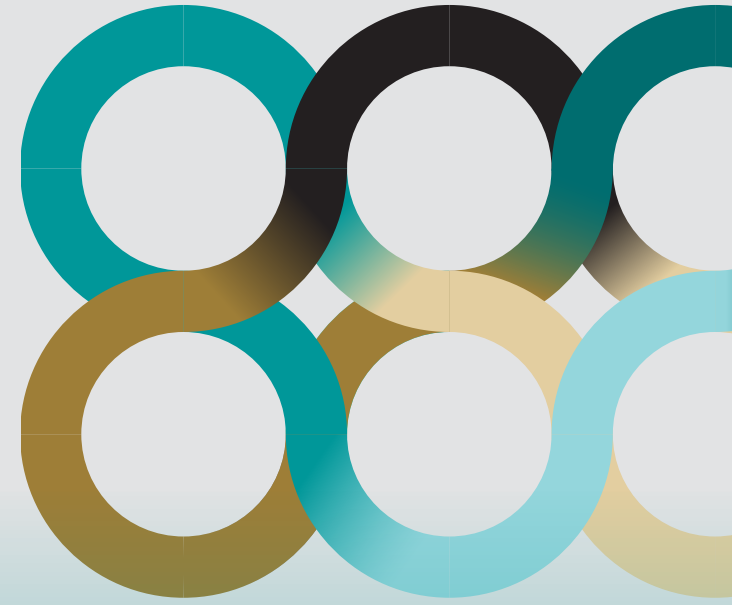


Belong Together, Strong Together



Year of Belonging | **2024** | Accomplishments

A Joint Collaboration Between the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and The Office of Justice and Belonging
January 2025



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Acknowledgments

Belong Together, Strong Together



Julie A. Freischlag, MD, FACS, FRCSEd(Hon), DFSVS, MAMSE
Chief Academic Officer and Executive Vice President, Advocate Health
Chief Executive Officer and Chief Academic Officer, Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist
Executive Vice President for Health Affairs, Wake Forest University

Throughout 2024, Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist recognized and celebrated the Year of Belonging, a transformative, organizational initiative that inspired new partnerships, forged meaningful connections and enhanced the many ways we care for teammates, patients, learners and the communities we serve. The efforts implemented during this year created spaces of belonging, trust, and advanced our mission of health, hope and healing FOR ALL.

This report reflects the incredible work that happened at Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist and across our communities throughout the Year of Belonging. All that we accomplished is a testament to the unity, strength, and growth that result from belonging together.

As you review this report, I encourage you to reflect on your role in advancing trust and belonging across our organization. We each have an opportunity and a responsibility to foster an environment where all feel valued, included and empowered. I am excited about the future and look forward to the positive impact that we will collectively achieve in this new year and beyond.



Boldly Leading the Way



**Jakki Opollo, PhD, RN,
MSN, MPH, NEA-BC**

Area Vice President, and
Chief Diversity Officer,
Atrium Health Wake
Forest Baptist

Enterprise DEI Talent
Initiatives



**Brenda Latham-Sadler,
MD, FAAFP**

Vice Chief Academic
Officer, Justice and
Belonging, Advocate Health
Vice Dean for Justice and
Belonging, Wake Forest
University School of
Medicine

Clinical Professor, Family
and Community Medicine,
Atrium Health Wake Forest
Baptist



David Zaas, MD, MBA

President, Atrium Health
Wake Forest Baptist

Executive Sponsor,
Challenge 100 Grants

At Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist, We create spaces where all belong and earn trust in all we do. Our year of belonging theme amplified our culture commitments.

As executive sponsors of our Year of Belonging, we are thrilled to share highlights and accomplishments of the initiatives implemented throughout 2024.

We are so proud of all the individuals and teams that continually engage in efforts to create a culture of inclusion and belonging in our organization and within the communities we serve.

Throughout this report you will see great examples of our intentional commitment to embed trust and belonging across our four Diversity, Equity and Inclusion pillars: Patients, Teammates, Community and Learners.

We hope this report inspires you to lead to make every experience matter for everyone you interact with within our organization and our community.

This work continues past this year as we look to embed and sustain what we have seeded. We invite you on this journey and look forward to what we will do together to build an inclusive culture FOR ALL.

When We Belong Together, We Are Strong Together



For Community, By Community

Community Collaborative - Trust Initiative
Past, Present, and Future Documentary
Belonging Talks
Challenge 100 Spotlight

Community Collaborative – The Trust Initiative Framework

Transparency and Accountability

The Year of Belonging initiative aims to build trust and belonging both within our organization and within the communities we serve. The initiative recognizes that trust and belonging extend beyond organizational walls, encompassing learners, teammates, patients, and community members.

Central to this initiative is the Trust Initiative Framework, led by the Community Collaborative. The Community Collaborative includes representatives from various offices, centers, and departments across Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist focusing on diversity, equity, inclusion, justice, belonging and community and social impact. The framework was shaped in collaboration with Community Advisory Boards and community members to capture how the community understands and feels about how we can build trust and belonging.

This framework aims to map, support, educate, promote, and report on existing and new initiatives centered around trust-building and belonging. It focuses on five main pillars addressing gaps in trust and trustworthiness, while advancing our Change Agenda for Racial Equity.

The Trust Initiative aims to support and build programs for the community led by the community while embedding and sustaining the Trust Initiative pillars in all our efforts.



1

Understanding Our History

- Acknowledging and understanding pain/trauma caused

2

Respect and Safety (Physical and Psychological)

- Being able to show up fully without judgment and believing that what people say or do will not harm me

3

Consistency in Relationship Building

- Being consistently present in community relationship building, not extractive

4

Action with Integrity

- Doing what you say and investing in areas the community feels matters

5

Transparency and Accountability

- Sharing the why, how and impact of trust building

Past, Present, Future Documentary

Understanding Our History

In 2024, in partnership with Likewise Media, a local media team with alumni from University of North Carolina School of the Arts (UNCSA) and Wake Forest University (WFU) and a community advisory board, Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist embarked on a journey to produce a three-part educational documentary. The purpose of the docu-series is to provide a historical perspective on policies, practices and behaviors, as well as share present and future efforts that demonstrate our commitment to advancing trust and belonging.

As an organization, we are committed to building more trusting relationships with our community and empowering our teammates, faculty, providers, researchers, and learners to provide the best care for our patients. Our intentional efforts, such as this documentary and what you will learn through it, will strengthen our institution's culture and future impact.

Likewise Media has interviewed more than 75 teammates and community members and captured hundreds of powerful stories and events. We are excited that the docu-series will be released later in 2025.



"You can only provide the best care when you understand the history, embrace the technological advances of the future, and have the trust to deliver it. This documentary completes a promise to the community to acknowledge the institution's history and demonstrates the deepness of Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist's commitment to providing the best care for all."

—Iris Cole, Consultant



Belonging Talks

Fostering Respect and Safety

In partnership with community stakeholders, the Belonging Talk series fosters respect, safety and inclusive spaces. These talks build trust and cultivate a sense of belonging by engaging our teammates and community members together in meaningful conversations on topics of mutual interest.

In 2024, two belonging talks were held. The inaugural talk, **Racial Inequities in Healthcare**, featured a virtual fireside chat on community-led engagement strategies to provide the best outcomes for patients. The talk on **Racial Integration: When Allies Emerged** highlighted historical accounts of racial integration in health care and the roles allies played. The session featured past Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist teammates who shared their personal stories. This session was hosted in partnership with Wake Forest University School of Divinity and the Office of Diversity and Inclusion and was the result of a Challenge 100 idea led by Dr. Lindsay Thompson, Chair of Pediatrics.

“Attending this belonging talk provided me with a unique opportunity to learn more about part of our community’s history that I had limited knowledge of. It also highlighted the impact that allies and accomplices can have in addressing racial inequities.”

–Itohan Igbiginigie, Site Coordinator, Love Literacy

Belonging Talk # 1
Belonging Talk on Racial Inequities in Healthcare

Fireside Chat Panelists



Crystal Ellis
PhD
Vice President of Research and Strategy for Action 4 Equity
Co-Director of the People's Research Council



Nadine Barrett
PhD, MA, MPH
Senior Associate Dean of Research Equity and Community Engagement
Wake Forest School of Medicine and Atrium Health
President of the National Association of Cancer Care Centers

Belonging Talk #2
Racial Integration: When Allies Emerged

Our Panelists



Sam Hickerson
Retired,
Valet and Van Services...



Michael Clements
Former Director,
Downtown Health Plaza...



Wayne Meredith, MD
Retired,
Surgeon



Phyllis Little, RN
Retired



Challenge 100: Little Things for Big Impact Mini-Grants



Action with Integrity

Building on a previous mini-grant program and in honor of our Centennial celebration, the Challenge 100: Little Things for Big Impact mini-grant program was launched in December 2023 to award up to 100 mini-grants of up to \$1,000 to implement ideas that align with the Trust Initiative Framework.

Teammates, learners, and community organizations who serve our catchment area were invited to apply with small impactful ideas that could have an immediate or sustained impact and that could be implemented by December 1, 2024.

Throughout this report, we will highlight fully implemented Challenge 100 projects, showcasing their contributions and celebrating their impact.



“People often think grand gestures build trust. In fact, trust is built in tiny, bite-sized chunks. Small, simple acts quickly add up to make a big difference! Many thanks to our teammates, learners and the community organizations for your successful implementation of your ideas!”
–Dr. David Zaas, President Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist and Executive Sponsor



300+ Applications

50 Community Organizations, 250 Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist Teammates and Learners from Forsyth, Wilkes, Davie, Guilford, Stokes and Davidson counties



\$80,000+ Awarded 83 Mini-Grants



24 Community Organizations



52 Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist Teammates



7 Wake Forest University School of Medicine Medical Students

Challenge 100: Community Awardees



Action with Integrity

The mini grants awarded to community organizations meeting eligibility criteria addressed vital community needs in Forsyth, Davidson, High Point, and Wilkes Counties.

A few highlights are included below:

- Access to fresh fruits and vegetables in a local food pantry in Davidson County
- Provide training to build an organization's capacity to serve diverse communities
- Enhanced referral network of 45 local agencies in Davidson County to increase access to community-based services and resources
- Establish a mini-library in East Winston-Salem equipped with a diverse collection of literature including art history monograph techniques and children's art
- Expand a community garden to Ashley Academy and Mineral Springs Middle School in partnership with Winston-Salem State University and Carver High School
- Enhance an existing pathway STEM mentorship program at Winston-Salem State University for male high school and college students
- Provide Thanksgiving meals for approximately 100 residents in need.
- Produce a video montage of the history of Lincoln Heights Rosenwald School located in Wilkes County



Lincoln Heights Rosenwald School



Challenge 100 Spotlight: Backpacks for Thriving Futures



Action with Integrity

Backpacks for Thriving Futures is a partnership between the Forsyth County Department of Public Health and Mia Magazine aimed at collecting and distributing backpacks and essential school supplies to students in need within our community. This initiative sought to alleviate financial burdens on families and empower students to excel academically by fostering a positive learning environment.

An event was held on July 27, 2024, from 11am-1pm in the Compare Foods parking lot. The Forsyth County Department of Public Health, Compare Foods, and Mia Magazine played a key role in organization and execution of the event.

Feedback from attendees expressed gratitude for the event's organization, attention to detail and for the supplies, health education and food provided.

IMPACT:

- Over **3,000** people attended
- **2,581** backpacks were collected
- **2,216** backpacks distributed on-site
- **55** volunteers from Our Lady of Mercy, Mia Magazine, Piedmont Federal Bank and more
- More than **40** vendors participated



Youth Behavioral Health Efforts

Consistency in Relationship Building



Based on feedback from the community, there is a need for supporting and sharing mental health resources specific for youth. A subcommittee of both community members and Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist teammates met regularly to focus on ways to provide resources for youth and their parents. The subcommittee also supported two events that benefited from Challenge 100 mini-grants.

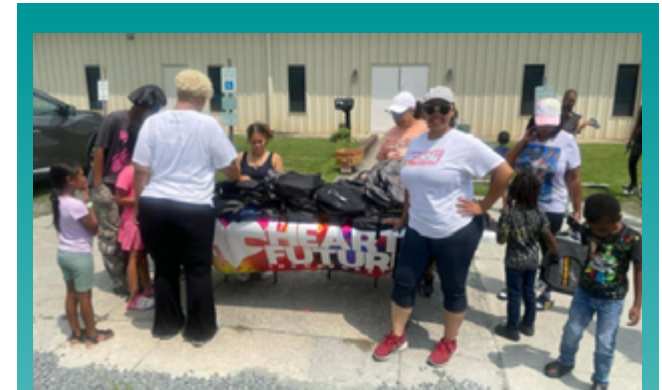


WS Rise, a United Way funded effort, used funding to support a youth-led summit held in October at the Enterprise Center. Twenty youth provided input on the seven vital conditions for wellbeing and justice which included transportation, belonging and civic engagement.



“Engaging youth on how the vital conditions impact them also taught problem-solving, leadership and resiliency skills.”

–Amaria Faison, Youth Summit Coordinator



Heart of the Futures Inc. used funding to host a backpack event and support its second annual Heart Academy held on September 7, 2024 at ROAR in Winston-Salem. The event provided 26 youth and their parents with education and interactive activities on career readiness, entrepreneurship, and included Dr. Yasmin Gay, Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist provider, who presented on behavioral health.

Teammate Engagement

Culture of Safety and Work Environment Survey

Teammate Spotlight

Belonging Book Clubs

Belonging Awards

Center for Advancing Racial Equity Convenings

Academic Leadership Equity Forum

Challenge 100 Spotlight

2024 Culture of Safety and Work Environment Survey

Transparency and Accountability

The annual Culture of Safety and Work Environment Survey initiated in 2024 provided an opportunity for teammates to share their voice around our Culture of Safety, Teammate and Clinician Experience, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion topics plus so much more. The engagement scores, based on the DEI related questions, tie to teammate engagement and our organization's ability to create a sense of belonging and trust. These scores are our road map to act and demonstrate our commitment to transparency and accountability.

Our engagement scores across the core DEI questions are at or above national benchmarks. These results are reflective of a strong culture of inclusion and belonging. While this is to be celebrated, we know we still have a long way to go and must remain focused on this important work.



Response Rate 48% **N= 10392**

DEI QUESTIONS COMPARED TO BENCHMARK

FAIR TREATMENT All teammates, regardless of their differences, are treated fairly. 67% 4.4 points above benchmark	DIVERSITY VALUED At this organization, diversity is valued. 81% 0.8 points above benchmark
--	---

SENSE OF BELONGING I feel like I really belong at our organization. 72% -0.7 points below benchmark	EQUITY OF CARE (Clinicians) I believe we provide all patients with the same standard of care, regardless of differences. 74% 9.0 points above benchmark
--	--

Teammate Spotlights: What are some ways that Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist helps you feel like you belong?

Action with Integrity



Cole Clark, Business Administrator Radiology

“Over my eight years at Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist, I’ve witnessed a significant and commendable shift toward fostering an environment where all truly belong. The organization’s commitment to equity and inclusion has been evident through the implementation of the Racial Equity Change Agenda. Additionally, the establishment of System Resource Groups has created spaces for courageous conversations, stimulating dialogue on important issues. These initiatives have not only transformed the workplace culture but also demonstrated a proactive approach to ensuring that every individual, regardless of background, feels valued and included at Wake Forest Baptist.”



Essence Howelle, Administrative Manager, General Surgery

“This is visible through institution-wide Affinity Groups (System Resource Groups), our Inclusive Hiring Toolkit, cultural competency trainings and various mentorship and leadership initiatives. I believe these programs are beneficial in our efforts to develop a community of teammates and leaders that reflect the population we serve.”



Dennis Dove, Director, HR Business Partner

“I have worked for Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist twice. The first time, in the early 2000’s, I was hired as an employee relations manager in Human Resources. After a few years, I left the organization to see if the grass was greener on the other side. Well, it was not. I later returned, not because of an opportunity, but because of the great people who make up the culture of our organization. Our teammates and leaders are smart, talented, dedicated and caring. This brought me back, and after seven years it was truly a great decision! I enjoy helping with the indirect care for our patients. This makes me feel that I belong here at Wake Forest Baptist.”

Teammate Engagement

Action with Integrity

So much happened in 2024! Thank you to all of our teammates and System Resource Group members who engaged within our organization and in the various community outreach and programs celebrating our rich diversity, history, cultures and heritage throughout the year.

- Black History Month
- Women’s History Month
- International Women’s Day
- Mental Health Awareness
- Juneteenth Festival
- PRIDE WS Parade and Food Truck
- International Black Theatre Festival
- Kennedy-Hopkins Medical Building
- Fiesta Festival
- Veteran’s Day
- Native American Heritage Celebration
- Holidays Around the World
- Staff Council at Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist



International Black Theatre Festival



International Women’s Day



Triad Veteran’s Day Celebration



Holiday’s Around the World



American Indian Heritage Celebration



Fiesta Festival – Cancer Center’s Strolling Colon



Juneteenth Festival



“Thank you to the System Resource Groups leaders and members who galvanized around the Year of Belonging theme! Your dedication demonstrates our organization’s commitment to building trust because You show up for your community, your patients, teammates and learners!”

—Montez Lane-Brown, Manager, Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion



Kennedy-Hopkins Medical Building in East Winston

Leadership on the Same Page: Belonging Book Clubs

Respect and Safety

The Leadership on the Same Page Belonging Book Clubs were designed to provide teammates across the Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist market with exposure to materials and interactive discussions about what it means to be an inclusive leader. The book club was centered on the book “**How to be an Inclusive Leader**” by Jennifer Brown.

100%

satisfied and very satisfied with book club

100%

satisfied and very satisfied with practical use of what they learned

89%

would recommend others to host their own book club

“We are all in a state of learning and should not feel embarrassed to ask, learn, and acknowledge.”

—Michelle Payne, RN, Magnet Program Director



“Having the opportunity to lead the Year of Belonging Book Clubs was a remarkable experience. So many teammates were willing to challenge themselves and one another to evaluate what it truly means to be an inclusive leader. This book club created a new and meaningful chapter in the journey of fostering inclusive leadership and belonging FOR ALL.”

—L’Oreal Neal, MBA, Enterprise Center of Excellence Lead – DEI Talent Initiatives



Belonging Awards

Transparency and Accountability

Belonging Awards recognize teammates and teams who demonstrate enthusiastic dedication to living out our Culture Commitments and fostering an inclusive learning and working environment for all.

Congratulations to the 28 teammates recognized with this award!



This year the Public Health Sciences Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee at Wake Forest University School of Medicine was named the winner of the Belonging Award for Inclusion for a team (pictured to the right).

PHS brings teammates from four departments together to ensure all voices are heard. Working with the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, this committee has organized and facilitated WAKE Active Bystander training for faculty and staff and tailored the Inclusive Hiring Toolkit to improve hiring practices. Teammates also actively volunteered at both the Juneteenth Festival and the PRIDE WS Parade and food truck.



In the photo Left to Right: Julie Freischlag, MD, Sabina Gesell, PhD, Camelia Singletary, Sean Simpson, PhD, Lilli Mann-Jackson, Justin Moore, PhD, Amanda Vega, Brenda Latham Sadler, MD

Center for Advancing Racial Equity (CARE) Convening

Action with Integrity

The Center for Advancing Racial Equity (CARE) is led by Amy McMichael, MD and Sabina Gesell, PhD, Co-Center Directors, Doug Easterling, PhD, Associate Director for Strategy, and Laura McDuffee, MPA, Research Associate.

CARE provides leadership to implement the Change Agenda for Racial Equity and is committed to convening and facilitating organizational change to advance racial equity throughout Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist and Wake Forest University School of Medicine. As part of the convening function, CARE hosted and facilitated a series of engaging peer-learning sessions for leaders who lead racial equity work. The convenings covered the following topics:

- Creating a culture of trustworthiness
- Strategies to shift organizational culture
- Examining the dynamics surrounding inner circles
- Creating a culture of belonging.
- Public Health Sciences Climate Survey

Thank you to the CARE team and convening participants for their role in supporting our Year of Belonging efforts. Together, we can create an institution where everyone thrives, feels valued, respected and empowered.



Amy McMichael, MD

Professor, Dermatology, Wake Forest University School of Medicine



Sabina Gesell, PhD

Director for Leadership Development Programs, Women in Medicine and Science

Professor, Social Sciences and Health Policy, Wake Forest University School of Medicine



Doug Easterling, PhD

Professor, Social Sciences and Health Policy, Wake Forest University School of Medicine



Laura McDuffee, MPA,

Research Associate, Wake Forest University School of Medicine

Academic Leaders Equity Forum

Consistency in Relationship Building

This year's Academic Leaders Equity Forum hosted by the Office of Justice and Belonging, Office of Diversity Equity and Inclusion, and the Center for Advancing Racial Equity was all about "Inclusive Leadership: Fostering a Culture of Justice and Belonging." With close to 60 clinicians, researchers, and staff in attendance, the forum kicked off with a fireside chat held at the Wake Forest University Bowman Gray Center for Medical Education followed by an inspiring keynote presentation from author and dynamic speaker, Bernadette Smith, who captivated the audience with the ARC Method, providing practical strategies for fostering inclusivity.

The highlight of the event was the honoring of Dr. Julie Freischlag, who received the Justice and Belonging Lifetime Achievement Award – celebrating her visionary leadership and unwavering dedication to fostering justice and belonging throughout the enterprise.

100 percent of post-event survey respondents indicated that they strongly agreed and agreed the forum helped them think about their role as an inclusive leader.



"This year's forum provided a space for leaders to share insights and strategies on inclusivity. This event not only highlighted the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion but also empowered leaders with actionable tools to create a more just and welcoming environment."

–Dr. RaShonda Flint, Senior Strategist and Chief of Staff to the Vice Chief Academic Officer/Vice Dean, Office of Justice and Belonging



Challenge 100: Teammate Awards

Action with Integrity



More than 55 teammates received funding to implement ideas which impacted patients, learners and teammates. Most ideas impacted the patients and community we serve, further elevating the commitment and passion our extraordinary workforce has in making a difference for others! Teammate awards also enhanced teammate wellbeing and provided professional development and education opportunities.



We Listen Because We Care Panel Discussion event hosted by The Birth Center Education Series to educate teammates and local organizations on how to improve the birth experience and patient outcomes. Implemented by Challenge 100 awardee Lynette Sechriest

- Campus Trail Signage
- Survivor Celebration
- Bilingual Patient Room Boards
- Rehab Equipment
- Bilingual Resources
- Blood Pressure Cuffs
- Comfort Care
- Age-appropriate Activities
- Healthy Meal Preparation Program
- Sunscreen Dispensers
- Diabetic Portion Plate
- Racial Inequities in Healthcare Education Session
- Temperature Monitoring
- Wellness Resources
- Spanish AED
- Activity Bags
- Clothing Closet
- Kennedy-Hopkins Mentor Academy Accreditation
- Pain/Anxiety Reduction
- Health Literacy Educational Event
- Resident Training Modules
- Feminine Hygiene Products
- Rural Autism Evaluation
- Prostate Cancer Screening
- Medical Kits
- Inclusive Art
- Hygiene Cart
- Comfort Care Signage
- Promotional Video
- Spanish Educational Sessions
- AED/CPR Training
- Automated External Defibrillator (AED)
- Multilingual Informational Greeting Cards
- CPR Manikin
- Science and Art Education
- Relaxation through Nature Sound
- Pill Cutters
- Keepsakes in Memory of Loved Ones
- Fitness Bicycle
- Inclusive Teammate Portrait Series
- AED/CPR Training
- Education on Medical Racism
- Advokits Supplies
- Inspirational Bracelets
- Craft Keepsakes
- Voices in Underrepresented Medicine Education Series
- Birth Trauma Education
- Islamic Educational Pamphlets
- Athlete Braces
- Sensory Bags
- OB Education Information Magnets
- Window Art
- Cancer Resources and Referrals
- Community Closet
- Wellness Picnic
- Breakfast with Ronald McDonald
- Alopecia Educational Event
- Vision Screening

Challenge 100 Spotlight: Connecting Teammate Families, Medical Students and Healthy Eating Habits



Action with Integrity

The Center of Excellence for Research, Teaching and Learning (CERTL) manages the Best SELF program to provide comprehensive support with a focus on academic achievement for Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist teammates who have dependents in grades 5-12. The program goals include increasing high school graduation rates, enhancing college preparedness, elevating interest in STEM fields for students and increasing teammate satisfaction and retention.

Fifty Best SELF participants (teammates, their children and Wake Forest University School of Medicine medical student mentors) were provided cooking workshops, utensils and ingredients to prepare healthy meals in partnership with Brenner Fit, thereby enhancing life skills and strengthening bonds between mentors, participants, and families.

The impact of this activity is clear in the smiles and photos from participants. Some middle schoolers came alive at the stove top during the activity, impressing their mentors with newfound enthusiasm and cooking skills. A graduating senior, part of Best SELF since 5th grade, brought his mom and cousin after a year away. That evening, he reconnected with his mentor and began completing college applications.



A group of diverse people, including men and women of various ethnicities, are looking upwards. The image is overlaid with a teal semi-transparent box that contains text. The text is white and reads: "Patients Come First", "Valentine's Day Belonging Challenge", "Healthcare Equality Leader Status", and "Challenge 100 Spotlight".

Patients Come First

Valentine's Day Belonging Challenge
Healthcare Equality Leader Status
Challenge 100 Spotlight

Valentine's Day Belonging Challenge

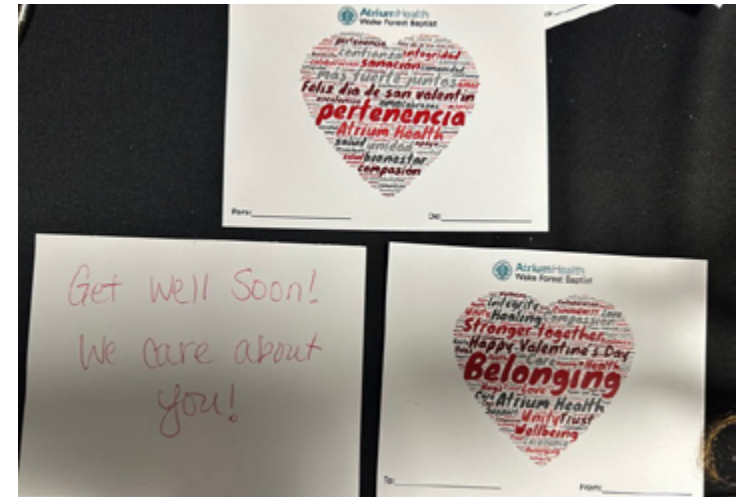
Consistency in Relationship Building

Between February 12 to 18, teammates participated in the Valentine's Day Card Challenge writing cards filled with messages of love, encouragement and inspiration for patients and colleagues.

On February 12, the Offices of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and Justice and Belonging hosted a table at the Centennial Celebration held in the Spine of Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center.

Approximately 1,000 Valentine's Day cards were made available in both English and Spanish at the event and approximately 500 cards were signed at the Centennial Celebration by teammates and learners and hand delivered to patients and teammates.

Additionally, teammates and learners were encouraged to send e-cards via the Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist Recognition platform to appreciate their colleagues. The challenge highlighted the impact of small acts of kindness in fostering belonging and strengthening connections within our community.



"The Valentine's Day Belonging Challenge was so much fun! Caught my patient by total surprise, I think she is still smiling!"

—Dr. Brenda Latham-Sadler, Vice Chief Academic Officer, Justice and Belonging, Advocate Health, Vice Dean for Justice and Belonging, Wake Forest University School of Medicine, Clinical Professor, Family and Community Medicine, Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist



Healthcare Equality Index Leader Status: Caring for our LGBTQ+ Patients, Teammates, Learners, and Community

Transparency and Accountability

The Human Rights Campaign Foundation (HRC) released the results of the 2024 Healthcare Equality Index (HEI), the nation's leading, comprehensive survey measuring inclusive policies and practices for LGBTQ+ patients, visitors, and teammates. Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center achieved the highest designation: "LGBTQ+ Healthcare Equality Leader" with a perfect score which is the fourth year of achieving this status!

"People want to work for and receive care where everyone belongs," says Jakki Opollo, Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer for Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist. "This year our theme at Wake Forest Baptist is 'Belong Together, Stronger Together.' Receiving the highest recognition as an LGBTQ+ Healthcare Equality Leader affirms our strong commitment to building cultures of belonging. It's a shared aspiration and intent by many leaders and teammates across our organization that delivers on our FOR ALL mission, and, as a result, our organization is stronger."

Many thanks to the dedication of our Equality One for LGBTQ+ System Resource Group and the commitment of our clinicians, staff, researchers, and learners!



Challenge 100 Spotlight



Action with Integrity

A large number of Challenge 100 grant recipients submitted by teammates and learners focused on enhancing our care for patients throughout their care experience.

Whether displaying inclusive artwork in the waiting rooms or ensuring children have interactive walls with various toys to make the time go by, teammates were innovative and intentional to meet a need expressed by patients over the years!

These ideas are great examples of our commitment to advancing our mission to elevate hope, improve health, and advance healing FOR ALL.



Nutrition Counseling for Eye Health



NICU Crafty Keepsakes



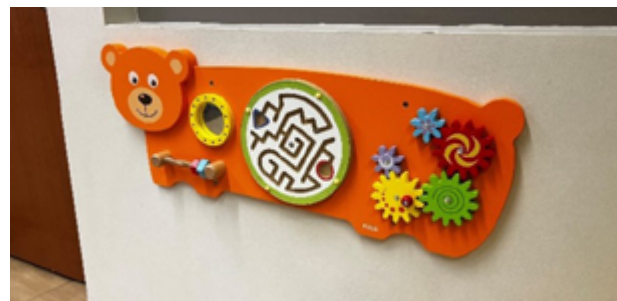
Tangibles for the Intangibles



Autism Community Connections Clinic Spanish Video



Helping Families Understand Acquired Brain Injury Through Children's Books



Pediatric ED Waiting Space Enrichment



Comfort Care Sign/Magnet

Challenge 100 Spotlight: The Voice Center

Respect and Safety



The Voice Center at Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist proudly incorporated two pieces of inclusive artwork to celebrate diversity and create an affirming environment for all patients. Our teammate Kathryn Ruckart, Speech-Language Pathologist Specialist, shares her excitement when describing the artwork, “One piece, *Lift Every Voice* by renowned local artist Ernie Barnes, honors the richness of cultural expression through music and community. The other artwork, a vibrant piece filled with the colors of the rainbow, represents and affirms our gender-diverse patients.”

Kathryn further explains, “Together, these pieces promote a welcoming space that aligns with the ‘Safety and Respect Initiative’ and ‘Year of Belonging.’ By celebrating diversity through art, the Voice Center underscores its commitment to acknowledging, affirming, and respecting each patient’s unique identity.”



A transwoman seeking gender affirming voice therapy had previously shared that our clinic is the only space where she feels safe and is truly able to be herself. When she saw the new artwork, she said, “It’s powerful to walk into a place that not only says you’re welcome but shows it. This makes me feel like I matter here.”

Challenge 100 Spotlight: Hygiene Cart



Action with Integrity

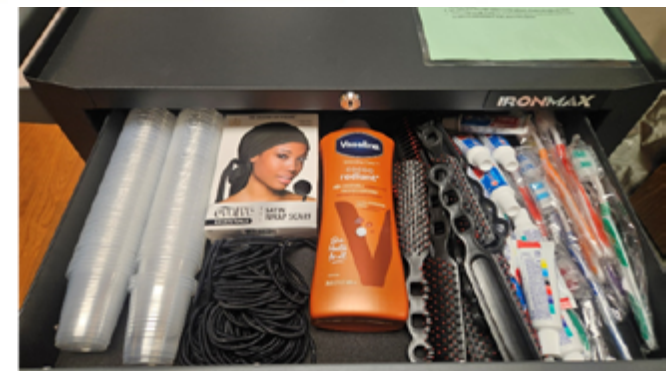
The inspiration for the hygiene cart originated from the recurrent concerns of long stay patients in the emergency department (ED). These patients often faced an extended period in the ED without access to essential hygiene products. Moreover, there was a noticeable lack of hygiene items suitable for patients from diverse ethnic backgrounds, exacerbating their discomfort. To address this pressing need, Suzanne Hunter, Registered Nurse in Nursing Education, had the idea of a comprehensive hygiene cart containing a variety of essential items such as underwear and bras to ensure basic personal comfort, as well as a range of hygiene products.

This initiative not only improved patient experience but also demonstrated our commitment to inclusive care by recognizing and addressing the unique needs of our diverse patient population. The impact of the hygiene cart was vividly illustrated when a long stay patient in the ED requested to take a shower. Given the freedom to choose her own specific hygiene items from the cart, she selected the products that suited her needs. After her shower, she expressed her gratitude, saying, “I really appreciate being able to use this for my shower. I feel so much better.” This personal testament underscores the profound difference such a seemingly simple resource can make in a patient’s experience.



“The introduction of the hygiene cart has been met with positive feedback from patients and staff alike. It represents a significant step forward in our ongoing efforts to enhance patient care and comfort in the emergency department.”

—Suzanne Hunter, Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist High Point, Emergency Room Hygiene Cart





Learners are the Future

Kennedy-Hopkins Scholars Annual Conference
Safe Zone in Medicine Training
Shoulders on Which We Stand Podcast
Challenge 100 Spotlight

Kennedy-Hopkins Scholars Annual Conference

Consistency in Relationship Building

The Kennedy-Hopkins (KH) Scholars Mentor Program was developed by Drs. Artina Dawkins and Brenda Latham-Sadler to address a gap in support for residency and fellowship programs at Wake Forest University School of Medicine. The program also helps recruit and retain diverse residents, fellows, and staff by exploring the power that relationships can have in the careers of medical professionals. The program was named in honor of Drs. Charlie Kennedy and Larry Hopkins, two prominent African-American trailblazers within the Winston-Salem community.

At the 6th Annual KH Scholar's Conference held on March 19-20, 2024, residents and fellows heard lectures featuring Dr. Jakki Opollo, Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer at Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist. Both lectures were focused on learner leadership development to prepare learners to be tomorrow's leaders. Attendees gained insights on addressing career equity barriers for underrepresented talent, demystifying the obstacles in talent selection, and learning best practices for mitigating bias across the talent cycle.

Attendees of this year's conference expressed their appreciation for the topics covered and were left energized and inspired to support and champion inclusive practices.



Safe Zone in Medicine Training: Student-Led 3-Night Training

Respect and Safety

The Safe Zone In Medicine team, a student group at Wake Forest University School of Medicine, hosts this training to educate, advocate and engage learners and teammates on LGBTQ+ health related topics. The three-night training is offered to teammates and learners annually in the fall covering a variety of topics.

The training ends with a panel of LGBTQ+ patients and their families, advocates and providers sharing their lived experiences while navigating the health care system.

This training is required for the Gender and Sexual Minority Health Care certificate offered to medical students.



Trinity Davis, MS2



“The hope with this training is that anyone who seeks it out is able to go forward and contribute to a healthcare environment that embraces inclusion, diversity, and belonging in the clinic and beyond.”

—Anna Kaneb, MS2, Class of 2027



Kathleen Williams, MS2 (left) and Aisha Nur, MS2 (right)

Shoulders on Which We Stand (SOWWS) Podcast

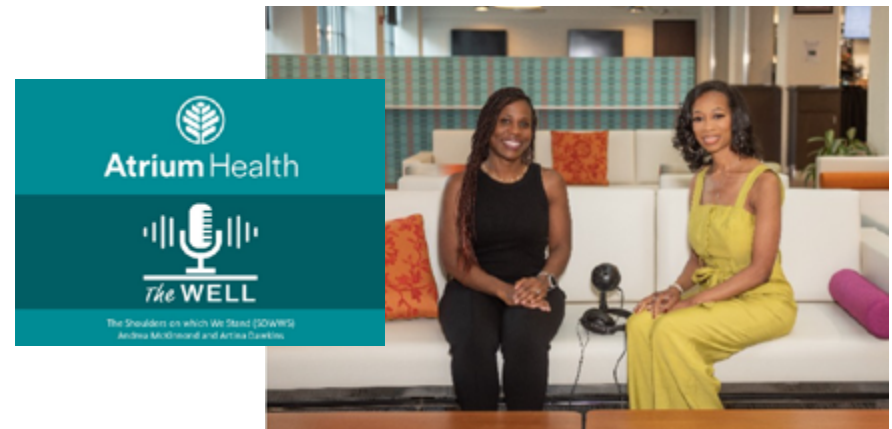
Transparency and Accountability

Since 2023, the Shoulders on Which We Stand (SOWWS) podcast, hosted and created by Andrea McKinnond, Assistant Professor of PA Studies at Wake Forest University School of Medicine, has highlighted contributions made by diverse trailblazers from our institution who have and are currently impacting the way we achieve our mission: to improve health, elevate hope and advance healing for our patients and our community. These stories inspire and remind us that the seeds you plant now for justice and equity will one day benefit the next generation.

In 2024, Dr. Artina Dawkins, Program Manager, Social Impact and Co-Director, Diversity and Inclusion, Orthopedic Surgery, joined Andrea as co-host. This year we featured a two-part series on the impact that mentorship and sponsorship can play in propelling diversity within leadership featuring Dr. Jakki Opollo. The final episode of the year shares the extraordinary bond developed through the Kennedy-Hopkins Scholars mentorship program between two black male doctors, Dr. Martin Burks and Dr. Cliff Howard Jr, as they discuss their legacy while “Carrying the Torch.”

“This past year we focused on elevating voices in our institution that created a sense of belonging through mentorship, trust, and belonging. In 2025, we will recognize a few of our leaders who have partnered with community leaders to advance us closer to health equity.”

—Drs. Dawkins and Andrea McKinnond



Andrea E. McKinnond, Assistant Professor of PA Studies and Artina Dawkins, PhD, MPA, C-TAGME, Program Manager, Social Impact and Co-Director, Diversity and Inclusion, Orthopedic Surgery, Founder and Director, Kennedy- Hopkins Scholars Mentor Program Affiliate, Maya Angelou Center for Health Equity



**Dr. Jakki Opollo,
PhD, RN, MSN,
MPH, NEA-BC**

Area Vice President
and Chief Diversity
Officer, Atrium Health
Wake Forest Baptist
Enterprise DEI Talent
Initiatives



**Clifford Howard
JR., MD**

Clinical Associate
Professor, Radiology,
Atrium Health Wake
Forest Baptist



**Martin V. Burks IV,
MD, MBA**

Anatomic and Clinical
Pathologist, Private
Practice in Virginia

Challenge 100 Spotlight: Giving Back To Community



Action with Integrity

A total of seven mini-grants were awarded to Wake Forest University School of Medicine medical students. These ideas impact other learners, teammates, patients and the community we serve on a daily basis.

Ideas included:

- Education on medical racism
- Providing cancer resources and referrals to patients in need
- Breakfast for families staying at the Ronald McDonald House
- Vision screenings
- Islamic educational pamphlets

Sydney Karre, a third year MD program student, gave back to an organization that provided much needed services to her as a teenager. When she was 15, she was diagnosed with lupus and hospitalized for 8 weeks. During her time in the hospital she was 2.5 hours away from her family. In order for them to financially afford having someone stay with her the entire time, they utilized the Ronald McDonald House (RMH) charities.

Now at the age of 25 she not only recognizes the impact that RMH played in her life, but she is committed to investing in the work they do. Since Sydney's first year at Wake Forest University School of Medicine she has regularly volunteered at RMH hosting craft nights, and with funding from a Challenge 100 grant she has also been able to coordinate with her peers to come to RMH monthly to cook breakfast for over 200 families. Opportunities like this funded through the Year of Belonging not only support our patients and their families during difficult times, but also help our teammates and learners connect to the broader community they are training to serve, as well as develop their own sense of community and well-being.



Charting Our Path Forward



Fernando Little, MSL, COID
Senior Vice President
Chief Diversity, Equity and
Inclusion Officer
Advocate Health

What an outstanding showcase of initiatives! While we still have a lot of work to do, the Year of Belonging efforts at Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist are to be celebrated.

Sustaining the Year of Belonging efforts remains critical to building a strong culture of inclusivity across the enterprise. As we look ahead to the future, each one of us has a critical role to play in advancing our enterprise focus area on Psychological Safety, a key pillar already embedded in the Year of Belonging’s Trust Initiative Framework.

Our path forward will be grounded in embedding and connecting to our new Purpose statement and Commitments. We are counting on you to make this happen and look forward to the future!

Our Purpose

From discovery to everyday moments, we're redefining care –
for you, for us, for all

We...

Our Commitments

- LIFT EVERYONE UP**
We believe everyone matters and create spaces where all belong and can thrive.
- LEAD THE WAY**
We chart new paths to achieve the extraordinary.
- THINK BOLDLY TOGETHER**
We collaborate with humility, turning the best ideas into new possibilities.
- EMBRACE THE UNKNOWN**
We drive change through fearless curiosity and unshakeable optimism.

Acknowledgments

On behalf of the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and the Office of Justice and Belonging, thank you to our community members and organizations and all the members of the Community Collaborative at Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist for your contribution to the Year of Belonging Trust Initiative.

Action4Equity	Healthy Women, Children and Adolescents	Network Hospitals	System Resource Group Representatives
BestHealth	Hispanic League	Office of Cancer Health Equity	Wake Forest University School of Medicine Faculty and Clinicians
Boston Thurmond United	Human Resources	Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion	Wake Forest University Center for Civic and Community Engagement
Center for Advancing Racial Equity	Iglesias Sin Fronteras	Office of Justice and Belonging	Wake Forest University Slavery Race and Memory Project
City of Winston-Salem	Imprints Cares	Partnership 4 Prosperity	Wake Forest University Social Documentary Program
Community Translational Science – Program in Community-Engaged Research	Innovation Quarter	Pediatrics	Winston-Salem State University
Facilities	Internal Medicine	Philanthropy	
FaithHealth Ministries	Love Out Loud	Population Health	
Forsyth Backpack	Marketing and Communications	Reset and Heal, LLC	
Forsyth County Health Department	Maya Angelou Center for Health Equity	Salem College	
Healthy Forsyth	Neighbors for Better Neighborhoods (NBN)	Shalom Project	
	Health Disparities Collaborative	SPARK	
		St. Peters World Outreach Center	



Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
Office of Justice and Belonging