

# CHALLENGE

## FOR A HEALTHIER LOUISIANA

*Communities Working Together to Fight Obesity*







## A Message from Our President

In 2012, the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana Foundation's board of directors issued a bold challenge to its staff: bring enough resources to bear to make a change in the skyrocketing childhood obesity rates of our state.

Using the model of collective impact, the staff of the Foundation got to work in the field, meeting partners, planning and refining past grant programs to meet this ambitious challenge. In the end, 12 major initiatives were selected to take the first steps in improving Louisiana's health at the grassroots level.

Now that we've wrapped up our project, we have promising results to report and plenty of hard-earned lessons to share with any and all who might want to take the next steps with us.

We are deeply proud of our partners across the state who took part in this extraordinary work. Credit for the exceptional work you find in these pages belongs to them. We are also indebted to Pennington Biomedical Research Center in Baton Rouge for their invaluable guidance throughout the program.

On the Foundation's end, we are grateful to two past staff members who oversaw much of the work on Challenge for a Healthier Louisiana – Christy Reeves, our former executive director, and Lydia Martin, the foundation initiatives manager who worked directly with Challenge Grant partners throughout the process.

If you're considering a collective impact approach to major health issues, we would love to hear from you and share our work. You can reach the Foundation at [BCBSLAFoundation@bcbsla.com](mailto:BCBSLAFoundation@bcbsla.com) or by phone at 225-298-7979.



Michael Tipton, BCBSLA Foundation President

## OVERVIEW

Over the last three years, the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana Foundation has invested \$10.2 million in 12 public-private partnerships as part of the Challenge for a Healthier Louisiana grant program.

Our goal: to reverse devastating trends in Louisiana's health through innovative, locally driven projects that build communities that eat right and move more, with a special emphasis on high risk, low income areas.

Our partners – from the City of New Orleans (population: 1.1 million) to the Town of Tullos (population: 419) – forged alliances with 180 local agencies and raised an additional \$16.8 million in funding. We've spent thousands of hours together listening, dreaming, scheming, and rolling out wildly ambitious plans. The results speak for themselves:



# EVALUATION PARTNERS

Our research partners at Pennington Biomedical Research Center tracked our progress every step of the way – and their reporting indicates public-philanthropic partnerships are the key to turning the tide on obesity. In our Challenge Grant communities, participants are now twice as likely to exercise regularly and 2.5 times as likely to eat more vegetables.

For too long, Louisiana has lingered at the bottom of poverty and obesity trend lines. Through Challenge for a Healthier Louisiana, our partners have laid the groundwork for improving the health of their friends, families and neighbors.

## Challenge Grant Investments by Region

REGION	BCBSLA FOUNDATION	MATCHING FUNDS	TOTAL AREA AMOUNT
○	○	○	○
Alexandria	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$1,000,000
Baton Rouge	\$2,000,000	\$2,466,994	\$4,466,994
Lafayette	\$1,000,000	\$1,512,655	\$2,512,655
Lake Charles	\$759,977	\$1,269,621	\$2,029,598
Monroe	\$999,716	\$1,416,506	\$2,416,222
New Orleans	\$2,365,267	\$4,072,491	\$6,437,758
Shreveport	\$588,485	\$849,081	\$1,437,566
Delcambre	\$1,000,000	\$3,762,616	\$4,762,616
LaSalle	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$2,000,000
TOTAL	\$10,213,445	\$16,849,964	\$27,036,409

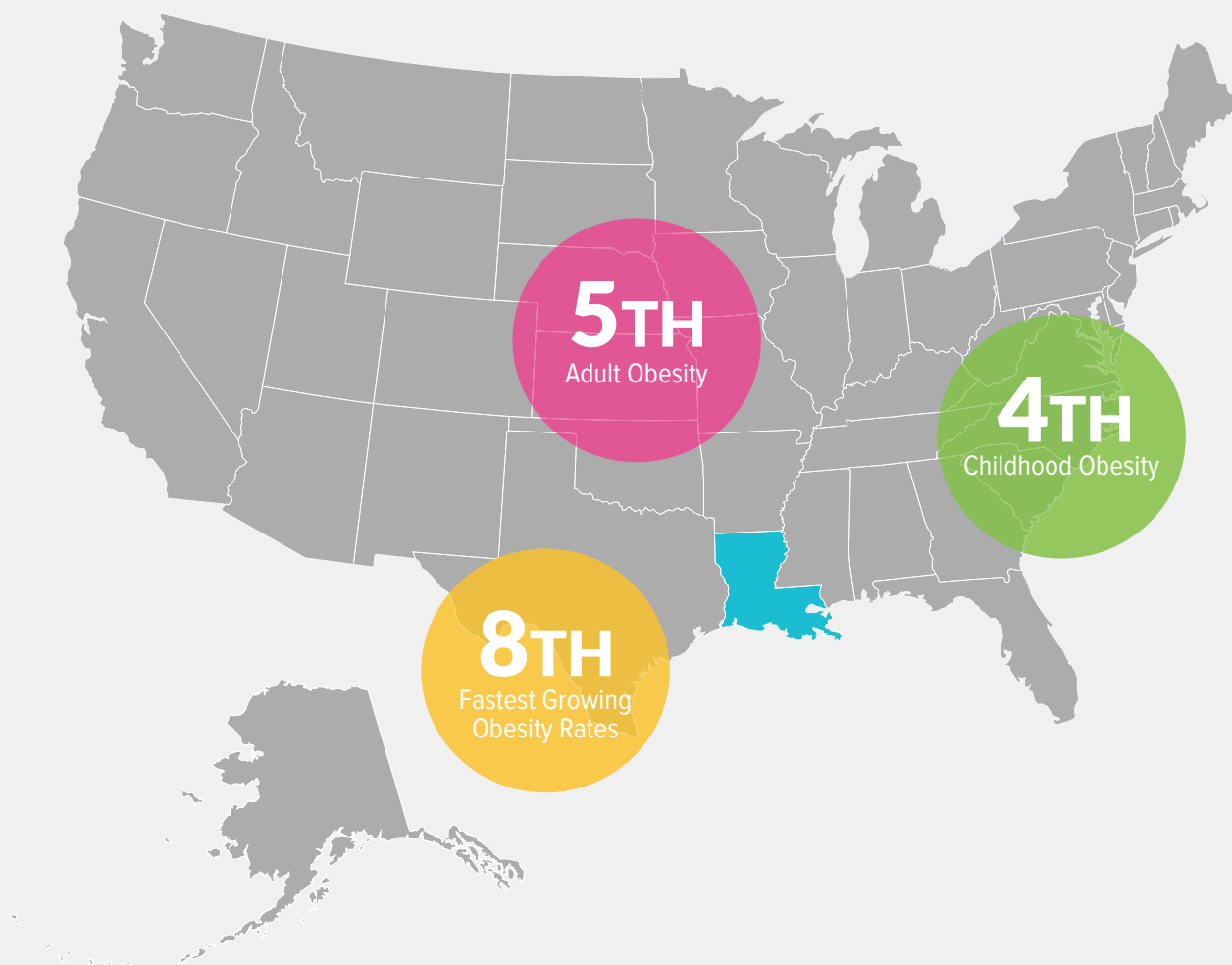


## LOUISIANA'S OBESITY EPIDEMIC

Louisiana has one of the nation's highest obesity rates. Obesity increases the risk for type 2 diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, depression and other serious health problems — which increases our state's healthcare costs.

Most experts agree that obesity is the result of an ongoing energy imbalance. It occurs when energy intake exceeds expenditure. Thus, physical activity and healthy eating are the keys to preventing obesity.

However, from a public health perspective, the problem is much more complex. At the individual level, behavior drives energy balance, but our environment shapes our decisions to be physically active or to eat right. Communities, neighborhoods, schools, homes and workplace environments can all influence our lifestyle choices.



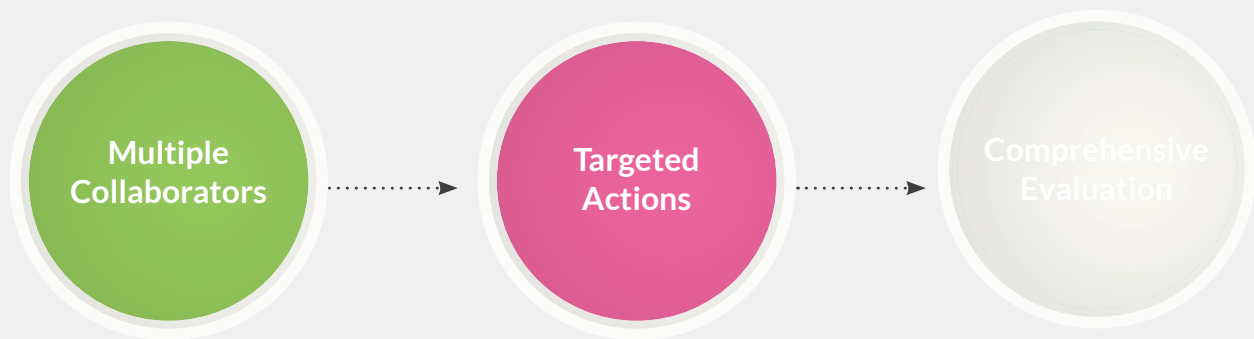
### The impact of obesity:

- ✿ In Louisiana, one in three adults are obese
- ✿ One in five children are obese
- ✿ By 2012, Louisiana had spent \$1.4 billion on overweight and obesity-related medical expenses
- ✿ Obesity is the second leading cause of preventable death in the United States.

Source: Centers for Disease Control (2012)

## KEY ELEMENTS TO SUCCESS

In 2012, Louisiana faced an urgent need for concerted public health action regarding obesity. We believed that we could address the root causes of obesity through integrated changes in policies, norms, practices, social supports and the physical environment – in short, building a community-level groundswell that encouraged healthy behavior in friends, families and neighbors.



### Key elements to success:

**Multiple collaborators** – Coalitions representing the entire community would need to come together, coordinate and collaborate to make a sustainable change. While one agency could lead, there would need to be consensus and buy-in in government, social and business sectors.

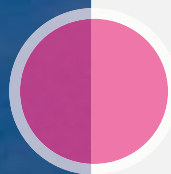
**Targeted action** – As funders, we allowed for a broad range of grant activities, as long as they were targeted and specific to a community and its particular needs and not cookie-cutter, turnkey solutions.

**Comprehensive evaluation** – At every step, we wanted to be sure we were collecting data that would support and validate our efforts for future use. We imposed a reporting burden on our grantees, but also contracted with Pennington Biomedical Research Center to provide scientifically sound analysis on our successes and needs for improvement.

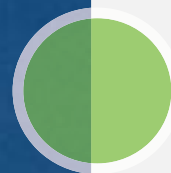
### Potential Project Activities

- ✿ Encouraging healthy lifestyles
- ✿ Promoting physical activity
- ✿ Promoting fitness and nutrition education
- ✿ Supporting parental/family involvement in healthy living
- ✿ Providing access to safe facilities and neighborhoods for physical activity

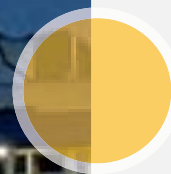
# OUR PARTNERSHIP WITH PENNINGTON BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH CENTER



Internationally-recognized research center at the forefront of understanding the causes of obesity and associated chronic diseases



Proven expertise in developing comprehensive, evidence-based prevention programs



Recognized leader statewide for childhood obesity prevention

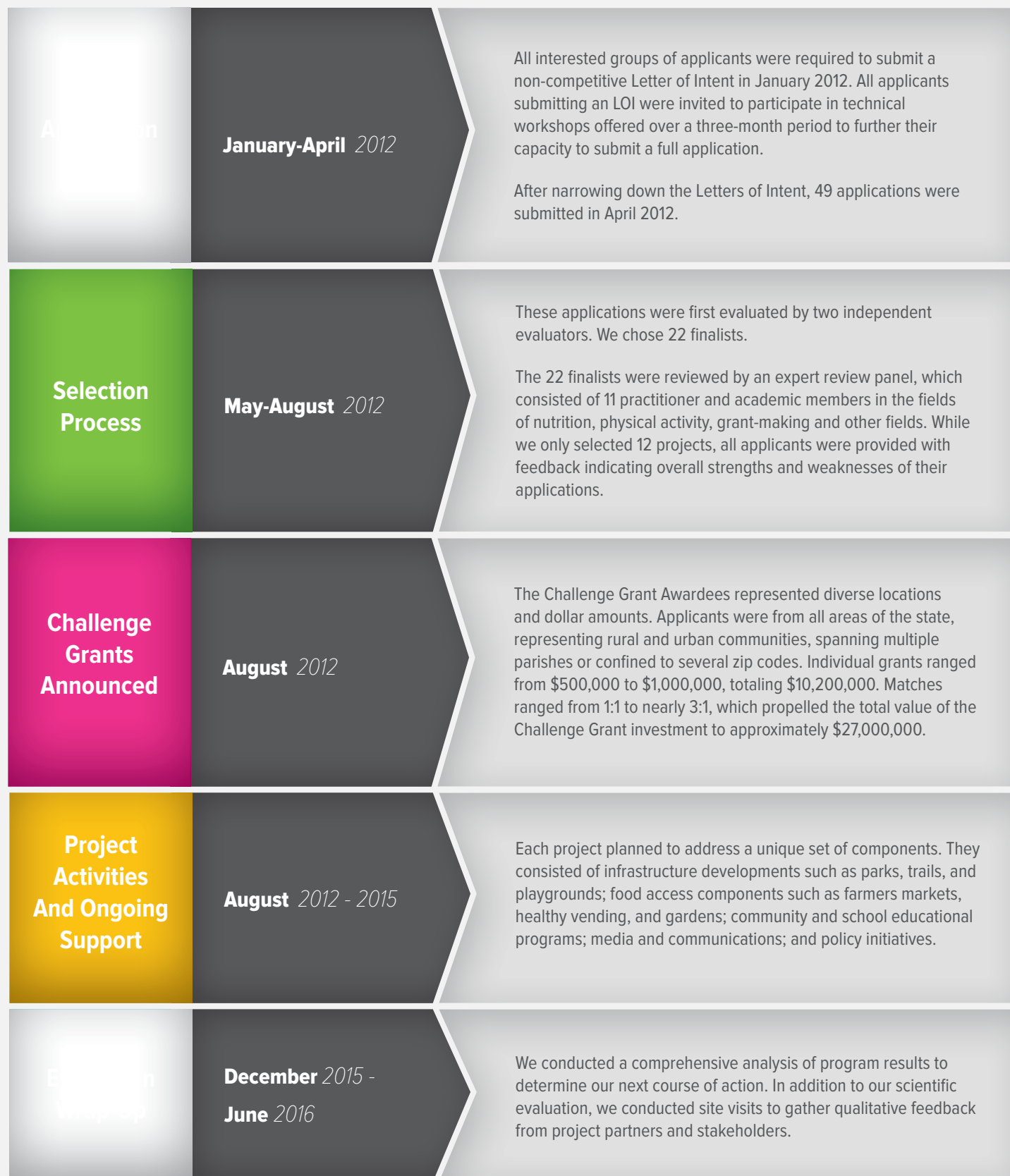
Early on in the process, we identified a need for administrative support and comprehensive program evaluation. We turned to Pennington Biomedical Research Center in Baton Rouge.

Pennington's mission is to discover the triggers of chronic diseases through innovative research that improves human health across the lifespan. At the forefront of medical discovery as it relates to understanding the causes of obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, cancer and dementia, Pennington Biomedical is a campus of Louisiana State University and conducts basic, clinical and population research.

The research enterprise at the center includes approximately 70 faculty and more than 15 post-doctoral fellows who comprise a network of 40 laboratories supported by lab technicians, nurses, dietitians and support personnel, and 13 highly specialized core service facilities. The center's 450 employees perform research activities in state-of-the-art facilities on the 222-acre campus located in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.



# PROGRAM TIMELINE



## STATEWIDE INVESTMENTS




### Project Activities

- ✱ Building or improving trails, playgrounds and parks
- ✱ Creating or expanding farmers markets, including creating incentive programs/benefits
- ✱ Providing healthy food service in restaurants, schools, vending machines and food banks
- ✱ Creating community, school and home gardens
- ✱ Providing healthy living education in schools and in the community
- ✱ Providing food policy or advocacy

# CASE STUDIES

*BY REGION*



**Fresh Beginnings** was a collaborative led by the Mayor's Healthy City Initiative targeting three high-need zip codes in North Baton Rouge. The project aimed to improve access to fresh, healthy foods by starting a mobile farmers market, convening a Food Access Policy Commission, and assisting corner stores in offering fresh produce. In addition, the project increased opportunities for physical activity at four elementary schools by providing equipment and training teachers.



## Highlights:

### Food Access Policy Commission (FAPC)

- 13 FAPC meetings + additional outreach events involving over 500 community members
- Garnered public support from political leaders, for the recommendations to establish a “Grocery Express” route operated by the city’s public transit, as well as a financing initiative to attract food retail in target areas

### Mobile Farmers Market

- One new truck and trailer with five regular stops
- Over \$97,000 in sales from 2013 to 2015

### In-school Physical Activity

- 70 teachers trained to integrate activity and nutrition into the classroom
- Indoor and outdoor exercise equipment installed in four elementary schools serving 1,882 children

## Project Partners

- ✿ Mayor’s Healthy City Initiative
- ✿ EBR Redevelopment Authority
- ✿ Together Baton Rouge
- ✿ Big River Economic & Agricultural Development Alliance
- ✿ Project Fit America
- ✿ Evelyn J. Daniel Foundation
- ✿ EBR Parish School System
- ✿ Cooking Matters for Families
- ✿ Our Lady of the Lake Hospital
- ✿ BREC on the Geaux
- ✿ Slow Food Baton Rouge
- ✿ LSU AgCenter
- ✿ Southern Univ AgCenter
- ✿ LA Culinary Institute

# CENTRAL LOUISIANA LOCAL FOODS INITIATIVE

## ALEXANDRIA



The Central Louisiana Local Foods Initiative was a collaborative led by the Central Louisiana Economic Development Alliance (CLEDA). The project aimed to facilitate the growth of a food economy in the nine-parish region of Central LA, where local produce is preferred by citizens and available in public venues. This aim was accomplished through farmer entrepreneurship training, farmers market enhancements, food distribution programs, and other forms of community organizing and leadership development.

## Highlights:

### Increased Access to Fresh Food

- Equipped three existing farmers markets to accept electronic payments and offer incentive programs for youth and EBT/SNAP clients
- Helped start two new farmers markets that are now operated by non-grantee leadership
- Connected 10 restaurants with local farmers

### Farmer Coaching & Training

- Provided a total of 469 hours of business coaching to 15 existing farmers
- Held 19 beginning farmer workshops

### Region-wide Advocacy & Policy

- Developed a local food brand called Fresh Central: Grown in the Heart of Central Louisiana
- Convened 73 Eat Local (local food coalition) meetings across nine parishes
- Convened a regional food policy council, which met 26 times
- Hosted three annual – plus one special edition – Foodapalooza events


## Project Partners

- ✱ Central Louisiana Economic Development Alliance
- ✱ The Rapides Foundation
- ✱ Food Bank of Central Louisiana
- ✱ Market Umbrella
- ✱ Louisiana Public Health Institute
- ✱ Inglewood Farm
- ✱ Cane River Green Market
- ✱ Leesville Main Street Market
- ✱ Winn Farmers Market
- ✱ Winnfield Housing Authority
- ✱ Winn Parish Health Initiatives Coalition
- ✱ LSU AgCenter
- ✱ Social Security Administration
- ✱ LA Dept. of Children and Family Services, WIC
- ✱ Catholic Charities
- ✱ Winn Parish Council on Aging
- ✱ Natchitoches Parish Council on Aging
- ✱ Winn Parish School District
- ✱ Natchitoches Parish School District
- ✱ Winn Parish Health Unit
- ✱ Natchitoches Parish Health Unit
- ✱ Fort Polk Net Zero Waste
- ✱ LA Young Farmers Coalition



## LIVE LIVELY LASALLE!

LASALLE PARISH

A young boy with light brown hair, wearing a red t-shirt and patterned swim trunks, is playing in a colorful water fountain. He is holding a large orange ball and looking towards the camera. Water is spraying from several colorful pipes (green, blue, orange) around him. Another child is partially visible in the background.

**Live Lively LaSalle!** was a uniquely inclusive and equitable collaboration of LaSalle Parish government, recreation districts, medical centers, and the Jena Band of Choctaw. It was aimed at increasing opportunities for routine physical activity and healthier eating within all communities and across all age groups of this rural parish (population <15,000). The project improved and promoted fitness and recreational opportunities in each parish town; it facilitated and promoted new farmers markets and availability of healthier foods. Live Lively LaSalle! brought parish residents together in the spirit of cooperation, empowerment and healthy lifestyles.



## Highlights:

### Park Improvements

- Eight parks + one tribal property throughout the parish:
- 2.5 miles of walking/biking trails adjacent to schools and neighborhoods
- Playground and fitness equipment
- State-of-the-art splash park
- Frisbee-golf course; basketball court; skate path
- Amenities (restrooms, water fountains, picnic tables, meeting rooms), shade coverings, landscaping, lighting, security cameras, public address systems

### Farmers Markets

- Constructed two market pavilions
- Developed two seasonal markets

### Promotion of Culture of Health

- Community wellness education through clubs and organizations
- Routine healthy lifestyle messaging in local media

### Community Events

- Numerous health/fitness-based activities
- Increased community leadership opportunities

### Technical Assistance to Local Restaurants

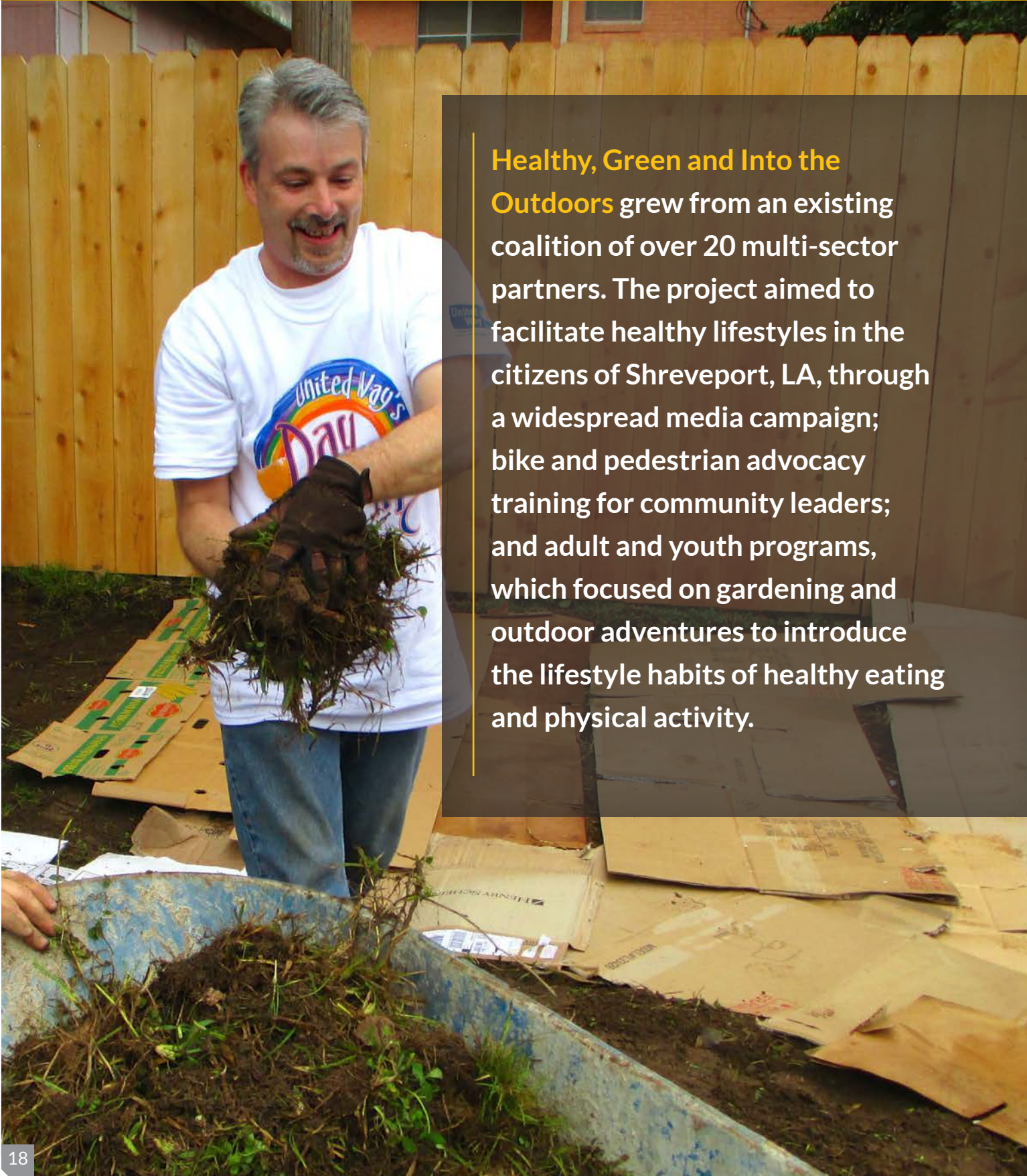
- Initiation and marketing of healthier menu items

## Project Partners

- ✿ Centennial Cultural Center
- ✿ LaSalle Economic Dev. Dist.  
Town of Jena
- ✿ Town of Olla
- ✿ Town of Tullos
- ✿ Town of Urania
- ✿ Jena Band of Choctaw
- ✿ Recreation District #10
- ✿ Recreation District #22
- ✿ Hardtner Medical Center
- ✿ LaSalle Parish Police Jury
- ✿ LSU AgCenter
- ✿ LaSalle Parish 4-H
- ✿ Boy Scouts
- ✿ YMCA
- ✿ The Jena Times
- ✿ Sheriff's Department
- ✿ Kiwanis Club of Jena

# HEALTHY, GREEN AND INTO THE OUTDOORS

## SHREVEPORT



**Healthy, Green and Into the Outdoors** grew from an existing coalition of over 20 multi-sector partners. The project aimed to facilitate healthy lifestyles in the citizens of Shreveport, LA, through a widespread media campaign; bike and pedestrian advocacy training for community leaders; and adult and youth programs, which focused on gardening and outdoor adventures to introduce the lifestyle habits of healthy eating and physical activity.

## Highlights:

### Youth Corps & Health Trekker Challenge

- Outdoor adventure activities and leadership development for 82 teenagers

### Garden Learning Communities

- 11 gardens built or enhanced
- Model Site: Everyday Choices Garden & Learning Center at MLK Health Center

### Mobile Market

- 4,800 pounds of produce sold

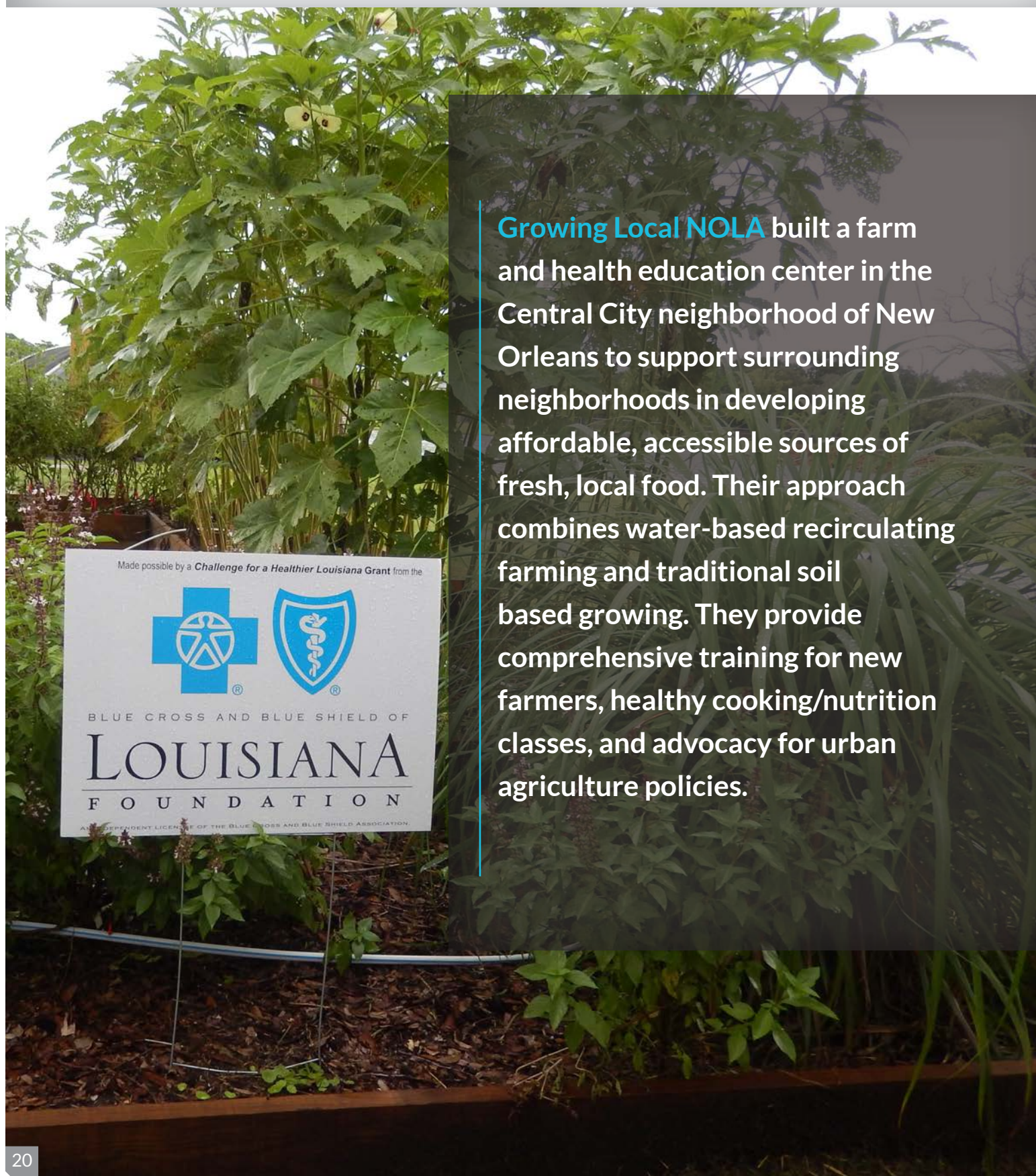
### Media Campaign partnership with KTBS

- Approximately 9,000 TV spots
- Production of two web forums
- HGIO Splash Page within KTBS website, which averages 3.5 million views per month

## Project Partners

- ✿ One Great River
- ✿ Community Foundation of North Louisiana
- ✿ Shreveport Green
- ✿ Martin Luther King Health Center
- ✿ LSU Shreveport Kinesiology & Health Sciences
- ✿ KTBS Channel 3
- ✿ YMCA of Northwest Louisiana
- ✿ LSU Health Shreveport Pediatrics
- ✿ Volunteers of America
- ✿ LSU AgCenter
- ✿ Food Bank of Northwest Louisiana
- ✿ Fuller Center for Housing
- ✿ Louisiana Association of Nonprofit Organizations
- ✿ St. Luke's Episcopal Medical Ministry
- ✿ City of Shreveport
- ✿ Lake Bistineau State Park
- ✿ Red River Revel





**Growing Local NOLA** built a farm and health education center in the Central City neighborhood of New Orleans to support surrounding neighborhoods in developing affordable, accessible sources of fresh, local food. Their approach combines water-based recirculating farming and traditional soil based growing. They provide comprehensive training for new farmers, healthy cooking/nutrition classes, and advocacy for urban agriculture policies.



## Highlights:

### Growing Local NOLA Urban Farm and Health Education Center

- Two blighted lots transformed to edible green spaces in Central City, New Orleans
- Public campus: 1/2 acre community garden consisting of solar powered buildings, raised garden beds, a demonstration aquaponics system, a chicken coop, recycling and compost bins, meeting space and exercise space
- Urban market farm: 1/2 acre consisting of a greenhouse, hoopouses, beehives and in-ground garden beds; grows food to sell or use at the public campus

### Advocacy and Policy Accomplishments

- Farm to School and the LA State Legislature: Minimum Purchase Threshold for schools raised to the federal level so that schools can purchase more local, fresh food directly from farmers
- City Council and the Mayor's Office Comprehensive City Zoning Ordinance: changed zoning to more easily allow urban agriculture and aquaponics
- Grow to Own: partnered with the New Orleans Redevelopment Authority to establish a process where blighted properties can be claimed and used for farming

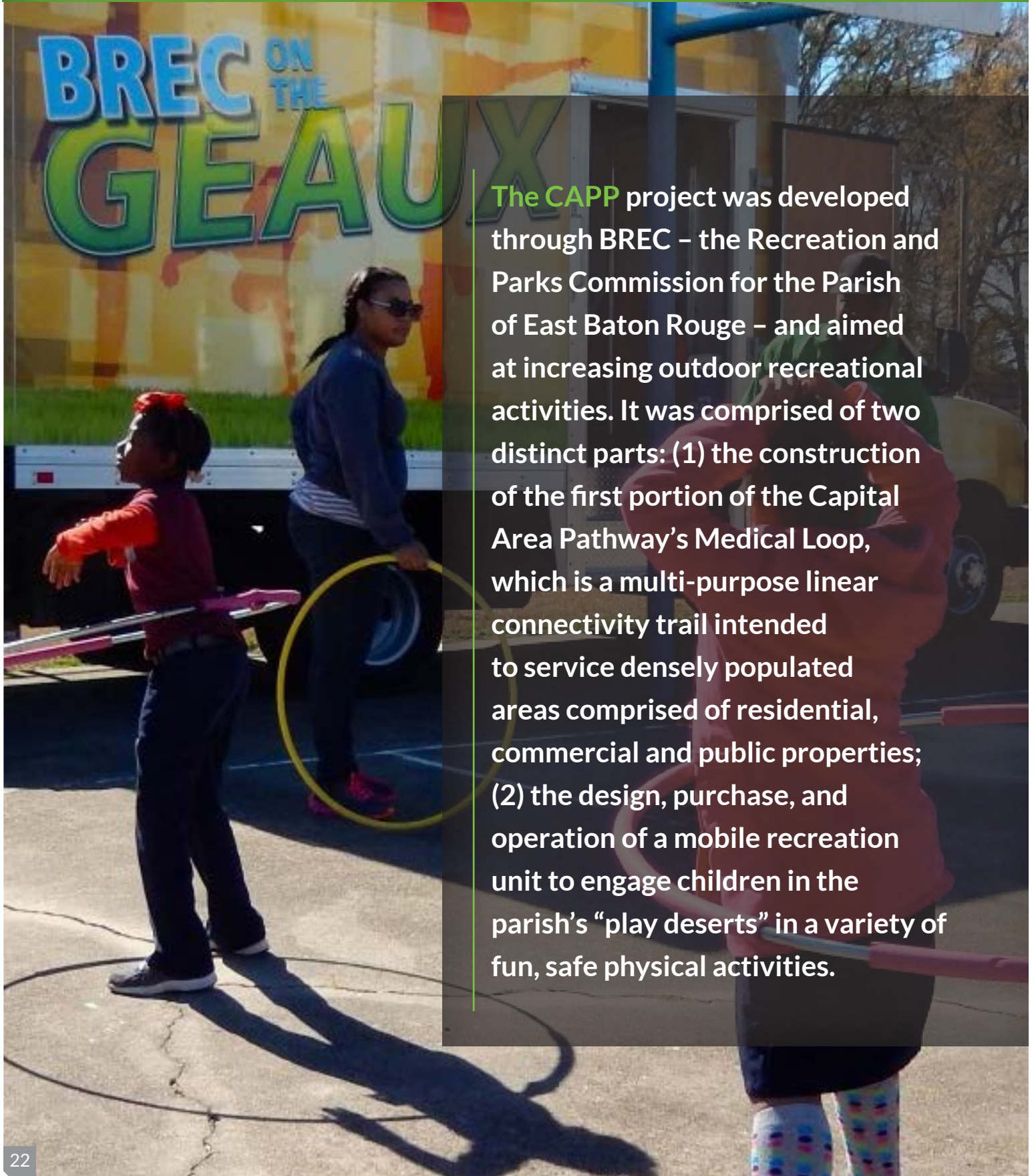
### Community Training and Capacity Building

- Classes and trainings imparted new healthy living skills for 2000 community participants (topics included health supportive cooking, gardening or farming, farm to school laws )
- Supported, created or improved 12 farms or gardens

## Project Partners

- ✿ New Orleans Food and Farm Network
- ✿ Recirculating Farms Coalition
- ✿ Solar Alternatives
- ✿ Debra Surtain (master gardener)
- ✿ Bollag International
- ✿ Gulf Coast Housing Partnership
- ✿ Nexum Printing
- ✿ NOLA Trash Mob
- ✿ USDA
- ✿ Loyola University School of Mass Comm
- ✿ LA Department of Agriculture and Forestry
- ✿ LSU Ag Center/Extension
- ✿ OC Haley Business Association
- ✿ Faubourg Lafayette Neighborhood Assn.
- ✿ NOLA Locavores
- ✿ Wild Lotus
- ✿ Avenue Café
- ✿ Capstone Community Gardens
- ✿ Life City
- ✿ LA Farm to School Alliance

## CAPITAL AREA PATHWAYS PROJECT AND MOBILE PLAYGROUND (CAPP) *BATON ROUGE*



The **CAPP** project was developed through BREC – the Recreation and Parks Commission for the Parish of East Baton Rouge – and aimed at increasing outdoor recreational activities. It was comprised of two distinct parts: (1) the construction of the first portion of the Capital Area Pathway’s Medical Loop, which is a multi-purpose linear connectivity trail intended to service densely populated areas comprised of residential, commercial and public properties; (2) the design, purchase, and operation of a mobile recreation unit to engage children in the parish’s “play deserts” in a variety of fun, safe physical activities.

## Highlights:

### Trail Construction

- Two miles of Ward Creek multi-use trail segment (including landscaping, water fountains, QT Fit/ smart phone fitness system, and parking access)
- Initiation of the Perkins Road multi-use trail segment

### Mobile Recreation Program

- Two “BREC on the Geaux” mobile recreation units (14-foot box trucks), fully equipped and staffed

### Parish-wide mobile recreation programming

- School recess programs targeting pre-K to 5th grade; 10 schools/week; up to 900 children/day
- After school and holiday programs – routes target low-income housing complexes and neighborhood parks; the program has reached over 9,750 residents to date
- Integration of activities into community events
- Available for private functions (revenue generating)

### National Recognition


- Sharing mobile recreation program development experience and expertise with recreation departments/professionals throughout the country

### Project Partners

- ✱ EBR Housing Authority
- ✱ EBR Parish Schools
- ✱ Richard Carmouche
- ✱ Mall of LA
- ✱ BREC Foundation
- ✱ BR General Medical Center
- ✱ Ochsner Health Center
- ✱ Atlanta Path Foundation
- ✱ Capitol Region Planning Commission
- ✱ Center for Planning Excellence



## OUACHITA WELL MONROE



**Ouachita Well** involved partnerships among three municipalities and a leading non-profit in the cities of Monroe and West Monroe. Project strategies were geared toward improving access to healthier food choices and physical activity opportunities within Ouachita Parish. Ouachita Well focused on infrastructure projects in urban areas and at schools, acquisition of and programming for a mobile recreation vehicle, adoption of healthy vending policies throughout the parish, and a media and school-based campaign to promote physical activity and healthy eating.



## Highlights:

### Vending Policy

- Development and adoption of a vending policy by the Ouachita Parish School System, the City of West Monroe, the Ouachita Parish Police Jury and the YMCA
- Policies covered parish schools, libraries, fire stations, the courthouse, administrative offices, recreation facilities and after-school programs

### Improving and Expanding Recreational Opportunities

- Construction or renovation of walking trails or tracks at parish elementary schools
- Development of shared use agreements for public access after school hours
- The installation of Ouachita Parish's first designated bike path
- A 12-mile loop connecting several pre-existing paths throughout the City of Monroe
- Completion of over four miles of sidewalks and crosswalks
- Connecting banks, medical facilities, shopping, restaurants and other businesses in the City of West Monroe
- Renovations of three park/recreational areas within the parish
- Included restrooms, picnic area, walking path, ball field, general playground/play area, parking, and construction of a pavilion

### Mobile Fitness Program

- Developed through the YMCA; has become a YMCA signature program
- Mobile unit has equipment for land and water-based play
- Instructors provide physical activity services to after school programs, churches and other local organizations

### Healthy Lifestyle Education

- Implementation of the 5-2-1-0 program
- Presentations to classes at six elementary, two middle and two secondary schools; and to members of three churches, nine preschools, and 14 civic/community groups
- Reaching thousands of individuals within the parish communities

### Project Partners

- ✱ YMCA of Northeast LA
- ✱ Ouachita Parish Police Jury
- ✱ Ouachita Parish School Board
- ✱ City of Monroe
- ✱ City of West Monroe

## THE HEALTHY LIVING CLUB

### LAFAYETTE



**The Healthy Living Club** project marshalled 23 partners to address the need for safe places to play and better access to healthy foods in two Lafayette neighborhoods with a high population of children. The project renovated parks and playgrounds. It also improved bike trails, sidewalks and crosswalks to provide easier access to these recreational spaces. Simultaneously, the project established extracurricular gardening and fitness programs for youth; community-based healthy eating classes (including breastfeeding promotion) and events targeting all ages; supported a mobile food pantry; and developed an easy to understand healthy-living message for use by all partners.

## Highlights:

### Renovation of Six Parks

- Construction of new children's playgrounds at all six parks
- Installation of adult fitness equipment at three of these parks

### Renovations at Neighborhood Outreach Center

- Construction of one new walking track and a new basketball court
- Installation of benches and shade

### Safer Opportunities for Active Transportation

- Improvements to eight crosswalks and installation of three new bike lanes to provide safer routes to the renovated parks
- Approximately 1,950 feet of path and new signage
- A reach of 12,000 households, with over 39,000 children ages 5 to 12

### Youth Wellness Education

- Gardens installed and fitness programs implemented at two elementary schools and one central community center


### Mobile Pantry

- Expansion of food bank concept/system to include distribution of food – including fresh fruits and vegetables – through a mobile pantry
- Total distribution: 443,699 pounds of food to 14,790 households
- Monthly average distribution: 14,790 pounds of food to 409 households

## Project Partners

- ✿ Kiwanis Club of Lafayette
- ✿ Kiwanis Club of Lafayette Foundation
- ✿ Lafayette Parks and Recreation Department
- ✿ Metropolitan Planning Organization
- ✿ Lafayette Consolidated Government
- ✿ 13 Communications
- ✿ Second Harvest Food Bank and Mobile Pantry
- ✿ Lafayette Parish School System
- ✿ Acadiana Food Circle
- ✿ Bridge Ministries of Acadiana
- ✿ American Heart Association
- ✿ Our Lady of Lourdes Health Care Ministry
- ✿ McComb Veazey Community Garden
- ✿ Truman Elementary Community Garden
- ✿ Acadiana Breastfeeding Coalition
- ✿ Junior League of Lafayette
- ✿ Family Tree
- ✿ Big Brothers Big Sisters of Acadiana
- ✿ Creole Fitness Productions, LLC
- ✿ Seed to Table
- ✿ Focused Fitness
- ✿ Acadiana Open Channel Community Media
- ✿ University of Louisiana at Lafayette



A young boy with light brown hair, wearing a green polo shirt with pink and white horizontal stripes, is smiling and holding up a whole carrot. He is standing in a grocery store aisle, with various produce and price tags visible in the background. The background is slightly blurred, focusing attention on the boy.

**The Dare to Be Healthy** project directed a variety of activities at low income populations in Calcasieu Parish to address both healthy eating and physical activity. These cross-cutting activities included improving biking and walking trails and sidewalks, and connecting them to parks and schools; delivering fitness and cooking classes directly to towns in the parish; instituting comprehensive physical activity and recreation training for teachers and students in all parish schools; developing a physical fitness program in recreation centers serving low-income youth; establishing a farmers education program and food hub; and developing a healthy restaurant initiative.



## Highlights:

### Eat Healthy Southwest Louisiana Restaurant Initiative

- 17 restaurants and cafeterias partnered with registered dietitians to identify healthy menu items
- 177 menu items analyzed – 117 fit Eat Healthy SWLA criteria

### Infrastructure Improvements

- Over 13,000 linear feet of sidewalks to provide connectivity to parks, schools and shopping
- Updated equipment, signage or other amenities in seven parks/recreation centers

### Calcasieu Parish School System (CPSS) Wellness Programs

- 50 schools participated in the “Health Teacher” and “Infused In-Class Curriculum”
- 70 “Wellness Warrior” teachers led peers to participate in the CPSS wellness initiative; 636 teachers participated (86% of those eligible)
- 13,902 students participated in physical activity breaks, spending a total of 14 minutes a day in in-class exercise

### KISS (Keep it Simple Sister) Exercise & Healthy Eating Program

- Total of six 12-week sessions held in six communities
- 190 participants completed the program
- Participants lost a total of 2,060 inches and 2,201 pounds

## Project Partners

- ✿ Southwest Louisiana Area Health Education Center
- ✿ Calcasieu Parish School Board (and schools)
- ✿ City of Lake Charles
- ✿ Calcasieu Parish Police Jury
- ✿ CHRISTUS St. Patrick Hospital
- ✿ West Calcasieu Cameron Hospital
- ✿ Lake Charles Memorial Health Systems
- ✿ Lake Area Medical Center
- ✿ McNeese State University (Nutrition and Food Science and Anthropology/Sociology evaluators)
- ✿ L.I.F.E. Fit for Women
- ✿ Office of Public Health
- ✿ Partnership for a Healthier Southwest Louisiana
- ✿ Louisiana Dietetics Association—SWLA Chapter
- ✿ Louisiana Restaurant Association—SW Chapter

## GREAT RESOURCES WHEREYAT (GROW) NEW ORLEANS



The  
Salvage  
Garden

We Recycle! ♻️  
The plants in this  
area are growing  
out of  
Salvaged  
materials  
from New  
Orleans! ♻️

The **GRoW** project was developed by members of the New Orleans Kids Partnership (NOKP) to develop a coordinated services network that would infuse physical activity and healthy eating education and activities through ‘hub schools’ to youth in three zip codes of the Gentilly community of New Orleans. GRoW established partnerships with charter schools, the New Orleans Recreation Department (NORD), and local businesses to deliver programs and recruit participants. GRoW also focused on volunteer-based infrastructure improvements and policies to increase opportunities for healthy living.

## Highlights:

### Delivered 70 GRow Saturdays

- Served 638 children ages 5-18 from targeted zip codes
- 71 students attended 10 or more GRow Saturdays
- Engaged children in 11,744 hours of physical activity
- Served over 10,000 servings of fruits and vegetables

### Created School Wellness Committees at Four Local Schools

### Community Outreach

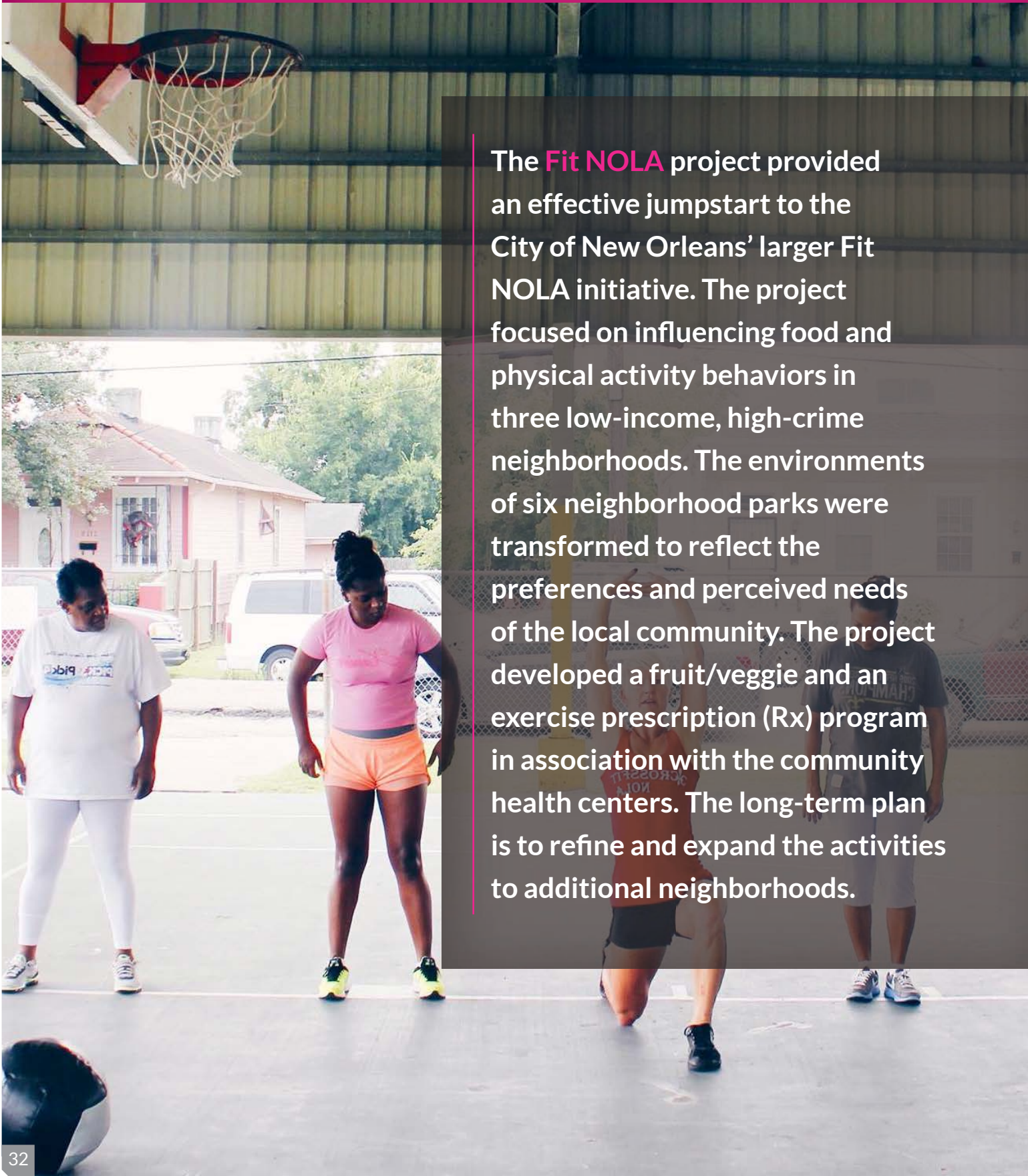
- GRow Citywide Advisory group met quarterly seven times
- Over 300 volunteers facilitated 13 community service projects, including a skate park near the St. Bernard Center and a school garden at Menard Nelson School

## Project Partners

- ✿ Big Brothers, Big Sisters
- ✿ Alignment Nashville
- ✿ Collegiate Academies
- ✿ America's Promise Alliance
- ✿ City of NOLA – Office of Planning
- ✿ Ashé Cultural Center
- ✿ Court-Appointed Special Advocates
- ✿ Center for Engaged Learning & Teaching (Tulane)
- ✿ Greater New Orleans Foundation
- ✿ Concordia, LLC
- ✿ Neighborhood Partnership Network
- ✿ Hands On NOLA
- ✿ Recovery School District
- ✿ Kids Rethink New Orleans Schools
- ✿ Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities
- ✿ Louisiana Public Health Institute
- ✿ New Orleans Outreach
- ✿ New Orleans Kids Partnership
- ✿ Start the Adventure in Reading
- ✿ Up2Us
- ✿ Young Audiences



## FIT NOLA NEW ORLEANS



The **Fit NOLA** project provided an effective jumpstart to the City of New Orleans' larger Fit NOLA initiative. The project focused on influencing food and physical activity behaviors in three low-income, high-crime neighborhoods. The environments of six neighborhood parks were transformed to reflect the preferences and perceived needs of the local community. The project developed a fruit/veggie and an exercise prescription (Rx) program in association with the community health centers. The long-term plan is to refine and expand the activities to additional neighborhoods.

## Highlights:

### Park Infrastructure Revitalization

- Improvements to six neighborhood parks that included: water fountains, bike racks, fitness equipment, a new baseball field, a resurfaced basketball court, benches and tables, upgrades to restrooms, shade/landscaping, a new concession building, sidewalks, a brick plaza, playground fencing, gates, lighting and security cameras

### Physical Activity Programming

- Free classes, 3-4/week, AM and/or PM, in each of the six parks. Classes included: dance, hula hooping, boot camp, Zumba, kickboxing, yoga and creative walking
- Attracted approximately 7,050 community participants

### Park Police Detail

- Negotiation and coordination of a police presence during physical activity classes
- This arrangement has become a model for community policing
- Farmers Market Fruit/Vegetable Prescription Program (FMRx)
- RX distribution by health care providers at community clinics, to 862 recipients
- 76% were redeemed, primarily at local farmers markets, with some transactions through Whole Foods

### Community Engagement

- Three major community input events (~300 participants) to collect residents' ideas for park programming, concessions, general improvements
- Six Family Fests (over 3,000 participants) to bring neighborhood organizations and families together to promote the Fit NOLA parks and activities

### Project Partners

- ✱ LA Public Health Institute
- ✱ Market Umbrella
- ✱ Tulane Prevention Research Center
- ✱ New Orleans Recreation Development
- ✱ Commission & NORD Foundation
- ✱ City Of New Orleans
- ✱ New Orleans Police & Justice Foundation
- ✱ Park Booster Clubs
- ✱ Community Health Centers
- ✱ Neighborhood Partnership Network
- ✱ Neighborhood Churches



## WEST END HEALTH AND WELLNESS PROJECT

### NEW IBERIA



The West End Health and Wellness Project was created to increase access to fresh, local produce and seafood in the fresh food deplete West End neighborhood of New Iberia. It established a variety of new fresh markets, through which local produce could be obtained almost every day of the week. It encouraged consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables through practical healthy eating education and promotion, and through a [low-income] produce voucher program. Markets were generated and supplied by three highly productive cooperative gardens, facilitated by active encouragement of a gardening culture within the community.



## Highlights:

### Access to Fresh-from-the-Boat Seafood

- A direct (planned) result of renovations of the Delcambre Port and fairgrounds
- Establishment of New Fresh Food Markets
- Monthly Fresh Markets and Share the Harvest days; a seasonal Delcambre market; periodic Flash Markets; several weekly farm stands/mini-markets; and daily garden pick-ups

### Expansion and Development of Three Grower Cooperatives

- Co-ops doubled their use of innovative, hydroponic greenhouse techniques, supplemented with in-ground practices
- Co-ops now have greenhouse capacities of close to 5,000 plants each
- Co-ops established the Acadiana Growers Alliance as a 501c3, to coordinate efforts of the local growers, to increase professional development, social impact, and long-term economic viability

### New Gardens

- Constructed six school gardens and 50 home gardens throughout the community

### Community Education

- 13 school-based nutrition education or experiential gardening programs
- Cooking demonstrations/recipe development featuring market produce provided by a local chef
- Weekly [local] radio broadcasts on food/fitness/wellness-related topics

### Community Engagement

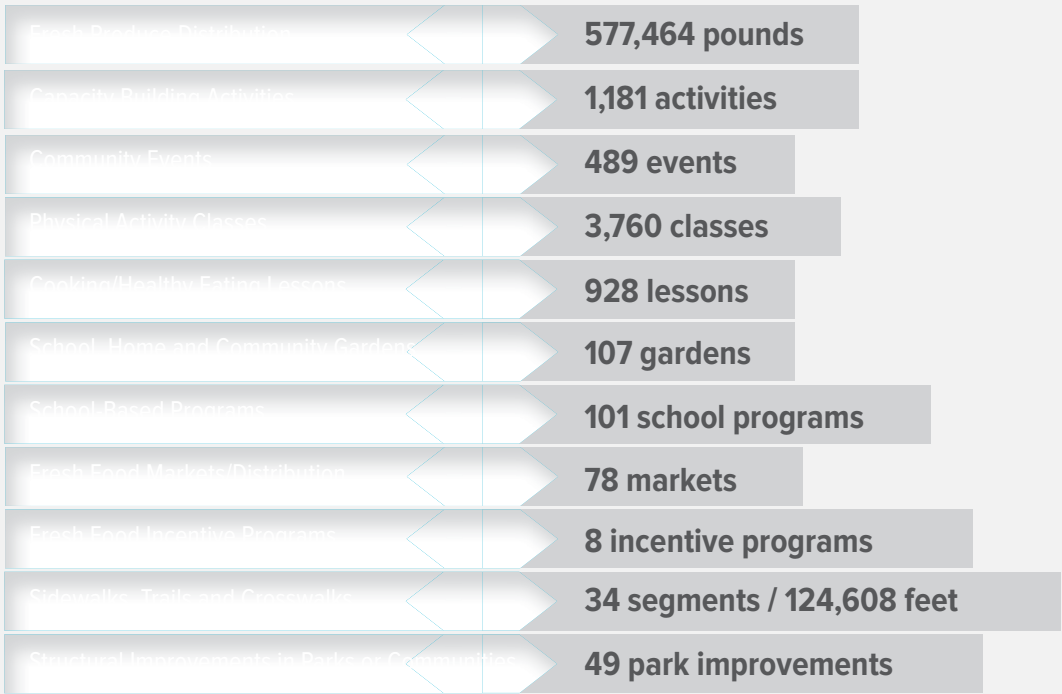
- Calendar of health/wellness events
- Leadership training opportunities
- Garden volunteer workdays and gardening seminars/workshops

### Project Partners

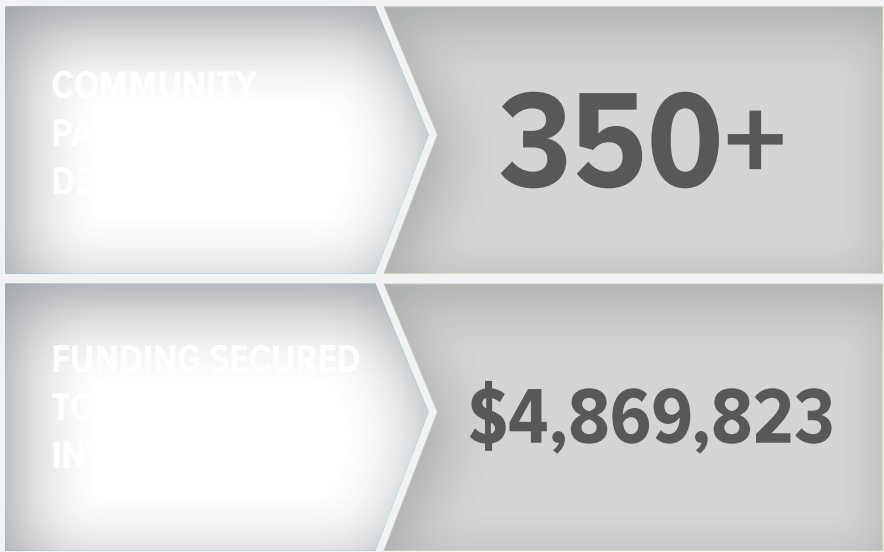
- ✱ Iberia Development Foundation
- ✱ Acadiana Growers Alliance
- ✱ Twin Parish Port Authority
- ✱ West End Leadership Council
- ✱ Envision daBerry
- ✱ Port of Delcambre
- ✱ United Way of Acadiana
- ✱ Iberia Medical Center
- ✱ West End Neighborhood Association
- ✱ LSU AgCenter
- ✱ Arceneaux Ford

# PROGRAM RESULTS IMPACT AND ANALYSIS

Challenge Grant projects were asked to record and report on the implementation and scope of their activities:



Additional successes over the course of the Challenge Grant Program:



## SURVEY RESULTS

Challenge Grant participants were asked to complete a program survey, at two time points, through which indicators of behavioral changes related to healthy eating and physical activity were collected. A total of 5,483 participant surveys (3,811 at baseline; 1,672 at 12-19 months later) were collected. Of these, 1,447 surveys were completed at both time points and with sufficient data to be included in the analysis. All Challenge Grant communities have benefited from the Challenge Grant Program.

### Among Adults

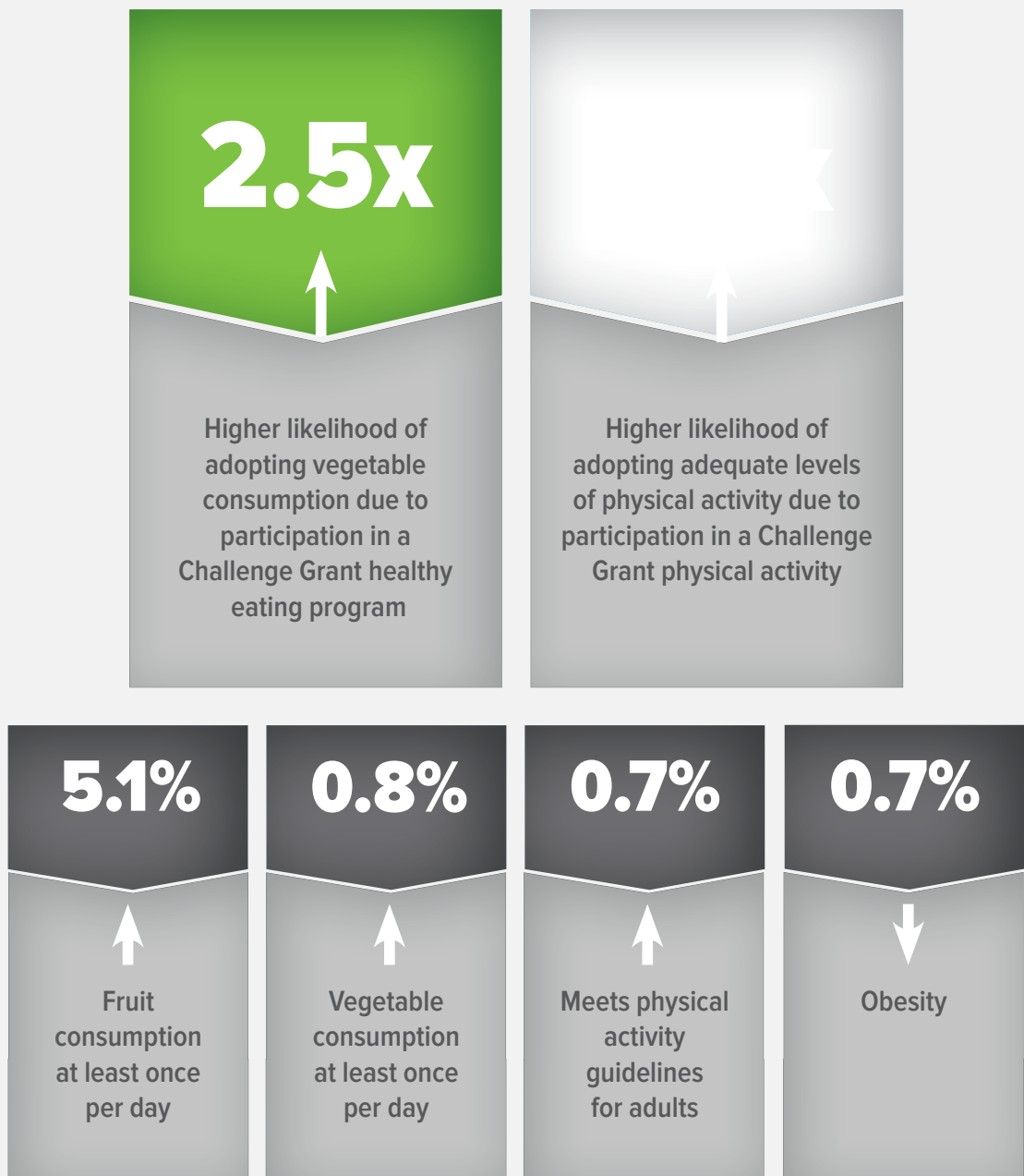
- ✱ The Challenge Grant targeted high-risk populations.
- ✱ Challenge Grant participants had a higher rate of obesity than the state of Louisiana as a whole (37.0% vs. 33.1% , respectively).
- ✱ Relative to the state as a whole (32.5% ), a higher percentage of Challenge Grant participants were African American (44.7%).
- ✱ Relative to the state as a whole, (16.5% ), a higher percentage of Challenge Grant participants were food insecure (39.5%).
- ✱ At follow-up, behavioral changes showed modest improvement. Although not statistically significant, collectively, results are trending in the right direction.

### Among Youth

- ✱ Youth Challenge Grant participants also represented high-risk populations.
- ✱ In the end, youth did not show significant improvement in targeted behaviors. These results are consistent with other large-scale, multi-level, community-based obesity prevention initiatives.



BY THE NUMBERS:



## LESSONS LEARNED AND NEXT STEPS:

1

### **Keep it manageable, stick to core programming.**

Collective impact grantees will be ambitious, and some will want to take a kitchen sink approach. Too many moving parts can overwhelm and cannibalize a project quickly. In future iterations, we will ask grantees to scale back proposals and limit to five or six components to maximize effectiveness.

2

### **Outsource evaluation, insource project management.**

Keep evaluation partners focused on their tasks. Outsourcing so much of our program management to Pennington left them constantly moving, but limited our ability to be in direct contact with grantees.

3

### **Be hands-on.**

Collective impact projects will morph and change over the course of three years. As a funder, you will want to be on the ground with your grantees, understanding their challenges in real-time and helping them formulate strategies to adapt to challenges that arise.

4

### **Even small change is a big win.**

Don't expect huge change. Change in the right directions is positive. Other collective impact projects around the nation have shown that this is hard work! You will see big outcomes – the analysis data may be small by comparison – but remember that you are inspiring a change in a long-entrenched trend. Moving in the other direction is victory!

# ABOUT US



## About the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana Foundation

The Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana Foundation works each day to improve the health and lives of Louisianians by empowering everyday people to do extraordinary good. By building and funding coalitions of friends, families and neighbors, the Foundation hopes to build a healthier Louisiana, particularly for its children. The Foundation is funded solely by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana, but is a separate 501(c)(3) nonprofit entity. Together Blue Cross and the Blue Cross Foundation invest \$2.5 million each year into Louisiana's communities and nonprofits.

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