

Ross Selected to Lead Triangle North Healthcare Foundation

After a national search process that yielded 31 applications from 8 states and three highly qualified finalists, the Board of Directors of the Triangle North Healthcare Foundation Board of Directors announced on August 28, 2025 that it has selected Paul Ross for the position of Executive Director of the Foundation. Ross will replace Tem Blackburn who has served as Interim Executive Director since 2023. Ross, a native of Henderson, currently serves as Executive Director of the Henderson Family YMCA, a position he has held since 2014.

In announcing the selection, TNHF Chair Terri Hedrick, commented: "Paul distinguished himself through his proven executive leadership experience, his deep and long-standing connection to our community, his evident love for its people and his clear, long-term commitment to its future. These qualities, combined with his alignment to our mission and founding purpose, make him the right leader to guide the Foundation into its next chapter."

In accepting the appointment, Ross stated that he had become familiar with many of the non-profit organizations funded by TNHF through his work at the YMCA and was "looking forward to working closely with all of the TNHF funded organizations to assist them in serving the needs of our communities."

Triangle North Healthcare Foundation Awards Grants for Local Health Impact

Triangle North Healthcare Foundation's Board of Directors announced on June 26, 2025 that the Foundation has awarded 17 grants to 17 organizations totaling \$875,631 for the Foundation's grant year that begins October 1, 2025. The Foundation's annual grant program supports initiatives that positively impact health throughout Vance, Warren, Granville, and Franklin counties.

Since beginning grantmaking in 2013, the Foundation has invested over \$6.7 million in funding for programs to improve health in the four-county region.

"Through our grants to local partners, we are investing in programs that will help fulfill our mission to improve health," said Tem Blackburn, interim executive director for the Foundation. "Our hope is that these grant awards will result in healthy outcomes for children and adults in the four counties we serve," said Blackburn.

Recipients of the 2025-2026 TNHF grants include a broad range of programs.

AIM High – Keep Pressing – *Park & Play*, is a structured mobile fitness, nutrition and recreational program to encourage children to play safely in outdoor parks. Play sessions are led by certified personal trainers and teen leaders to provide low-income youth positive summer engagement. *Park & Play* will continue as an afterschool program in 2025-2026 in collaboration with Vance County Housing Authority.

Area Congregations in Ministry (ACIM) – *GCS Backpack Buddy Program*, will provide monthly backpack buddy packs for distribution in Granville County Schools. Each backpack contains meals and snacks for a weekend.

Boys & Girls Clubs of North Central North Carolina - *Triple Play*, is a three-component health and wellness program for youth ages 6-18 emphasizing



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2025-2026 Board of Directors

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Our Mission

To encourage, support and invest in quality efforts that measurably improve health in the Triangle North Region.

Our Vision

To live in a healthy community.

Our Focus Areas

The Foundation gives priority to grant projects that will have a positive impact and improve health in these priority areas:

- Child Well-Being
- Chronic Disease
- Mental Health & Substance Abuse
- Nutrition & Physical Fitness
- Reproductive Health

**2026-2027
grant cycle opens
early 2026.
Contact us to discuss
your grant ideas,
252-430-8532.
Go to the Foundation's
website,
www.tnhfoundation.org
to review our grant
making policies,
funding priorities
and eligibility
requirements.**

nutrition, exercise, and social emotional well-being.

Children's Cancer Partners of the Carolinas – Triangle North Childhood Cancer Safety Net, aims to ensure that every child has equitable access to outstanding pediatric oncology services, no matter where they live, how long their treatments last, or their family's financial circumstances. The program offers financial support, and intensive case management, to help families navigate the complexities of insurance, travel logistics, and home care for other family members.

Edmonds Tennis and Education Foundation - Healthy Serve II, is an award-winning program that promotes child well-being through the physical fitness and nutritional requirements afforded by the game of tennis. In addition to tennis, ETEF interns provide a Pre-K-3rd grade after school reading program in conjunction with Turning Point Community Development Corporation.



Approximately 60 individuals attended the 2nd annual Tennis & Dentist event coordinated by Edmonds Tennis & Education Foundation on Saturday, May 31 at Fox Pond Park. Participants enjoyed free tennis lessons and learned about good oral hygiene.

Granville Vance Public Health – Tooth Club, addresses and treats oral health issues among students enrolled in Vance and Granville County Schools, Falls Lake Academy, and Henderson Collegiate.

Kerr-Tar Regional Council of Governments – Food Security Partnership Project, will inventory resources and foster collaboration in the regional food system and create an online centralized index of organizations & resources to be routinely updated and public facing.

Life Line Outreach, Inc. – Capital Repairs for the residential housing that accommodate homeless women and children. Life Line provides a resource hub for people in need by offering emergency monetary support and in-kind goods, access and connection to resources, educational/skill-building classes and support groups, and information about resources via outreach.

NC MedAssist – Medication Access for Under Resourced Residents in Granville, Franklin, Vance, and Warren County Residents, will continue to provide free prescription medications for low income and uninsured individuals via mail order. In addition, two over-the-counter medicine giveaway events will be implemented in 2026 in the TNHf region.

Perfecting Praise Ministries – Rural Wellness Initiative: Bridging Minds & Bodies, addresses mental health disparities and nutritional deficiencies prevalent in rural communities, focusing on Warren County. Mental health services are offered on a weekly basis through comprehensive mental health programming, education, and support services, including safe space therapy sessions and community education initiatives to raise awareness and reduce stigma.

Safe Space, Inc. – *Rural Youth Development Project* – Empowering Rural Youth for Resilience, Well-Being, & Success, a community-driven, evidence-based initiative that supports rural youth by promoting resilience, social-emotional development, and positive mental health. Designed for youth impacted by adverse childhood experiences.

S.a.M. Child Advocacy Center - *Child Forensic Interviews/Community Outreach-Prevention*, provides a centralized, child-centered approach to justice involved investigations that reduces the risk of trauma to children who are victims of abuse or witnesses to violent crimes. With an interdisciplinary team of professionals located in one, child-friendly location, this program provides an important component of a comprehensive child abuse investigation. The program also offers opportunities for healing for the child and non-offending family members. Community education is also provided.

Shepherd Youth Ranch – *Trail to Success*, provides skill building for youth suffering from grief, loss, abandonment, and abuse. Participants enter an intensive 24-week program, which consists of weekly group and monthly family sessions in a unique program that uses rescued horses to help with therapy.

Student U – *High Quality & Affordable After School Programming Pilot at Clarke Elementary*, in partnership with the Henderson Family YMCA, supports Clarke Elementary with starting a school-based afterschool program serving 50 children during the pilot year.

Triangle Residential Options for Substance Abusers, Inc. (TROSA) – *Long-term Substance Abused Recovery for TNHF Residents*, offers a two-year residential recovery program with treatment, education, vocational training, and health care for residents of the Triangle North region who suffer from alcohol and substance use addiction, free of charge.

Turning Point Community Development Corporation – *Operating Support for Out-of-School Time (OST) & Food Insecurity*, increases access to resources, opportunities, and experiences for school-age youth through out-of-school time (OST) programs by offering affordable, quality child care that meets the educational, health, and social needs of children and youth in an after-school and summer learning program setting. The Launchpad Youth Workforce Development program will provide youth workforce development for underserved youths in grades 9 - 12. The cohort begins in the summer with students completing a series of engaging training workshops. Students are placed in paid internships with local community organizations. Students participate in experiences throughout the academic year, including a college tour, two mental health seminars, and a two-day public speaking camp. The Oasis Food Pantry & Distribution Center will serve over 250 families quarterly with healthy meals and delivery services.

Vance Charter School – *Vance Charter School's Remote Area Medical Clinic*, stages a two-day remote area medical clinic open to all, providing no-cost medical, dental, and vision care services scheduled for the Spring of 2026. Since 2022, the RAM Clinic has served 1,020 unique patients in Vance County providing over \$926,000 in free medical care. Services include same-day dental care including tooth/cavity fillings, tooth extractions, and restorative oral surgeries. Medical care includes physical exams, hemoglobin A1/Cs, pap smears, lipid panels, women's health exams, and breast exams. Eye care services include eye exams and same-day prescription eyeglasses, which are made on site.

The seventeen grant programs fall into one or more of the Foundation's five focus areas, which include Child Well-Being, Chronic Disease, Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder, Nutrition and Physical Fitness, and Reproductive Health.

2025 Strategic Small Grants Program

Triangle North Healthcare Foundation awarded strategic small grants to twelve nonprofit organizations for projects during its 2025 grant year. The purpose of the 2025 Strategic Small Grants Program (SSGP) is to provide financial assistance to nonprofit, educational, and governmental organizations in Franklin, Granville, Vance, and Warren counties responding to immediate needs in one of the Foundation's strategic priority areas: Child Well-being, Senior Well-being, Housing and Homelessness, Mental Health and Substance Abuse, and Food Security. The 2025 Strategic Small Grants Program provides one-time, non-renewable grants up to \$10,000 per grant in funding.

Recipients of 2025 Strategic Small Grants (SSG) include:

Children's Cancer Partners of the Carolinas supports families dealing with childhood cancer who live in Warren,

Granville, Vance, and Franklin counties. It helps to ensure that any child in the TNHF region who is newly diagnosed with cancer in 2025 has the resources to access outstanding care, no matter where that child's particular cancer treatment is provided or how long it may last.

For the second year, grants for the **Farmers Markets in Vance & Warren** counties supported Senior vouchers and participants in the EBT, SNAP, and WIC programs.

Granville County Cooperative Extension for *Farm to Fridge*, a part of the donation station at Armory Farmers Market, helps bridge the gap for the working poor by providing nutritious food to families in their community. The refrigerators are housed within the Granville County Library system.



Pictured above are representatives of Granville County Cooperative Extension at the Oxford Armory Farmers Market. Granville County Cooperative Extension is a recipient of a Strategic Small grant for the Farm to Fridge Program. This program allows community members in need to go to their local library and get donated nutritious food. Food is provided by local groceries stores, the food bank, churches, and other sources of excess food.

Kearah's Place, Inc. The Kearah's Place Transitional Housing Program provides aid to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking who are homeless, or in need of transitional housing because of their victimization.

Family Financial Assistance Program with **Me Fine Foundation**, addresses emergency financial assistance as families begin to navigate their new normal post medical diagnoses. By providing support early in their journey, Me Fine can help keep these families in their home and/or prevent greater financial crisis that could lead to other substantial catastrophic life changes that may have permanent negative effects not only on the family, but on their extended relatives.

SSG funding to support Camp Royall Scholarships through the **Autism Society of NC** will provide recreational, educational, and therapeutic camping experiences for campers with autism through 10 weeks of residential camp for campers from across NC, as well as 10 weeks of day camp for local campers. Camp activities include traditional camp components such as swimming, arts and crafts, field games, fishing, boating, hiking, and music.

Vance County Schools received funds to train personnel to use Care Portal. The Care Portal platform is designed to work closely between the school system and the faith-based community. Selected school personnel such as school counselors, social workers and administration will put specific student/family or school needs into the platform. The request is sent to the district level support staff for approval and then sent out to church partners. The church partner who responds will gather the item(s) (cribs, car seats, etc...) and delivery will be made by the church partner or Vance County Schools staff.

Empowered Generation is a program developed by **Higher is Waiting** to improve the well-being of children and youth in underserved communities through guidance on spiritual growth, resilience, and leadership, helping youth build self-esteem and positive coping skills.

First in Families of NC (FIFNC) provides basic needs support for individuals in Vance, Warren, Granville, and Franklin counties living with severe mental illness and/or substance use disorders. FIFNC will build on the success of last year's Small Strategic Grant—through which households were provided with rental and utility assistance, as well as critical home items such as a bed, stove, and refrigerator.

FGV Smart Start Character Traits Initiative supports five child-care centers from each of the three counties participating in this initiative. Each month, centers will focus on one trait to teach and model for the children. Students will be given positive

verbal feedback for demonstrating the focused trait. At the end of each month, each center will have a special recognition with certificates and small tokens for students who have demonstrated the trait consistently. In addition, each participating center will select one child to represent their center to be recognized at the county level each month. A selection team at FGV will then select one overall winner from each county, who will be visited by FGV staff and awarded a certificate and a gift card. The traits that will be taught, modeled, and recognized will be teamwork, respect, self-control, sharing, gratitude, thoughtfulness, kindness, responsibility, acceptance, resiliency, honesty, determination, and courage.

Dads on Guard is a community-rooted initiative aimed at engaging, empowering, and educating fathers and young men across Vance, Franklin, Granville, and Warren counties. Spearheaded by **Franklin Vance Warren Opportunity, Inc.** in partnership with Vance County Center of the NC Cooperative Extension Service and Southern Charm Event Center, this program creates safe spaces for open dialogue, critical reflection, and mentorship through a monthly podcast-style live event called *Man in the Mirror*. The initiative will engage approximately 45 fathers (age 25-55) and 60 young men (age 14-24) annually across Franklin, Vance, Warren, and Granville counties.

Triangle North Healthcare Foundation Launches Strategic Planning Initiative

The Triangle North Healthcare Foundation (TNHF) is embarking on an important journey to shape its next three-year strategic plan (October 2026 – October 2029). Beginning November 2025, TNHF will lead a collaborative process designed to gather insight from community stakeholders and analyze key health data across its four-county service area. This initiative will guide the Foundation's future investments and deepen its impact on community health and wellbeing.

The purpose of this process is to ensure TNHF's strategy reflects both the voices of local partners and the data-driven realities of the region's health landscape. The Foundation aims to develop a plan which balances direct services, capacity-building projects, and generational work. The objective is to meet immediate needs and also address the root causes of health challenges.

Inclusive and Evidence-Based Planning

Over the coming months, TNHF will:

- Engage key stakeholders through multiple in-person focus groups with grant recipients and partner agencies. These conversations will help identify community priorities and inform future funding directions.
- Conduct a comprehensive data analysis of health and planning reports from county health departments, area hospitals, local governments, and other foundations to identify emerging trends and key priorities.

Insights from both the stakeholder input and data review will help the TNHF Board shape a list of potential focus areas and actions to consider at a strategic planning retreat.

Building a Shared Vision

As part of this process, TNHF will develop fact sheets on potential focus areas, each highlighting relevant health indicators, community perspectives, and example strategies across three categories:

1. Direct service initiatives which address immediate needs.
2. Capacity-building efforts to strengthen community organizations.
3. Generational strategies which tackle systemic root causes of poor health.

When the strategic plan is complete, TNHF will conduct an amplifier analysis to identify opportunities for collective impact. The Foundation will then convene partners with shared priorities to explore how collaboration can enhance the reach and effectiveness of everyone's work.

NC MedAssist Mobile Free Pharmacy Coming to TNHF Region in 2026

NC MedAssist will provide two over-the-counter medicine giveaways in the TNHF region in 2026. On March 13, 2026 the mobile free pharmacy will be at the VGCC Civic Center and on June 26, 2026 it will be at the Warren County Armory. Participants can take home free over-the-counter medicine items such as allergy, cough and cold, pain relief, vitamins, children's medicine, and more! Orders can be placed online in advance and picked up the day of the event. Walk-ins are also welcome.

This program is being brought to the region in partnership with NC MedAssist, Triangle North Healthcare Foundation, Vance Granville Community College, and the Warren County Health Department. Look for more information on local media sources prior to the events.

