



2016
ANNUAL REPORT



Open Books. Open Opportunity.



It is possible to increase the third-grade reading proficiency to 80% by 2025.

WE CAN DO THIS.

Dear Friends,

Last year was a breakthrough year for Read Charlotte. We began transforming what was an audacious idea into a community-wide movement for children and families.

We have a bold goal of doubling the percentage of third graders reading on grade level from 39% in 2015 to 80% by 2025. These aren't just words on a page – this is our belief and singular mission. We know that third-grade reading is one of the greatest predictors of how well children will perform in school and what type of life they will live. In today's world, economic opportunity requires one to be able to read, comprehend and use written information.

Although 80% may seem like a daunting figure to some, we are more convinced than ever in our community's ability to achieve this goal. In 2016, we spent a tremendous amount of effort researching "what works" to improve children's literacy. We identified a set of research-based predictors of third-grade reading proficiency. We identified five "buckets" of evidence-based practices to move the needle on these predictors, as well as interventions to put these practices into action. Moreover, Read Charlotte's focus is not just on programs, but also the systems barriers that often get in the way of effective practices and programs.

The progress we made in 2016 was due to the incredible commitment of dozens of organizations and hundreds of people across our community, including you. You volunteered countless hours on our Working Groups. You collected surveys from families, youth and educators. You helped us organize focus groups. You attended six days of systems change workshops. You are helping us create systems change on our Action Learning Teams. We are grateful for your time, talent and financial contributions.

Together, we know we can do this.



Katie B. Morris
KATIE MORRIS
Board Chair



Munro C. Richardson
MUNRO RICHARDSON
Executive Director



60%
of Charlotte's
third-graders are
not reading at
grade level.

Children not
reading at grade
level in third grade
are **4x** more likely
to drop out of
high school.

Reading
proficiency at **3rd**
grade is critical for
school, career and
life success.

What started as a community conversation became a \$5 million community initiative with 40+ partners, and growing.



Is a community initiative that unites families, educators and community partners to improve children's literacy from birth to third grade.

We're helping to give kids a fair chance by:

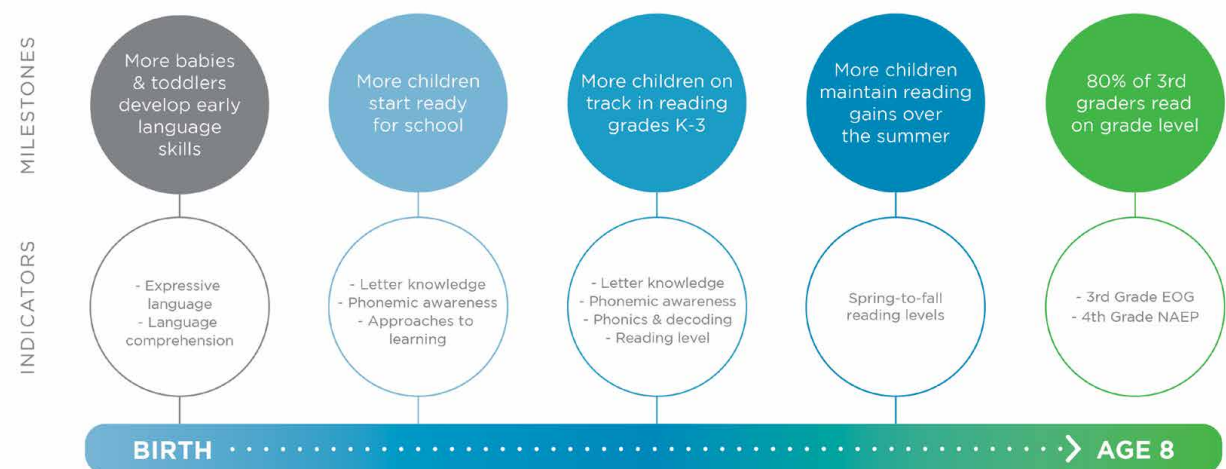
- Reaching out and collaborating with like-minded organizations on policies, programs and resources.
- Empowering educators with evidence-based practices and programs.
- Accounting for success by making data-driven decisions, gathering feedback and transparently reporting to our stakeholders.
- Dedicating ourselves wholly to this cause.



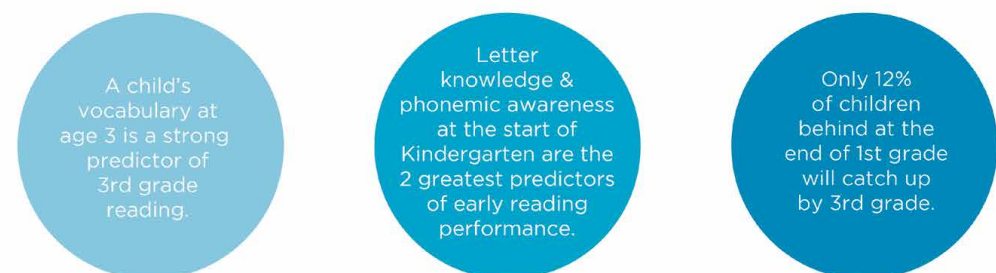
Our Indicators Support Early Literacy

Through our extensive research and analysis, we've developed a set of indicators aligned with strategies for children from birth through age eight.

RESEARCH-BASED PATHWAY TO READING



Why are these indicators so important?



We've Learned What Works

We scoured over two-dozen online databases and clearinghouses to find evidence-based practices and programs that can work better than typical early language and literacy interventions. We found five practices backed by rigorous research proven to move the needle on one or more of our community indicators. We organized these practices into five "buckets."

BUCKET 1: Active reading with children (4.5 months of additional growth)
Shared reading with children (rather than just reading aloud to children) helps build oral language, vocabulary and comprehension.

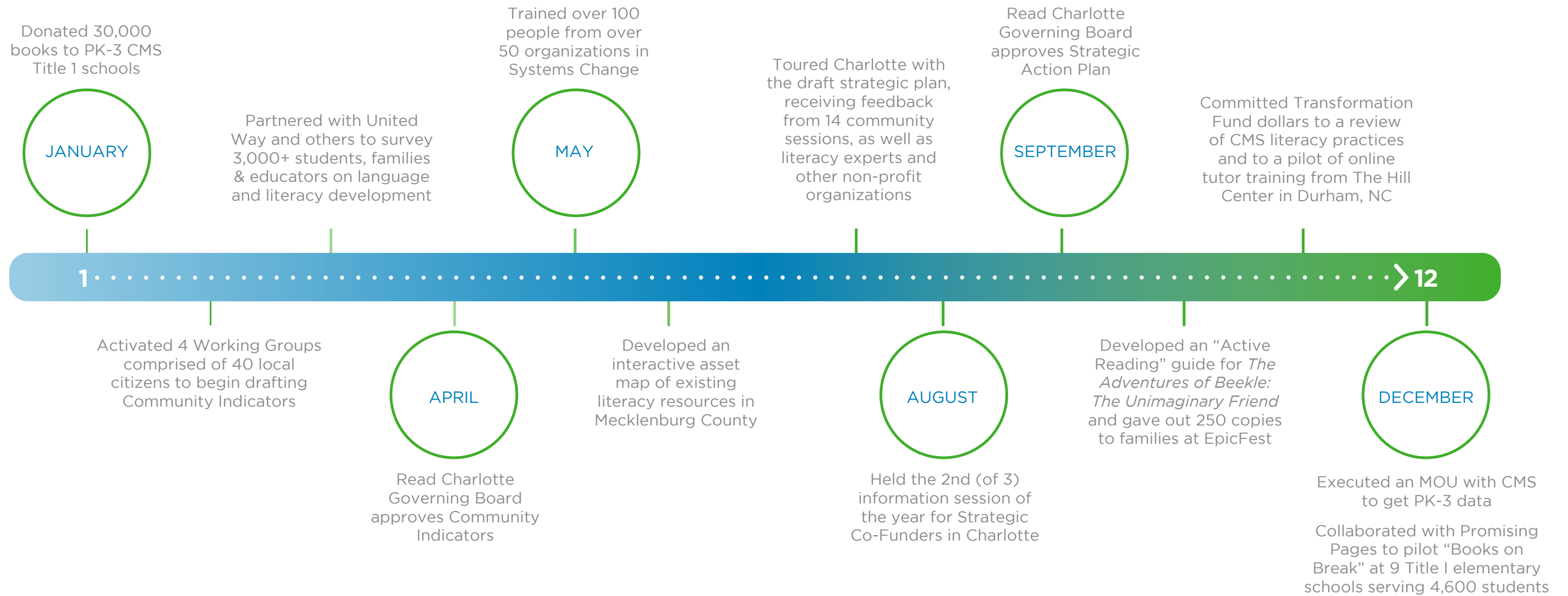
BUCKET 2: High-quality structured tutoring (7.3 months of additional growth)
Adult one-on-one structured tutoring is one of the most effective ways to help struggling readers. (Small group tutoring with 2-4 children also helps under the right conditions.)

BUCKET 3: Summer reading (3.5 months of cumulative growth)
The most impactful way to help children over the summer is to ensure they spend time reading. Summer activities at home or in the classroom with sufficient reading (4-5 books) can not only avoid the summer slide (2 months loss), but add 1.5 months of additional growth.

BUCKET 4: Include families in the process (8.4 months of additional growth)
Programs make greater impact when families are provided with knowledge and resources on specific things they can do at home to help their children develop their language and literacy skills.

BUCKET 5: Training adults to teach specific reading skills (12.2 months of additional growth)
Adults are most effective when they receive explicit instruction in specific literacy skills (e.g. letters, phonemes, phonics, comprehension, etc.).

2016: A YEAR OF ACTION



..... Delivered nearly 100 presentations in Mecklenburg County about early language & literacy development



Building Momentum Toward Our Goals

Our Strategic Action Plan guides our work to reach four initial goals by December 2017. Here's an inside look as to what we have already accomplished and what we are currently working on for each goal.



1.

PROMOTE LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH ACTIVE READING

- Developed the “ABC’s of Active Reading” to share evidence-based techniques for language and vocabulary development
- Partnering with Charlotte Mecklenburg Library, CCRI and others to provide Active Reading training for parents, educators and caregivers



3.

EQUIP FAMILIES WITH HIGH-IMPACT HOME STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT LITERACY

- Created a research-based strategy around four specific things families can do to support children’s language and literacy development at home
- Developing a public education campaign to raise awareness and catalyze specific actions to support literacy at home, school and in the community

2.

COLLECT COMMUNITY INDICATOR DATA FOR CHILDREN AGES BIRTH THROUGH THIRD GRADE

- Finalized MOU with Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools to get PK-3 data
- Built a strategy to collect more language & literacy data for the 85,000 children ages birth to five in Mecklenburg County
- Developing a data dashboard to share and track our community progress to meet our 80% goal by 2025



4.

DETERMINE WHAT WORKS TO IMPROVE LITERACY

- Identified five buckets of evidence-based practices and nearly two dozen nationally-reviewed interventions proven to improve literacy
- Developing a standardized framework to evaluate local language and literacy programs
- Partnering with CMS and Harvard University to conduct a review of literacy curricula and practices to be ready in Fall 2017





We believe in bold ideas and precise action.

With our continued community collaboration, we can change the trajectories of thousands of students in Charlotte-Mecklenburg to ensure they have the opportunity to live choice-filled lives.

2017-2018: Looking Ahead

As we look ahead to the near future, our sights are set on the following initiatives to help us reach our longer-term strategic goals.

PUBLIC EDUCATION CAMPAIGN:

Launch a public education campaign to raise awareness of early language and literacy development. Promote four High-Impact Home Strategies and get adults actively reading with children.

TUTOR CHARLOTTE:

Partner with United Way of Central Carolinas to launch Tutor Charlotte, a countywide effort to provide high-quality, structured tutoring to children throughout Mecklenburg County.

COMMUNITY DASHBOARD:

Provide relevant, actionable information to the community on how children are progressing in language and literacy development from birth through third grade.

TRANSFORMATION ZONE:

Build deep partnerships in a targeted area in southwestern Mecklenburg County to develop and implement systemic solutions that can be scaled to the rest of the community.

PARTNER NETWORK:

Create a countywide learning community where individuals and organizations can leverage research, data and resources to accelerate progress to meet our ten-year goal of 80% third-grade reading proficiency.

RAISING A READER:

Deepen and strategically expand the impact of this evidence-based reading and family engagement program in Mecklenburg County.

REACH OUT AND READ:

Deepen and strategically expand to reach more families to improve language and literacy through doctor's office visits in Mecklenburg County.

BOOKS ON BREAK:

Ensure that more children have access to books at home and build a love of reading through school-based pop-up bookstores held prior to winter and summer breaks.

Our achievements in 2016, and our future successes, are only possible with the support of a diverse coalition of individuals from across the Charlotte-Mecklenburg community as well as the Read Charlotte staff. We extend our sincere gratitude to these individuals and look forward to future collaboration.



WORKING GROUPS

Suzanne Adams, *Community Volunteer*
 Barb Bascom, *PNC*
 Angie Caffee, *City of Charlotte*
 Blair Campbell, *Community Volunteer*
 Barbara Cantisano, *Charlotte Mecklenburg Library*
 Adina Casey, *Community Volunteer*
 Vivian Correa, *UNC Charlotte*
 Todd Dalrymple, *The Duke Endowment*
 Tina Fincher, *Community Volunteer*
 Fannie Flono, *Community Volunteer*
 Ivy Gill, *CMS*
 Devonya Govan-Hunt, *Community Volunteer*
 Dominic Henriques, *PwC*
 Betty Howell-Gray, *Community Volunteer*
 Linda Hutchinson, *Community Volunteer*
 Whitney Jackson, *Community Volunteer*
 Eric Johnson, *Community Volunteer*
 Mary Johnson, *CMS*
 Kristin Keuhn-Follum, *CMS*
 John Martin, *Community Volunteer*
 Jen McDonald, *Bank of America*
 Lisa McMillan, *Community Volunteer*
 Jennifer Myers, *Community Volunteer*

Emily Nanney, *Charlotte Mecklenburg Library*
 Amanda Nickens, *CMS*
 Pilar Perez, *YMCA of Greater Charlotte*
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 Greg Schermbeck, *Community Volunteer*
 Sarah Shifflet, *Communities in Schools*
 Mariam Tisdale, *Teach For America Charlotte*
 Anthony Trotman, *Mecklenburg County*
 Deborah Walker, *Community Volunteer*
 Shonta Walker, *Thompson Child and Family Focus*
 Liz Winer, *Winer Family Foundation*
 Cass Wolfe, *Child Care Resources Inc.*

READ CHARLOTTE STAFF

Samantha Cleaver, *Research Assistant*
 Elise Esasky, *Communications Manager*
 Madison Hanakahi, *Administrative Assistant*
 Deepti Panjabi, *Data and Research Manager*
 Munro Richardson, *Executive Director*
 Maggie Wittman, *Project Manager*

ACTION LEARNING TEAMS

Active Reading Team

Kelly Cates, *Promising Pages*
 Dana Eure, *Charlotte Mecklenburg Library*
 Carolyn Hazeldine, *Child Care Resources Inc.*
 Helen Kimbrough, *Reading Partners*
 Emily Nanney, *Charlotte Mecklenburg Library*
 Mary Katharyne Rizzo, *Child Care Resources Inc.*
 Greg Schermbeck, *Community Volunteer*
 Kamy Taylor, *Reading Partners*
 Rossi Volley, *BELL*
 Amanda Wilkinson, *YMCA*

Family Engagement Team

Lee Bush-Perry, *Child Care Resources Inc.*
 Michael Devaul, *YMCA*
 Jerri Haigler, *BELL*
 Susan Hansell, *A Child's Place*
 LaTarzja Henry, *CMS*
 Meryle Leonard, *Charlotte Mecklenburg Library*
 Lisa McMillan, *Community Volunteer*
 Sarah McNeill, *United Way*
 Diane Means, *Ada Jenkins*
 Carol Morris, *Foundation For The Carolinas*
 Violeta Moser, *LAWA*
 Victor Rodriguez, *YMCA*
 Champagne Selman, *Smart Start of Mecklenburg County*
 Sarah Shifflet, *Communities in Schools*
 Caroline Trammell, *Reach Out and Read*
 Steffi Travis, *Care Ring*

Kindergarten Success Team

Courtney Alexander, *Lakewood Preschool*
 Paul Barnhardt, *Freedom School Partners*
 Regina Boyd, *CMS*
 Barbara Cantisano, *Charlotte Mecklenburg Library*
 Judith Carter, *The Learning Collaborative*
 Bill Geiger, *Community Volunteer*
 Devonya Govan-Hunt, *Community Volunteer*
 Lee Henderson, *Smart Start of Mecklenburg County*
 Alison Houser, *Augustine Literacy Project*
 William McDonald, *Bethlehem Center*
 Joanne Stratton Tate, *Charlotte Bilingual Preschool*
 Eleanor Toliver, *First Ward Child Development*
 Shannon Tucker, *Charlotte Speech and Hearing*
 Brandi Weathers, *YMCA*
 Cass Wolfe, *Child Care Resources Inc.*
 Alice Yoder, *CMS*

Summer Learning Team

Carmen Blackman, *Above and Beyond*
 Candice Colvin, *CMS*
 Stephanie Galeotti, *International House*
 Kimmi Howard, *CMS*
 Mary Nell McPherson, *Freedom School Partners*
 Sherrinne Reece, *BELL*
 Lelia Smallwood, *YWCA*
 Holly Summers-Gil, *Charlotte Mecklenburg Library*





SYSTEMS CHANGE WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

Suzanne Adams, *Community Volunteer*
 Courtney Alexander, *Lakewood Preschool*
 Rosalyn Allison-Jacobs, *ROI Impact Consulting*
 Johanna Anderson, *Belk Foundation*
 Rachel Banks, *NorthPark Family Medicine*
 Paul Barnhardt, *Freedom School Partners*
 Barbara Bascom, *PNC*
 Kitty Bauknight, *Myers Park Methodist Church*
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 Mary Bowman, *Selwyn Avenue Presbyterian Church*
 Regina Boyd, *CMS*
 Lee Bush Perry, *Child Care Resources Inc.*
 Angie Caffee, *City of Charlotte*
 Blair Campbell, *Community Volunteer*
 Barbara Cantisano, *Charlotte Mecklenburg Library*
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 Judith Carter, *The Learning Collaborative*
 Adina Casey, *Community Volunteer*
 RJ Caswell, *Church at Charlotte*
 Kelly Cates, *Promising Pages*
 Betsy Conway, *Novant Health*
 Robert Corbin, *Discovery Place*
 Vivian Correa, *UNC Charlotte*
 Emily Crow, *Bank of America*
 Kristina Cruise, *Promising Pages*
 Todd Dalrymple, *The Duke Endowment*
 Susan Daniel, *Social Venture Partners*
 Ross Danis, *MeckEd*
 Edwina Desravines, *CMS*
 Dena Diorio, *Mecklenburg County*
 Ursula Douglas, RN, *Care Ring*
 Acquanetta Edmond, *CMS*
 Holly Eskridge, *City of Charlotte*
 Dana Eure, *Charlotte Mecklenburg Library*
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 Fannie Flono, *Community Volunteer*
 Stephanie Galeotti, *International House*
 Sonja Gantt, *CMS Foundation*
 Bill Geiger, *Community Volunteer*
 Ivy Gill, *CMS*
 Devonya Govan-Hunt, *Community Volunteer*
 Jerri Haigler, *BELL*
 Susan Hansell, *A Child's Place*
 Sharon Harrington, *Reading Partners*
 Carolyn Hazeldine, *Child Care Resources Inc.*
 Rebecca Hefner, *City of Charlotte*
 Lee Henderson, *Smart Start of Mecklenburg County*
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 Craig Hopkins, *Food Lion*
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 Betty Howell-Gray, *Community Volunteer*
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 Lois Inland, *Carolinas Healthcare System*
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 Kristin Keuhn-Follum, *CMS*

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TOGETHER.



220 N. Tryon Street, Charlotte, NC 28202
www.readcharlotte.org