, “because of their focus on picking a specific geographic area and saying, ‘How do we work with families and children in that geographic area or zone, to really create changes at scale?’

“So we want to see changes in the community, not just at the individual level, but at the community level.”

Two out of six local zones being considered were selected as pilot zones for the project.

Wednesday, from 5 until 7, partners from Zone 4 – the area between I-40 and I-85 in central Orange County – will join members of the FSA for a public meeting at A.L. Stanback Middle School, at 3700 NC 86 South, in Hillsborough.

They'll discuss the findings of door-to-door surveys in Zone 4, which includes Stanback and New Hope Elementary. Fifty-five percent of Zone 4 students receive free or reduced lunch.

“What I might see on a daily level is a parent calling me and telling me they don't have a place to live,” said Aviva Scully, a social worker at Stanback Middle School, “or they need help paying a bill; they've had a shutoff notice; they need help with clothing; lots of calls for help with food.”

A similar meeting will be held Thursday for Zone 6, from 5 until 7 p.m. at Carrboro Elementary School, at 400 Shelton St. The zone stretches from downtown Chapel Hill southwest to Highway 54, and has the highest number of the county's children under 18 living in poverty – nearly 900.

Child care, a light dinner and interpreters will be available at both meetings.



The Herald-Sun

FSA to request \$90K for two initial programs

Apr. 20, 2015 @ 05:30 PM

[Katie Jansen](#)

CARRBORO —

Orange County Health Department staff Monday presented preliminary survey data and the needs that two communities had decided were their highest priorities.

After two and a half months of collecting data through surveys, the staff found that kindergarten readiness, childcare and support for families were needs in both pilot communities, Zones 4 and 6. Each community also had its individual challenges, such as transportation in Zone 4 and lack of affordable housing in Zone 6.

The staff presented those findings to the advisory council for the Family Success Alliance Health and recommended that the advisory council approve a request for the remaining \$90,000 from Orange County's social justice fund.

The money would go toward two initial programs for Zones 4 and 6, said Meredith Stewart, program manager for the Family Success Alliance.

The first program would focus on meeting a need that was a priority in both communities – kindergarten readiness. Stewart said the program, to start over the summer, would expand support for incoming kindergartners. The program would also include a short-term kindergarten prep program for those students who had never attended preschool. They would be introduced to the structure of a school day as well as to their teachers.

Stewart said this program would initially roll out in one elementary school in Hillsborough east of I-40 (Zone 4) and one elementary school in Chapel Hill and Carrboro (Zone 6).

The program would help to establish a cohort of families that the Family Success Alliance could work with until their students were ready for a college or career.

The kindergarten readiness program would cost \$40,000 for each zone and would serve 80 to 100 students in each zone, she said.

If this kindergarten readiness plan weren't feasible, Stewart said that health department staff had suggested a second option.

The Family Success Alliance would work to build a similar cohort of families, but instead of the kindergarten readiness program, families would participate in a literacy program. Staff would work with both parents and students to teach them how to read and work at home together.

This approach would cost about \$50,000 to implement in both zones, Stewart said.

The second program would provide “navigators” who live and work in each community. The navigators’ job would be to connect families to different services that are available and to provide “a unified point of contact and support for zone families,” Stewart said.

The navigators would have a physical location in one of the zone partners’ buildings – for example, a school or a service provider.

The navigator program’s estimated budget is \$10,000 for the remainder of this fiscal year and an additional \$150,000 for fiscal year 2015-16.

Some members of the advisory council seemed hesitant to agree to the recommended kindergarten readiness program, pointing out that the second literacy training option would leave more funds available for wraparound support services.

After much debate, the council approved the request for \$90,000 from the social justice fund. However, the council asked staff to find a program that would implement both kindergarten readiness and literacy training.

The community navigator program will also proceed as suggested.

Work on the programs will begin as early as this summer, and the data collected from the surveys will be compiled into a comprehensive baseline report that will be made publicly available.

The advisory council’s next meeting is scheduled for June 22.

The Herald-Sun

Health workers complete ‘walk’ to California

Apr. 28, 2015 @ 06:45 PM

[Keith Upchurch](#)

DURHAM —

They’ve talked the talk, and now they’ve walked the walk.

Staff members at the Orange County Health Department have reached their goal of walking the distance to Orange County, California — a week ahead of schedule.

As part of a walking challenge, health workers began tracking their steps on March 1 with a goal of covering the width of the United States — 2,505 miles.

Initially, they expected to need eight weeks, but they reached the goal Friday.

The purpose of the walk was to improve employee health, build exercise habits among staff and spread the message about the importance of physical activity, according to Stacy Shelp, public information officer for the health department.

Participants tracked their daily steps using pedometers and other tools.

Shelp tracked many of her steps in the beach sand at Emerald Isle. Depending on the weather, she logged between 4,000 and 12,000 steps each day, averaging about 10 miles a week during the challenge.

“Before the challenge, I probably walked about eight miles a week, but every bit helps,” she said.

Shelp said participants reported feeling better as they stepped up their daily exercise. Many plan to continue the practice in the future.

The department created an interactive map to document their journey and track their progress. The map included pins that linked to public health departments along the way.

The Orange County Health Department got calls from as far away as Colorado and California from groups that heard about the challenge and hope to start similar efforts.

“Orange County, California’s health department said they may even take up the challenge and walk over to North Carolina,” Shelp said



Stacy Shelp records one of her steps on the 'trip' to Orange County, California, this one on the beach at Emerald Isle. (Special to The Herald-Sun/Stacy Shelp)



Orange County Health Department employee Kathleen Goodhand logged the most steps on department's staff six of the seven weeks of the Orange to Orange challenge. She averaged 88,699 steps or 44 miles per week. She's pictured with Jim Northrup, who went along in a support role. (Special to The Herald-Sun/Courtesy Stacy Shelp)

The Herald-Sun

Grant to aid breast cancer screening

May. 18, 2015 @ 03:22 PM

From staff reports

CHAPEL HILL —

The Orange County Health Department has been awarded a \$49,624 community health grant from the Susan G. Komen North Carolina Triangle to the Coast Affiliate. The funding will be used for "Project Access-Orange County," a breast cancer screening project of the health department.

The purpose of the Project Access is to increase access to services for low-income, under/uninsured women who need regular breast cancer screening or have clinical breast exam findings that require follow-up. Project activities include patient education, examination, referral and follow-up for qualified participants. Patients will receive a sliding-fee clinical breast exam and breast health education at one of the two health department clinics (Hillsborough or Chapel Hill) or Piedmont Health Services Carrboro Community Health Center.

Digital screening mammography and follow-up imaging for asymptomatic routine screening and work-up of clinical breast findings (such as lumps) are covered for program participants. All participants will be tracked to ensure a timely continuum of care and support.

Through collaboration/referral from community health care providers/programs, or self-referral, the project seeks to serve 250 patients in 2015-2016.

Project success will be determined by the number of patients who received screening, timely follow-up and referral, and patient satisfaction. This project aims to produce community-wide enhancements in breast health screening for the medically underserved populations of Orange County, including a significant group of recent immigrants/refugees.