



Sparking a health movement across Louisiana

Corporate Social Responsibility
and Sustainability Report: 2013-2014



BLUE CROSS AND BLUE SHIELD OF
LOUISIANA
FOUNDATION

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SPARKING A HEALTH MOVEMENT ACROSS LOUISIANA

The mission at Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana, as the state's oldest and largest health insurer, is to improve the lives of Louisianians. A key part of that mission is the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana Foundation, which manages community outreach and strategic giving to build healthier communities.

Today, that mission is more important than ever, as Louisiana faces some of the highest healthcare costs — and the worst health outcomes — in the nation. Even though Louisianians are learning about healthier lifestyles to prevent obesity and chronic disease, they often struggle to put those lifestyles into action — simply because community norms don't encourage healthy behaviors.

In the past two years, the Blue Cross Foundation focused not only on sparking healthier lifestyles — but also on ways to sustain them.

* SPARKING A HEALTH MOVEMENT ACROSS LOUISIANA



Broad community change

In the past two years, our Foundation has continued to shift its role from mere grantmaking to strategic partnership and widespread community change.

In addition to funding important projects, we launched innovative strategies to bring the right parties together to make meaningful changes in Louisiana communities — changes that *enable* Louisianians to practice healthier lifestyles.

- » One such strategy is our **Challenge for a Healthier Louisiana**. During the first two years of this multi-sector program to reduce obesity, Louisiana communities have sprouted farmers markets, community gardens, walking paths and safe places to play. These holistic shifts are changing the way Louisianians think about food and exercise.
- » Meanwhile, our **Smart Bodies** and **Angel Award** programs made significant strides to improve the health and safety of Louisiana's at-risk children.
- » We also sought **strategic grant opportunities** to enable more people in Louisiana to access healthcare, reduce ethnic and racial disparities, and manage health problems.
- » And Blue Cross continued focusing on **employee giving** and **wellness events** to encourage healthy lifestyles and deploy much-needed resources to Louisiana communities.

Today, Louisiana is seeing a movement of healthy changes spreading across the state. In this report, explore what this movement looks like in Louisiana communities — and what sustainability and social responsibility mean to Blue Cross.



Christy Reeves, Executive Director,
Blue Cross and Blue Shield
of Louisiana Foundation

* EXPLORING THIS REPORT



INTERACTIVE NAVIGATION

If viewing on your desktop, look for this navigation bar at the bottom of each page and click a box to move from section to section.

CHALLENGE
FOR A
HEALTHIER
LOUISIANA

ANGEL
AWARD

SMART
BODIES

IMPACT
GRANTS

EMPLOYEE
GIVING AND
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INTERACTIVE CONTENT



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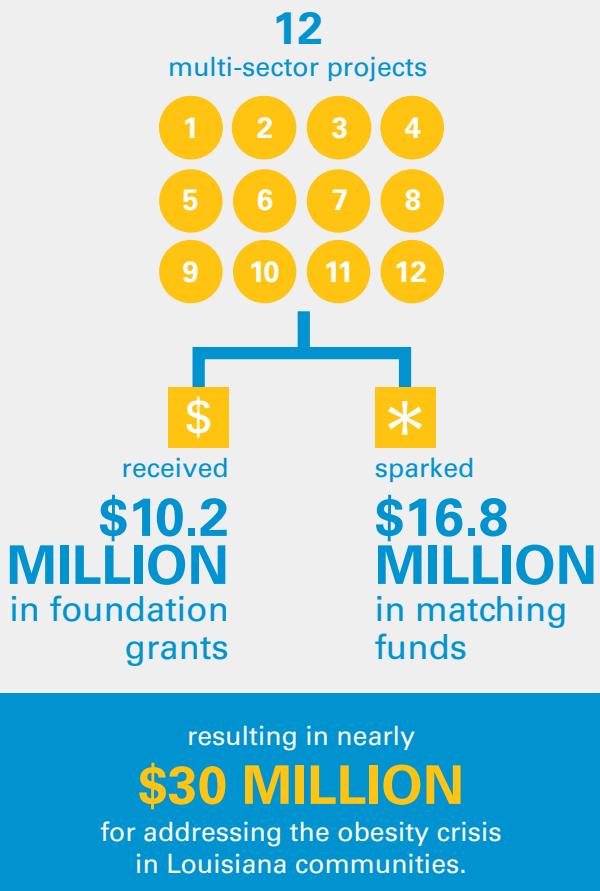


SPARKING A MOVEMENT TO REDUCE OBESITY

Louisiana has one of the nation's highest rates of obesity, which contributes to numerous health problems and increases the cost of healthcare. In response, the Blue Cross Foundation in 2011 created a unique matching grant program called "The Challenge for a Healthier Louisiana."

We issued a challenge to nonprofits across the state: Team up with other organizations to create innovative ways to reduce obesity, and the Foundation will provide the most compelling proposals with grants of up to \$1 million, which have to be matched by other organizations involved in the project.

In 2012, we convened an expert panel of local and national leaders in public health to select 12 multi-sector projects to receive \$10.2 million in grants, to be distributed over a three-year period. Our grants sparked \$16.8 million in matching funds, resulting in nearly \$30 million in targeted funding for addressing the obesity crisis in Louisiana communities.





Statewide Impact

PROJECT NAME	APPLICANT	REGION	FOUNDATION GRANT	MATCHING FUNDS	TOTAL IMPACT
Central Louisiana Local Foods Initiative	Central Louisiana Economic Development Alliance	Alexandria	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$1 million
Fresh Beginnings	Mayor's Healthy City Initiative	Baton Rouge	\$1 million	\$1.2 million	\$2.2 million
Capital Area Pathways Project and Mobile Playground	BREC Foundation	Baton Rouge	\$1 million	\$1.2 million	\$2.2 million
West End Health and Wellness Project	Iberia Development Foundation	Delcambre	\$1 million	\$3.7 million	\$4.7 million
Healthy Living Club	Kiwanis Club of Lafayette Foundation	Lafayette	\$1 million	\$1.5 million	\$2.5 million
Dare to be Healthy	Southwest Louisiana Area Health Education Center	Lake Charles	\$760,000	\$1.2 million	\$2 million
Live Lively LaSalle!	Centennial Cultural Center Inc.	LaSalle	\$1 million	\$1 million	\$2 million
Ouachita Well	YMCA of Northeast Louisiana	Monroe	\$1 million	\$1.4 million	\$2.4 million
Fit NOLA Project	Louisiana Public Health Institute	New Orleans	\$1 million	\$1.2 million	\$2.2 million
GRoW	Greater New Orleans Foundation	New Orleans	\$900,000	\$1.4 million	\$2.3 million
Growing LA	New Orleans Food & Farm Network Inc. and Recirculating Farms Coalition Inc.	New Orleans	\$440,000	\$1.4 million	\$1.8 million
Healthy Green and Into the Outdoors Obesity Prevention Project	One Great River	Shreveport	\$600,000	\$850,000	\$1.4 million
			\$10.2 million	\$16.8 million	\$27 million

Reading on a mobile device?

Please see page 21 for more information on each project.

Dollar figures are approximate.



Changing — and sustaining — the way Louisianians think about food and health

In 2013 and 2014, the first two years of the three-year grant period, the 12 projects made tremendous strides in changing community norms to encourage healthier lifestyles. Even more, these projects — composed of more than 200 partner organizations across the state — are working to sustain their efforts, ensuring that the changes last long beyond the Challenge Grant program. A few examples:



1 Alexandria

Change: The Central Louisiana Local Foods Collective is changing the way people get their food — by putting a focus on locally grown fruits and vegetables. In addition to educating the community, the Collective is working with local farmers to systematically grow the produce and make it available.

Sustained: To engrain the change, the Collective is working with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the LSU Ag Center to train local farmers and develop sustainable ways to grow local, healthy food.



2 New Orleans

Change: In New Orleans, the Growing LA project is improving access to fresh, healthy, affordable food. But that's easier said than done when some inner-city communities simply don't have these resources, and local policies often prevent out-of-the-box solutions.

Sustained: Project leaders changed local policy by securing mobile-vending permits for 100 new food trucks to take whole foods into disadvantaged neighborhoods. The project is also working with policymakers to take blighted land from Hurricane Katrina — and turn it into farming land for growing food.

IMPROVING ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOOD

CHANGING LOCAL POLICY



3 La Salle

Change: To drive healthy lifestyles, the Live Lively LaSalle! project created a robust park infrastructure — even though the parish doesn't have an official parks and recreation department. Project leaders did it by bringing together four municipalities, one tribe, an economic development board and other partners to make lasting community changes, such as walking trails, outdoor fitness equipment and a splash park that's so fun that kids don't even know they're exercising.

Sustained: Looking beyond their own project, the leaders of Live Lively LaSalle! are joining forces with a community foundation and other local change-makers to create an integrated strategic plan for supporting healthy lifestyles and reducing chronic disease.

COLLABORATING WITH OTHER AGENCIES

"When the Challenge Grant opportunity arose, there were all sorts of rumblings and positive developments underway on food access and healthy living. What the grant has accomplished — is accomplishing — goes well beyond helping to fund those efforts. It has harnessed and directed all that energy into a coherent project and challenged us to be far more ambitious and imaginative than we otherwise would have been."

— Broderick Bagert, lead organizer of Together Baton Rouge, a partner in Fresh Beginnings

4 Baton Rouge

Change: From schools to corner stores to farmers markets, Fresh Beginnings is increasing the availability of fresh, healthy foods in underserved areas of the community.

Sustained: To sustain its impact, the project created a cross-sector Food Access Policy Commission, which is advising the mayor on long-term solutions for healthy food access in North and Old South Baton Rouge. Moreover, based on its great work so far, Fresh Beginnings received a grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to take fresh-from-the-farm fruits and vegetables into local schools. National organizations such as the American Heart Association and the Food Trust are also investing in the project's solutions for healthy food access.

LEARN MORE

[Click here](#) to read other stories about how the 12 Challenge Grant projects are reducing obesity in Louisiana communities.



BY THE NUMBERS

Improving the shape of Louisiana communities

The Blue Cross Foundation is partnering with Pennington Biomedical Research Center, known for its work in combating obesity, to administer the Challenge Grants, measure their effectiveness and monitor progress. Evaluation in the past two years shows that the 12 projects are making significant, sustainable changes to foster healthy lifestyles in Louisiana communities:

**23**miles of paved
biking and
walking paths**325,147**
pounds of
fresh produce
distributed**341**
community
health and
nutrition
meetings**47**
community and
school gardens
planted**13**
local farmers
markets**153**cooking and
nutrition classes**24**facilities
furnished with
new fitness
equipment**15**
health and
fitness policy
councils**805**
community
runs and
exercise events**38**
school and
after-school
health and
safety programs*continued ▶*

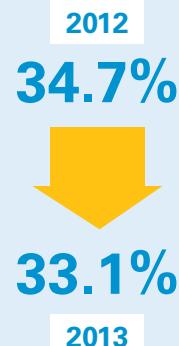


BY THE NUMBERS

The movement across the state, sparked by the Challenge for a Healthier Louisiana, is improving access to healthy foods and activities:

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, **Louisiana had the nation's second-biggest jump in farmers markets in 2013 and 2014**, second only to Tennessee. The USDA encourages farmers markets as a sustainable way for consumers to access fresh, healthy produce while building business relationships with local farmers.

The Louisiana obesity rate is declining, according to a [study](#) by the Trust for America's Health and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. In 2013, Louisiana was No. 6 in the nation for the rate of adult obesity, down from No. 1 in 2012.



West End Health & Wellness Project — Lydia Martin (left), strategic initiatives manager at the Blue Cross Foundation, visits a community market with project partners Phillip Lanza, greenhouse manager at Iberia Community Gardens, and Mary Himel, project manager at the Heirloom Produce Cooperative. The Foundation's support of the West End Health & Wellness Project has spurred other changes throughout the New Iberia community, including a food hub to make the West End project's fresh produce available to more people.



SPARKING A MOVEMENT TO IMPROVE CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY

In the past two years, we continued our longstanding tradition of the annual Angel Award, which recognizes Louisiana volunteers — or Angels — who perform extraordinary work for at-risk children. These children face dire issues from hunger and poverty to drugs and abuse.

In addition to increasing awareness of children's needs in underserved communities, the Foundation's recognition provides much-needed resources to address them — in the form of a \$20,000 grant for each honoree's charity.

Some of our employees are Angels too, and we call them "Blue Angels." We recognized two Blue Angels in the past two years for their work on behalf of Louisiana's children, and we awarded each of their charities a grant of \$5,000.

2013-2014

Angels:

18

Grants:

\$330,000

Communities:

Baton Rouge, Denham Springs, Keithville, Kenner, Lafayette, Marrero, New Orleans, River Ridge, Shreveport

2013

Jacob Nichols

John Smith

Beth Clark

Jamie Tindle

Paula LaCour

Pam Frey

Carlos Naranjo

Babs Johnson

2014

Laura Domingue

Jennifer Maggio

Nancy Zito

Isaac McFarland

Debbie & Hank Perret

Ashley Belding

Jackie Silverman

Brian Hunter

Blue Angel:

Charles Landreneau Laura Landry



ANGEL AWARD



2014 honoree Ashley Belding creates a better life for New Orleans children who have pulmonary disorders.

2014 honoree Brian Hunter runs a community center that serves one of the poorest neighborhoods in Shreveport.



LEARN MORE

[Click here](#) to get to know the 2013 and 2014 Angels.



Marking 20 years of the Angel Award with \$1 million in grants

Since 1995, the Foundation has recognized 162 Angels throughout Louisiana and provided more than \$1.8 million to their charities. And we want to continue partnering with these Angels to make Louisiana a healthier place.

Therefore, to commemorate the approaching 20th anniversary of the Angel Award, we announced a special 2015 grant program — designed especially for past Angels whose organizations need continued assistance.

In this special program, the Foundation is awarding 20 grants of \$50,000 to 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations that are affiliated with a past Angel Award honoree. We are funding innovative projects that improve children's health and safety through sustainable changes to community policies, social norms and children's physical environment.

In this section, meet a few Angels from throughout the years.



2005

Kim Byas-Dilosa, Harvey, New Orleans

Intervention, prevention and mentoring for New Orleans youth

“My life was at a screeching halt when I received my Angel Award. After Hurricane Katrina, I had no home — I had lost everything — and schools were totally devastated. However, I was the recipient of an award that said, ‘You have to make it. You will make it — for the kids’ sake.’

My Angel Award drew other funders to me, and we helped kids express their Katrina anxieties through the arts. So not only did the award help keep me sane — it ultimately helped keep an entire community sane when we needed it most.”



ANGEL AWARD



2009

Vicki Ellis, Baton Rouge

A unique residence that provides life skills to children and their families

“Being an Angel Award recipient garnered new opportunities for Heritage Ranch by increasing our credibility, helping us develop relationships with new community partners and increasing awareness of our mission.

I hope to leave a legacy of hope and generational change through the lives of the youth served at Heritage Ranch — a legacy that strengthens and encourages them to overcome life's adversity, discover their unique potential and become productive members of society.”



1996

Geri Christ Landry, Lake Charles

Helping children with autism

“At the time I received the award, a group of parents and professionals had just met to develop a nonprofit that would provide homes for people with autism in Southwest Louisiana. We had not received our nonprofit status from the government, so I donated my funds to the Southwest Autism Chapter, a nonprofit that I helped start over 40 years ago. The funds from the award went toward starting Camp Hopen, a free camp for people with autism. The camp continues to host many wonderful children and adults each year.”



SPARKING A MOVEMENT TO PREVENT CHILDHOOD OBESITY



Photo: LSU Ag Center

Obesity is a public-health issue that threatens Louisianians of all ages. That's why the Blue Cross Foundation continued its Smart Bodies program, which teaches elementary-school children throughout the state about the importance of healthy eating and physical activity.

This program, conducted in partnership with the LSU Ag Center, is a great complement to our Challenge for a Healthier Louisiana: After learning about healthy lifestyles in school, children are now going home to communities that enable them to put those principles into action. They're finding more access to fresh, healthy food and safe places to play.



How does Smart Bodies work?

Integrating classroom activities with hands-on learning, Smart Bodies has three parts:

1) The Louisiana Body Walk

This walk-through exhibit invites children to explore the functions of the human body and the effects that different foods have on each organ.

2) The OrganWise Guys

These fun characters appear in lessons, books, games and videos that teach children how healthy behavior improves their bodies.

3) 2 Step 4 Kids

This educational tool incorporates the principles of Blue Cross' Louisiana 2 Step wellness program by integrating short bouts of physical activity with academic lessons. The Louisiana 2 Step encourages two simple steps to better health: eat right and move more.

2013-2014

Estimated reach of the program:

Schools:

85

Students:

30,000

Teachers:

1,500

Volunteers:

1,500

Public events:

10

reaching more than
7,000 additional
youth and adults



"My students absolutely loved participating in the Smart Bodies program. They were excited to chart their consumption of vegetables and fruit each day, as well as exercise daily. My students are encouraging each other to eat healthy at lunch."

— Sarabeth Accardo, third-grade teacher, Lyon Elementary, Covington





Teaching children to practice healthy behaviors

Evaluation in the past two years shows that Smart Bodies is helping Louisiana children adopt healthy lifestyles:

- » Students said they intend to drink milk and water instead of soda.
- » 84% of Body Walk participants said they would try a vegetable at their next meal.
- » Students reported they understand the importance of exercise to maintain health.
- » Students recalled the importance of drinking eight glasses of water a day.

"I will keep my heart healthy by playing hard and eating healthy food like apples and green beans and drinks like milk and water."

— David, first-grade student, Woodlake Elementary, Mandeville



A walk through the body — As part of The Louisiana Body Walk, students visit the small intestine, where they learn about the absorption of nutrients.



SPARKING A MOVEMENT TO ADDRESS CRITICAL HEALTH ISSUES

The Blue Cross Foundation has long partnered with nonprofits throughout the state to improve public health, reduce barriers to care for the uninsured, improve health literacy, train medical professionals and otherwise improve health and education in Louisiana communities.

In the past two years, however, we have adjusted our approach to grantmaking. While we continue to seek strategic grant opportunities to address the greatest health issues facing Louisiana residents, we're shifting from a portfolio of smaller, more scattershot grants to a portfolio of larger, more focused grants. With the Challenge for a Healthier Louisiana, for example, we set our sights squarely on a robust grant program to move the needle on obesity.

To accommodate this sharper focus, we suspended the Foundation's Impact Grants program in 2013. Meanwhile, we continue to seek select partnerships, by invitation only, with nonprofits that are developing innovative, measurable ways to address critical public-health issues.

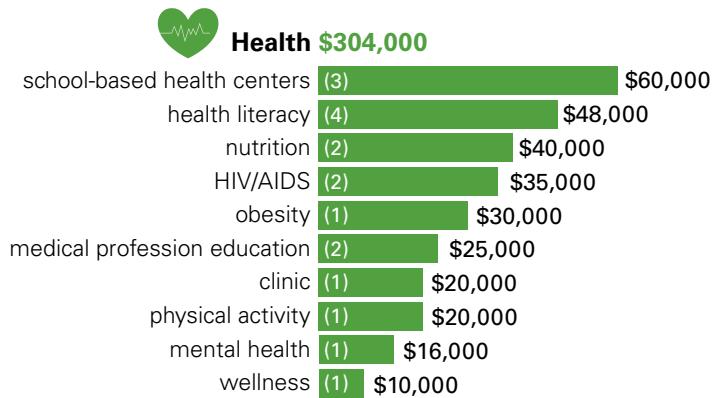
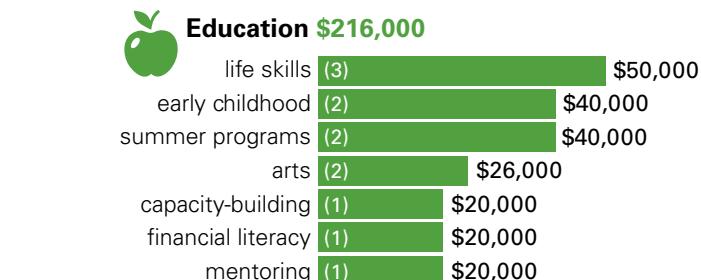
Grants requested
\$1,950,000

63

Grants approved
\$520,000

30

2013





EMPLOYEE GIVING AND COMMUNITY WELLNESS

SPARKING A MOVEMENT TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN LOUISIANA



Team Blue at the Louisiana Special Olympics

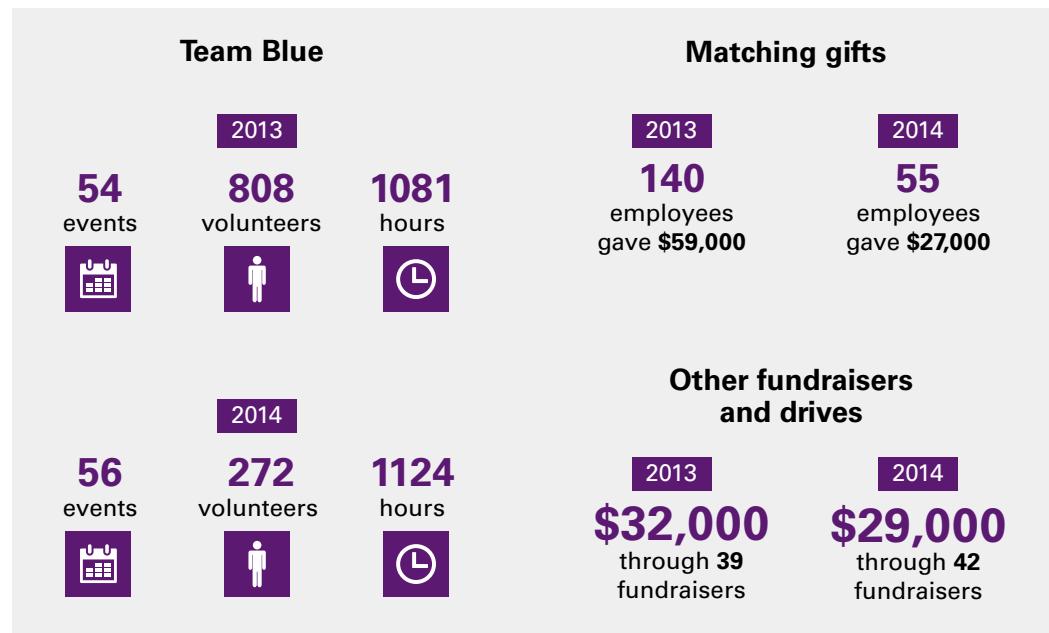
Employee giving

An important part of corporate social responsibility at Blue Cross is our employees, who are **passionate about donating their time and money to Louisiana communities.**

In 2013 and 2014, our league of employee volunteers, called Team Blue, worked on projects such as school and playground maintenance, youth empowerment, health conferences and more.

Meanwhile, through the corporate Matching Gift Program, Blue Cross employees, retirees and board members donated thousands of dollars to 501(c)(3) organizations that are near and dear to their heart — and the company matched those gifts dollar-for-dollar. Recipients in the past two years range from the American Diabetes Association and St. Vincent de Paul to Junior Achievement, Healing Place Serve and the Capital Area United Way.

Blue Cross employees also supported other community fundraisers and drives — for items such as school uniforms, toys, nonperishable food and other community needs.



Wellness

In 2013, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana supported nearly **50 wellness events** throughout Louisiana, including health fairs, school events and workplace activities. We also distributed more than **20,000 pedometers and other tools** to encourage active living and healthy eating.



Challenge Grant: Statewide impact

PROJECT NAME	DESCRIPTION	PROJECT NAME	DESCRIPTION
Central Louisiana Local Foods Initiative	Increase availability and consumption of locally grown fruits and vegetables while enhancing opportunities for local farmers.	Live Lively LaSalle!	Introduce skate parks, basketball courts, healthy menu items and other changes for education, outreach and wellness.
Fresh Beginnings	Introduce healthy-lifestyle courses in elementary schools, convenient neighborhood access to fresh and healthy foods, and new policies to address “food deserts.”	Ouachita Well	Change public policy and community norms while introducing services for obese Louisianians, especially children and low-income families.
Capital Area Pathways Project and Mobile Playground	Provide healthy recreational options through the construction of the Wards Creek Trail portion of the Capital Area Pathways Project, along with a mobile recreation unit for “play deserts.”	Fit NOLA Project	Improve the health of low-income families through food vouchers for farmers markets, community-centered health clinics and new opportunities for family-oriented recreation.
West End Health and Wellness Project	Create an open-air seafood and farmers market, plus a network of garden co-ops, to provide healthy food options for the West End of New Iberia.	GRoW	Create community hubs that engage New Orleans youth in physical activities, nutritional programs and healthy lifestyle choices.
Healthy Living Club	Introduce parks, bike trails, sidewalks, healthy cooking demonstrations and more to create a healthier community.	Growing LA	Build an urban farming and food center for affordable, accessible sources of local, fresh food.
Dare to be Healthy	Develop sidewalks, trails, community gardens, health education and other programs for children and adults.	Healthy Green and Into the Outdoors Obesity Prevention Project	Provide health education to children while teaching families to sustain gardens and orchards.



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