



CHILDREN



FAMILIES



ADULTS



COMMUNITIES

As we celebrate **35 Years of Healthy Minds & Healthy Bodies**, we honor the Poe Center's legacy of innovation and impact while looking boldly to the future. We continue to evolve to meet North Carolina's changing health-education needs, from using state-of-the-art technology to develop new brain-science programs to bringing health education directly into schools, workplaces, and family kitchens. The result is a ripple effect that extends far beyond a single program, creating systemic change with exponential reach.

As we embark on the next 35 years, strong partnerships and donor support are more important than ever to sustain and expand this impact. Our newly-refined mission reflects this broader vision: **to educate and empower North Carolina children, families, adults, and communities to improve lifelong health and well-being.**

Will you help us?

Give today, become a sponsor, or ask an educator to book a program.

REACH*



2,434 Programs taught



63,730 Participants taught[†]



42 Counties served



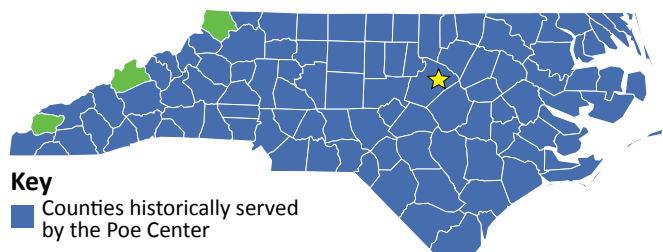
4 MILLION People reached via social media[†]

10% more

10% increase in programs delivered.

87%

87% of participants report making positive health choices after a Poe Center program.



Key

■ Counties historically served by the Poe Center

■ Help us reach these counties

★ Poe Center location



"The Poe Center's program, Mythbusters, had a wonderful impact on my 7th graders. I'm seeing much more intentionality in their health choices - from **choosing better fuel during lunch to showing deeper empathy in their peer interactions.** It makes me smile to see them break away from the 'herd' and start evaluating what their bodies truly need."

- Teacher,
Warren County Middle School

^{*}Data available through June 30, 2026.

[†]Represents an 18% and 55% decrease respectively due to the elimination of federal funds from Supplemental Nutrition Education Assistance - Education (SNAP-Ed).



IMPACT

371 FREE LUNCHES SERVED. This year's free summer lunch program helped youth who rely on school meals to bridge the food gap during school breaks. The **31% increase** from 2025 highlights the growing need for accessible food resources.

600+ CHILDREN PRACTICED ROAD-SAFETY SKILLS. Through the new Traffic Safety program and practice course, children built pedestrian and cycling skills to help them safely navigate their communities.

111% INCREASE IN PLAYWELL PARK ENGAGEMENT.

Following its **\$1.6 million** renovation, excitement for PlayWELL Park continues to surge, with website and Facebook views more than doubling and daily park visitors increasing substantially.

"Love, love, love this park. The skeleton play structure is the coolest!!! And the fact that it's shaded is a HUGE bonus!"
- Instagram comment

66,372 PEOPLE REACHED THROUGH #POEFIT.

Weekly mental and physical wellness videos reached **214% more people** on Instagram this year, offering families simple ways to improve mental and physical wellness.

50% OF ADULTS IMPROVE ALCOHOL SAFETY.

The "Talk It Up, Lock It Up!"™ campaign is helping reduce youth access to alcohol. **More than half of adults** surveyed after the campaign reported storing alcohol in secure locations, and 49% reported discussing strategies with teens to avoid risky situations.

682 MEDICATION LOCKBOXES DISTRIBUTED.

Twice as many lockboxes were provided in 2026 to help families secure medications. An additional **75 cabinet locks**, **764 medication disposal kits**, and **90 medication safety demonstrations** helped hundreds of families reduce the risk for youth.

1,844 TRAINED IN MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID.

The Poe Center was recognized by the National Council for Behavioral Health for training more adults in Mental Health First Aid than any other organization in North Carolina.

97% of participants demonstrated a positive increase in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors related to mental wellness.

"I really left class feeling empowered and like I now have the tools to help me deal with these types of crisis situations more effectively."
- Participant

400 POUNDS OF PRODUCE HARVESTED. Produce from the GrowWELL garden provided the equivalent of **320 meals** and was shared with local farm stands, community centers, a daycare, and used in education programs — helping connect families with fresh fruits and vegetables while strengthening local food systems.

11 TEACHING GARDENS ESTABLISHED. Teaching gardens were established in eleven schools and community sites across Johnston, Vance, and Wake Counties with materials, technical assistance, and programs that connect nutrition education with hands-on gardening experiences.

175+ STUDENTS EXPLORED THE WORLD OF BEES.

During the annual "Live at the Hive" virtual tour with Bee Downtown, students from **15 elementary schools** across the state learned from beekeepers about the essential role bees play in North Carolina's food systems and the environment.

"How does one become a queen bee?"
- Lillian

"What do bees eat?"
- Andrea

7 COMMUNITIES JOIN WATCH FOR ME NC.

The Poe Center is leading the statewide relaunch of Watch for Me NC, a nationally-recognized pedestrian and bicycle safety initiative. The initiative provides communities with proven tools and strategies to prevent injuries and save lives.

The Poe Center officially opens its doors to its first program participants with Family Life, Nutrition, Drug Education, and Dental Health programs.

Governor Hunt dedicates the Poe Center to the people of North Carolina.

440,471
people reached.

The Cranium Connection brain-science exhibit is introduced.

PlayWELL Park opens, the first body-systems-themed playground of its kind.

903,015
people reached.

1991

1993

2001

2002

2004

2011

Bullying Prevention programs are introduced.

2011

The GrowWELL teaching garden and CookWELL teaching kitchen open.

2018

MindWELL Mental Wellness programs are established.

2021

1.3 million people reached.

2021

The Poe Universe, the Poe Center's virtual field trip and digital campus, premieres.

2023

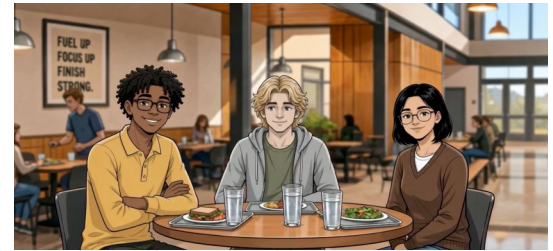
1.75 million people reached.

2026

INNOVATION

Empowering Teens to Take Charge of Brain Development

Middle and high school students can now explore how everyday choices shape the developing brain through **Wired: The Teen Brain Experience**, a new immersive experience inside the Poe Center's iconic giant head. Using projection mapping and real-life teen scenarios, the exhibit brings brain science to life and empowers students to make healthier decisions.



100% of teen Mental Health First Aid participants reported increased ability to support peers in crisis, recognize signs of mental health struggle, and talk to a trusted adult about mental health concerns.

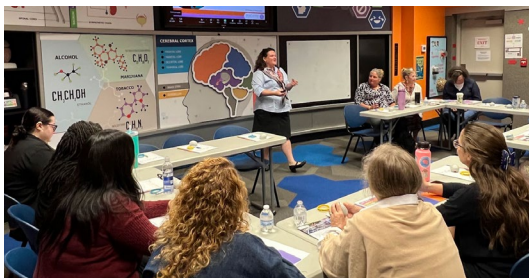
Young Leaders Are Creating Healthier Communities

More than **185 elementary and high school students** participated in nine Youth Empowerment groups across Wake, Johnston, and Vance counties, engaging in weekly activities and projects designed to develop leadership skills, promote healthy mental and physical behaviors, and improve their communities.

- **Johnston County:** Over **80 students** led initiatives promoting mental wellness, sexual violence prevention, and substance use prevention, including Denim Day and family engagement events.
- **Vance County:** **30 fifth graders** built a school garden and hosted a farmers market serving 60 community members. Technical support and supplies from the Poe Center ensured the garden's sustainability and provided materials for at-home gardens, extending the program's lasting impact.
- **Wake County:** **Four groups** advocated for substance use prevention best practices and policies, participated in mental wellness and substance use prevention trainings, and coordinated events and presentations for over **150 local leaders**, including the Tobacco-Free Community Forum, demonstrating the powerful role youth play in influencing community change.

Expanded Summer Camp Program Benefits More Campers

New camp options, including four specialty-themed weeks, scholarships and paid options, and extended care, made Poe's new and improved summer camp experience, Camp PlayWELL, more accessible to families and resulted in a **12% increase in attendance**. Fifty-four campers spent the summer cooking, gardening, exploring health science, staying active, and building friendships.



Training the Trainers: Supporting Community Professionals

On average, the Poe Center conducts **six professional development trainings each month** equipping educators, businesses, law enforcement, and community leaders with evidence-based strategies to support health-science education in their classrooms and communities. New mental wellness, sexual health, and garden-education opportunities, along with established substance use prevention programs, are helping expand the reach of health education to communities across North Carolina.

New Program Focuses on Strengthening Family Connections

Strengthening Families, a new 14-week substance use prevention program, launched in partnership with Little Hands & Feet Childcare Center to build protective factors and strengthen family relationships. **Five families** completed the first series, participating in weekly child and parent education, family activities, and shared dinners focused on communication, emotional support, problem-solving, and healthy relationships. Families reported that the strategies helped them better express feelings and understand one another, with one parent sharing that the program **"helps both the children and the adults become better at understanding each other."**

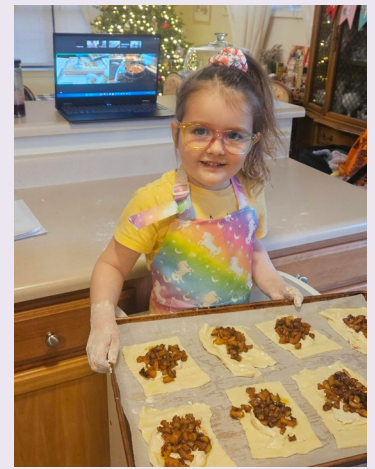


Investing in Military Families

For more than eight years, the Poe Center has hosted an online cooking class for active military families, thanks to a partnership with the Rick Herrema Foundation, known as Rick's Place. **Forty-six families** participated in the program in 2026. Over the course of nine sessions, families practice cooking skills while learning about food and kitchen safety, money-saving tips, and waste reduction.

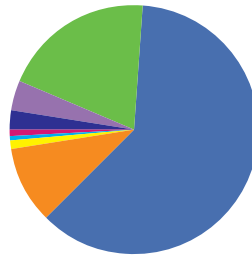
New grants and sponsorships are critical to keeping this program available to military families, following the loss of federal SNAP-Ed funding.

"[Food Smarts] has been everything! Not only has it helped feed our family during tough times - it showed us something new. I have been trying for years to learn how to cook - this gave me the option to learn from home which is so helpful. The Zoom, the ingredients, everything was perfect!" - Program Participant



The Path Forward

In 2025, federal funding cuts significantly impacted our ability to deliver nutrition education to those who rely on it most. Thanks to donors, partnerships, and financial strategies, we are rebuilding to ensure we can meet critical needs.



2025-2026 Funding*

Government Grants: 61.3%	Individuals: 2.4%
Non-Gov't Grants: 19.7%	Other: 1.2%
Program Fees: 10.1%	In-Kind: 1.0%
Corporate: 3.8%	Endowments: 0.4%

Total: \$ 4,235,649.36

THE IMPACT



\$2M

loss of SNAP-Ed federal funding

CRITICAL NEEDS



Resources
required to meet
growing needs

RECOVERY STRATEGIES



Donors
make a major
difference



18% ↓ fewer children and adults served



55% ↓ decrease in reach of nutrition and physical activity campaigns



Programs with many schools, daycares, and senior centers defunded



Replace lost nutrition education funding to continue vital programs and resources



Meet growing demand for mental wellness education and senior adult programming



Invest in our assets, including talented staff, aging facilities, and state-of-the-art technology



47% ↑ increase in individual giving



99% ↑ increase in fee revenue: charging for our value



Diversify government and non-government grants



New stewardship programs

BUILDING MOMENTUM



37

Businesses, foundations, and individuals made a \$2,500+ investment through our new Annual Sponsorship program.



95+

Donors joined the renewed Poe Society with a gift of \$1,000+, and enjoy insider updates and special events.



35+

Poe Young Professionals signed up to connect, build community, and support the Poe Center's mission.



Make a gift today and help ensure we have the resources to meet North Carolina's growing health education needs.

Follow and share the Poe Center's unique social media content:



@PoeCenter



@Poe_Center



@Poe-Center-For-Health-Education



@ThePoeCenter