Actions Underway — Health Foundations

W. Colby Tucker
Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies

“The way we think about a healthy environment is broader than one issue, it is about parks and trails and access to the outdoors, and it’s about how the rest of the population behaves. The more people see others exercising, the more they’re likely to exercise.”
— Kent Thiry, CEO of DaVita, a Fortune 500 company which decided to move to Colorado in 2010 in part because of the health record of the state (R. Jones, 2013).

Foundations play a key role in funding a wide variety of health programs, including medical research, access to medical services, public education, organizational effectiveness of health care systems, disease prevention and others. At the same time, this programmatic approach appears to be yielding to more advocacy in the policy process. While health foundations are not likely to give up on programs altogether, many now recognize the cost effectiveness of becoming involved in the policy process to tackle their target issues. In addressing both the programmatic and policy advocacy component in pursuing their missions, foundations are becoming key players in partnerships at a variety of scales.

As health care dollars are increasingly scrutinized and hospital dollars devoted to Community Benefits need initiatives to fund, health foundations are helping shift the conversation toward more of a focus on disease prevention. Many of these foundations have placed promoting healthy lifestyles programs and advocacy agendas as menu items on their health portfolio. These investments take a variety of shapes, such as improving access to healthy foods and supporting an active population. This chapter offers a closer look at how health foundations are encouraging the citizenry to be physically active through the use of parks and public spaces in our communities and how foundations are approaching these projects from an institutional perspective.
2.1 Progress Begins with the Foundation in Health

The clearest and boldest steps health foundations can make in promoting use of natural areas are by providing vision, leadership, funding, maintenance, and programming for a park. This “one-stop shop” approach, while attractive in its simplicity, is idealized and relatively rare. Working at the community level, larger foundations often do not have the on-the-ground person-power and local connections to pull off such a project by themselves.

Successful projects can, however, begin with the health foundation’s vision, coupled with leveraging its broader networks. The Desert Healthcare Foundation provides one such example of how health foundations can initiate and manage park development.

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Desert Healthcare Foundation (CA): The Wellness Park

Desert Healthcare Foundation created the 5-acre Wellness Park in collaboration with the City of Palm Springs, the Desert Water Agency, and Palm Springs Unified School District. The impetus behind the park was a board member’s desire to have a natural area around the hospital such that her husband, suffering from Lou Gehrig’s disease, had access to a natural area during treatment.

While the park was born out of an individual’s vision, the process for the park development was an example of collective impact. The City of Palm Springs offered to maintain the park for ten years at a cost of $1 per year. The Desert Water Agency contributed $250,000 and, in return, was allowed to incorporate educational signage about water use and quality. The Palm Springs Unified School District offered the sale of the land at a bargain price. The local health care district’s support of the park was stated using wording from the Healthy People 2010 federal program—encouraging fitness and disease prevention. The park has a quarter-mile walking/jogging loop with drinking fountains and benches, exercise stations, and various gardens—meditation, memorial, and a healing and fragrance garden.

In conducting this work, the Foundation:

- Is acting on the belief that health results from the proper care of body, mind and spirit;
- Defines health according to wellness, instead of illness;
- Focuses on prevention and health promotion, instead of acute, episodic treatment; and
- Encourages participation by the entire community.
Park managers now cite the presence of several informal economies and activities occurring at the park, including tai chi and yoga practice, dog walking, and an annual run with the mayor.

*Note: The federal government’s Healthy People 2010 initiative has now been superseded by a subsequent 2020 initiative.*

For more information see: Desert Healthcare Wellness Park: [http://www.dhcd.org/Wellness-Park](http://www.dhcd.org/Wellness-Park); Healthy People 2020 Initiative: [http://healthypeople.gov/2020/implement/Funding.as](http://healthypeople.gov/2020/implement/Funding.as)

Wellness parks can fit within many of the goals stated by health foundations. For land trusts, wellness parks are a useful concept that can broaden the toolkit for acquiring or facilitating the preservation of land. As another example of how foundations can direct the dialogue surrounding health and the use of natural areas, The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Commission to Build a Healthier America published a 110-page report in early 2014 with the title “Time to Act: Investing in the Health of Our Children and Communities.” The recommendations of the report have close links to urban/community development and financing healthcare, and have potential consequences for land conservation. The three driving recommendations, along with other relevant suggestions, include the following:

- **1. Make investing in America’s youngest children a high priority.** This will require a significant shift in spending priorities and major new initiatives to ensure that families and communities build a strong foundation in the early years for a lifetime of good health.
- **2. Fundamentally change how we revitalize neighborhoods, fully integrating health into community development.**
  - 2a. Support and speed the integration of finance, health, and community development to revitalize neighborhoods and improve health.
  - 2b. Establish incentives and performance measures to spur collaborative approaches to building healthy communities.
- **3. The nation must make a much more health-focused approach to health care financing and delivery.** Broaden the mindset, mission, and incentives for health professionals and health care institutions beyond treating illness to helping people lead healthy lives.
  - 3a. Adopt new vital signs to assess nonmedical indicators for health.
  - 3b. Create incentives tied to reimbursement for health professionals and health care institutions to address nonmedical factors that affect health.”
As local land trusts seek to engage with the health foundations in their communities, they might consider how their work/vision is aligned with these goals—as they do mark three themes that appear in much of the dialogue. As a result, land trusts are likely to be more successful if they are able to address how a given project targets children’s health (especially with respect to obesity), community/neighborhood development, and health care cost efficiency.

### 2.2 Environmental Programs working with Health Programs

In addition to expanding health programs to include natural areas, some foundations with multiple program portfolios appear to be changing their granting guidelines. Environmental projects operating under the “nature for nature’s sake” paradigm appear fewer in number and seem to be giving way to grants that include humans. In some foundations, institutional policy now encourages program officers to find and solicit projects that fall under multiple portfolios. In others, program officers are pushing the collaboration across program boundaries themselves.

The Houston Endowment is one example of a foundation undergoing such a shift. The environment program now outlines four environmental goals—Air, Land, Water, and Urban Development—and emphasizes a clear imperative for connecting these goals to human benefits. While this new framework may limit the types of projects that are funded, the pool from which to draw funds has been implicitly increased, expanding the numbers of “environmental” projects that fall within the Health portfolio. Spearheaded by Elizabeth Love, Program Officer for the Environment, and her colleague who oversees the foundation’s Health Program, the creation of the Healthy Living Matters collaborative provides an example of how the Environment and Health portfolios from the Houston Endowment came together to fund one project.

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<th><strong>Houston Endowment (TX): Funding of Harris County Healthcare Alliance</strong></th>
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<td>In 2011, the Houston Endowment funded the Harris County Healthcare Alliance with money from both its Health (sub-category Prevention) and Environment (sub-category Urban Development) portfolios. The Alliance used the $2.5 million to build a private-public partnership to assess the influences of the built environment, food access, and public infrastructure on obesity and to mobilize policy actions to combat it. This collaborative, called Healthy Living Matters, is made up of health, education, policymaking, business, parks and conservation organizations. It has roughly 60 participating member institutions, including three with missions directly relating to parks and conservation (Houston Parks Board, Houston Wilderness, and Children &amp; Nature Network).</td>
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This way of tackling obesity is novel in its collaborative approach. After a two-year assessment period, Healthy Living Matters published a community action plan with the goal to “advocate for Texas legislators to develop a statewide strategic plan to address hunger, nutrition, physical activity and obesity in children and families.” The recommendations were outlined under the titles, Eat (E), Play (P), and Learn (L). Relevant recommendations include:

- E4. Encourage use of available public lands in Harris County for the development of community gardens and farmers markets.

- P1. Support the development and adaption of “Safe Neighborhoods” Policy:
  > Fix streets and sidewalks, promote Safe Routes to Schools efforts, build sidewalks in new developments,
  > Eradicate abandoned houses,
  > Improve lighting in streets and parks,
  > Support the ongoing development of safe trails and parks.

- L4. Promote outdoor classrooms and incorporate active learning into core curriculum subjects to increase physical activity in Harris County school districts.

Part of the collaboration included input from local citizens through focus groups, interviews, and surveys. Some of the major findings were:

- 67% of respondents said they would walk or bike if it only took 10 minutes and was safe.

- 42% of respondents said there aren’t any parks within walking distance.

At its core, Healthy Living Matters is about making healthy living easier. This community action plan suggests that improving access to, increasing safety in, and promoting programming in open spaces is critical for maximizing the public benefit of these areas.


The process through which the Houston Endowment decided to fund Healthy Living Matters may be instructive to how similar projects may occur in the future. Love and her colleague in the Health Program first engaged a group of local leaders from the health community and the conservation community. With these leaders interested in the health and environment nexus and ready to take action, Love and her colleague approached the Houston Endow-
ment board. With the network preemptively built, the board then gave approval to solicit a proposal from the Harris County Healthcare Alliance. As an important aside, the Houston Endowment does not normally solicit grants—suggesting the power of this approach for other large foundations.

To summarize, Love was given the go-ahead to pursue this project for three reasons:

- It targeted a long-standing goal of the foundation, childhood obesity,
- Other local leaders were already excited and invested, giving the project credibility, and
- Love convinced the board that policy change is more cost effective than funding programs.

In January of 2014, the action plan was published and Houston Endowment granted more funding for the transition from policy development to implementation. How these next steps unfold is still to be determined, though possibilities include creating a new 501(c)(3) entity to help carry the work forward. For many foundations, however, policy planning can be a tough sell. The Houston Endowment took a risk in funding Healthy Living Matters because rather than measurable benefits from a program, the only end products were a strategy document and a nascent network.

In contrast with the Houston Endowment, The Doris Duke Charitable Foundation (DDCF) has taken a top-down approach—the Foundation’s board has pushed program officers to find connections between portfolios. The outcome of this new approach has been the funding of several cross-listed programs, many of which lie between the Foundation’s Environment Program and Medical Research Program.

Doris Duke Charitable Foundation: Grow to Learn NYC and New York Restoration Project; Grants from 2012-2014

In both 2012 and 2013, The Doris Duke Charitable Foundation pledged $100,000 to support Grow to Learn NYC, a public-private partnership between the Mayor’s Fund, GrowNYC, NYC Department of Parks and Recreation, and Department of Education’s Office of School Food. In 2014, DDCF pledged another $100,000 to the New York Restoration Program (NYRP), a non-profit organization dedicated to transforming open space in underserved communities to create a greener, more sustainable New York City. These grants functioned as an internal collaboration between its Environmental and Medical Research Programs. The 2014 grant was also cross-listed with the Child Well-being program.

The premise of these grants is to thoughtfully and quantitatively measure the health and social impacts of urban agriculture and urban design. The focus of the 2012-2013 grants was on Grow to Learn NYC’s gardening and environmental programs. In the 2014 grant, NYRP used the money to plan and develop a project to foster social and environmental resilience in a pilot neighborhood in New York City.
In both the GrowNYC and NYRP grants, the organizations and DDCF wanted to see an evaluation component added to the studies leading to the cross-listing with the Medical Research Program. All of the programs were or are supported by Health by Design, a firm with expertise in public health research and urban design. Rupal Sanghvi, the company’s founder and director, has earned a stellar reputation for conducting and designing this research.

The DDCF Program Officer, Andrew Bowman, was particularly excited about the 2014 project because the program is a proof of concept for the health and social benefits of park spaces in urban areas. The very core of the grant is the interplay between the Environment, Medical Research, and Child Well-being programs at DDCF. The ability to check off multiple mission goals likely made this particular grant more likely to be funded.

It may be interesting to note that in 2012 and 2013 DDCF granted $400,000 and $300,000, respectively, to other aspects of GrowNYC.


Two key points in the 2014 NYRP grant made it particularly attractive to DDCF:

- The meta-analysis of similar programs and the grant’s data-driven component enhances its ability to be duplicated and scaled from proof of concept.
- Urban agriculture and place-based education are hallmarks of the Environmental and Child Well-being programs.

The 2012 grant was the first Environmental Program grant from DDCF to be publicly cross-listed with another Program. Now, as of May 2014, three of nine grants in the Environment Program DDCF are formally cross-listed with another program.

For the local land trust, these examples highlight the importance of making personal connections with program officers and other mission based organizations, particularly those with a health component. At the Houston Endowment, Love targeted progressive, local leadership and developed a grant opportunity by reaching out to that local network. At DDCF, Bowman was attracted to the existing network of GrowNYC, Grow to Learn NYC and NYRP. All of these organizations have affiliations or missions that target human well-being with the environment.

Land trusts can learn from the other mission-based organizations in their area and try to affiliate in order to have greater clout through partnership. Many foundations are pushing the connection between humans and the environment, as well as leveraging their dollars further by finding opportunities that fit within more than one of their program fields.
Foundations are filling a much-needed role in developing the connection between human health and time spent in nature. Organizations like Health by Design, supported with funding from foundations, are pushing research to comply with the rigorous standards of classic public health and medical research. Foundations have the important flexibility to fund research that falls outside of traditional medical institutions or practices, thereby pushing the medical world to include nature as an important component of health.

2.3 Foundations Creating Access to the Outdoors

Developing and maintaining parks are important, but without sufficient access, the benefits of the park remain unrealized. Access to parks can be considered in two ways—number of parks per city and ease of transport to parks. Foundations are focusing on increasing access to parks through joint-use agreements (JUA) and urban planning efforts.

**Joint-Use Agreements**

In many communities, schools have the richest resources for supporting physical activity. After the school day, gymnasiums, ball fields, pools, and other school district resources are often closed—despite a desire from the local community to access them.

To capture this opportunity, some communities have turned to joint-use agreements (JUAs). JUAs are formal agreements between two separate entities setting forth the terms and conditions for shared use of public property or facilities. These joint use agreements are usually between school systems and a city, though nonprofit organizations have participated in these agreements as well. Typical examples of joint-use agreements include the following provisions (Prevention Institute and Berkeley Media Studies Group, 2014):

- A principal unlocks the school gate after hours so neighbors can shoot hoops or play ball on evenings and weekends.
- A school opens its soccer field to a local league for weekend games.
- A YMCA opens its gym to the local PE teachers so students have a place to exercise.

Such joint-use agreements are one of the tools that the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation has decided to pursue in a 5-year, $500 million pledge to reverse the growth in childhood obesity by 2015. According to RWJF’s 2013 Bridging the Gap report, nearly 93 percent of schools had some type of joint-use agreements in place with their community; however, many were vague. The report’s authors recommended that for joint-use agreements to work most effectively and give people better access to physical activity in their communities, the document should specify how the agreement will be managed on an ongoing basis. ChangeLab Solutions, based in Oakland, California, is a recipient of some of this funding and has been a pioneer in both developing joint-use agreements and making them even more effective.
Joint-Use Agreement Toolkit—ChangeLab Solutions (Oakland, CA)

ChangeLab Solutions is a nonprofit organization that provides community-based solutions that promote the common good by making healthier choices easier for everyone. It works primarily in policy development and provides documents that facilitate action items for its grantees.

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Kresge Foundation, and The California Endowment all played a role in ChangeLab Solutions’ development of a tool kit for joint-use agreements and a stock of four different joint use agreements ready for community deployment. In 2012, ChangeLab Solutions published its JUA toolkit “Playing Smart: Maximizing the Potential of School and Community Property Through Joint Use Agreements.”


Urban Design

Foundations and public health officials striving to connect health and nature can learn from Colorado, a state ranked 8th in the U.S. in overall health for the year 2013 (United Health Foundation, 2014). While the Colorado Health Foundation is more modest—ranking the state 18th overall (Colorado Health Foundation, 2014)—this foundation has been an integral part of the effort to make the state healthier. Their new Healthy Places initiative is one example of how the foundation is addressing the intersection of health and nature, specifically focusing on increasing access to nature through urban design.

Healthy Places: Designing an Active Colorado—Colorado Health Foundation

Healthy Places: Designing an Active Colorado is a five-year, $4.5 million initiative by the Colorado Health Foundation to support and inspire the development of healthy communities. Obesity is the primary target. Through community-led processes, Healthy Places will help Colorado communities become healthier places to live, work and play. The tenets of the initiative are:

- “Enhance walking, biking and transit connections throughout neighborhoods.
- Increase parkland, open space and recreational opportunities.
- Prioritize enhancement that encourage healthier lifestyles and behaviors for children and families.
• Invest in and prioritize good health through scheduled activities, classes, programming and events.”

From a health perspective, The Colorado Foundation cites two important findings that relate to urban design:

• “Residents are twice as likely to get adequate physical activity if their neighborhoods have access to sidewalks and trails.

• A child has a 20-60% higher chance of being overweight in neighborhoods with no access to sidewalks, parks or recreation centers.”

In 2012 the Colorado Health Foundation received requests from 26 communities to join the Healthy Places initiative. During the first phase of Healthy Places, the Foundation selected three communities to participate in an advisory panel process with the Urban Land Institute. Selected communities also will receive follow-up technical assistance.

See more information here: http://www.coloradohealth.org/healthyplaces.aspx

The Trust for Public Land (TPL), known for its work in protecting nature for people, took a new, more data-driven approach to advocacy with its ParkScore program in 2012. In Houston, Texas, TPL partnered with the Houston Endowment to develop these programs and create a methodology for incorporating the results into effective urban design.

**ParkScore: Case Study in Houston—Trust for Public Land & Houston Endowment**

The Trust for Public Land is collaborating with the Houston Endowment to develop an innovative way to find locations for new parks in Houston. Beginning with the release of ParkScore in 2012, TPL has developed a number of tools to improve park planning efforts. These include a ParkScore analysis, ParkServe, and others.

ParkScore is a rating system developed by TPL to help large cities identify where new parks are most needed and which park improvements will deliver the greatest benefit to residents. The system uses a combination of geographic, demographic, and local data and ranks cities based on three basic factors: park access, park size, and park services and investment.

The Houston Parks and Recreation Department (HPARD) asked for technical assistance from the Trust for Public Land to integrate the ParkScore findings into the city’s planning process. With support from the Houston Endowment, TPL accomplished the following:
• Devised a tool that allows park planners to model the impact of creating one or more new parks on a city’s ParkScore. The tool gives an instant analysis of how many additional people would be served by a hypothetical new park, and how the new park would affect other factors that make up the ParkScore ranking.

• Created a tool that identifies where in a city a new park would have the greatest impact to improve access.

• Provided training to HPARD on the use of these tools.

HPARD is now using the tools TPL designed to assess community park needs and identify sectors and neighborhoods within each sector in particular need of new parks, and where strategic investment in new parks could produce the maximum benefit.

TPL developed a simplified version of ParkScore that has been dubbed “ParkServe.” ParkServe is a purely GIS-based analysis that uses spatial data on land use type, park location, and half-mile walking distance park service areas. The analysis incorporates weighted demographic indicators (population density, percent kids 19 and younger, and percent low income households) with the spatial data to identify priority areas. When complete, ParkServe results will be shared with all stakeholders.

The Trust for Public Land’s collaboration with the Houston Endowment has enabled Houston and Harris County to serve as a laboratory for the development of new and improved methods for siting parks. TPL is now aiming for widespread adoption of the ParkServe methodology by cities and urban communities across the country. With ESRI, a leading provider of GIS software, TPL is currently developing a web platform that will allow any urban municipality to upload GIS data on its park system and generate a ParkServe analysis.

For more information see: http://parkscore.tpl.org

* Written by Hannah Kohut, Senior Research Associate at The Trust for Public Land

Providing the legal framework (through JUAs) and the physical connectivity (through urban design) are critical components in creating accessible natural areas. Colorado Health Foundation and ChangeLab Solutions highlight public health concerns as a basis for their missions, while TPL highlights the social justice and public health aspects (Harnik and Welle, 2011). While the wheels have already started rolling in Houston, a logical next step appears to be combining the power of ParkScore’s public awareness mission with a more comprehensive community health component. In order to focus urban design on health and natural areas, a partnership between TPL’s ParkScore team and GrowNYC/Rupal Sanghvi (see Section 3.2: Doris Duke Charitable Foundation box above) could be fruitful.
2.4 Foundations Making Partnerships

Much as the Houston Endowment and DDCF have seen the benefit of making partnerships within sectors of their own organizations, some foundations are making formal partnerships with other foundations and institutions in their communities to better address both health and nature.

The Convergence Partnership, formed in 2006, is one such large collaboration brought together by health and the environment. The Convergence Partnership, originally focused on influencing change at the national level, now works at the local, state, and regional levels as well.

**The Convergence Partnership (National)**

The Convergence Partnership steering committee includes representatives from Ascension Health, The California Endowment, Kaiser Permanente, the Kresge Foundation, Nemours, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention serve as critical technical advisors on the committee. PolicyLink, a national research and action institute devoted to advancing economic and social equity, serves as program director for the partnership. The Prevention Institute, a national non-profit organization dedicated to improving community health and equity through effective primary prevention, provides policy research and analysis along with strategic support.

The Convergence Partnership envisions a nation in which every community fosters health, prosperity, and well-being for all, by promoting:

- “Equity as the means to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to participate and prosper;
- Policies and practices that create conditions that sustain healthy people and healthy places; and
- Connections among people across multiple fields and sectors that catalyze and accelerate the work.”

The partnership’s tagline is Healthy People, Healthy Places. The partnership was founded on the belief that health and place are inextricably linked. It is acting to implement that belief in the following ways:

- “Influencing federal policy, such as Sustainable Communities Initiative, Community Transformation Grants and transportation policy.
- Promoting access to healthy food, including support of the national Healthy Food Financing Initiative to improve access to healthy food in underserved communities.
• Improving the built environment, featuring a focus on the connection between transportation and health.”


The Convergence Partnership supports the formation and growth of 14 regional convergence partnerships. Situated within the Regional Convergence Initiative, these smaller partnerships engage advocates, practitioners, and community leaders across multiple fields and sectors and serve as a capacity building mechanism for the Convergence Partnership. Nevertheless, these regional partnerships are expected to help foundations create sustainable partnerships that support and promote the three ideals of the Convergence Partnership listed above (Convergence Partnership, 2014). The 14 current regional convergence partnerships are:

• California Convergence
• Livewell Colorado
• Florida Partnership for Healthy People, Healthy Places
• Shaping Kentucky’s Future Collaborative
• Let’s Go! Maine
• Massachusetts Convergence Partnership
• Michigan Convergence Partnership
• Missouri Convergence Partnership
• Heal New Hampshire
• North Carolina Convergence Partnership
• Northwest Convergence Partnership
• Ohio Regional Convergence Partnership
• Greater Philadelphia Food Funders
• Washington Regional Convergence Partnership
Some Examples of Other Relevant Partnerships/Collaborations

- Coachella Valley Link – 52 mile alternative transportation network
  Partners: Desert Healthcare District (formerly Desert Healthcare Foundation), Desert Recreation District, Riverside County Parks, California Department of Transportation, South Coast Air Quality Management District, The Strategic Growth Council. [http://www.coachellavalleylink.com](http://www.coachellavalleylink.com)

- Health & Environmental Funders Network: Connect & Collaborate
  Partners: Various through different projects focusing on Community Environmental Health & Justice, chemicals in the environment, and fracking. [http://www.hefn.org/connect](http://www.hefn.org/connect)

Barriers to Partnerships

The RWJF Commission to Build a Healthier America surveyed local organizations to determine the barriers to forming partnerships across the health and community development sectors. Some of the major barriers identified included:

- “Inadequate funding and resources
- Lack of shared vision and common goal
- Lack of skilled leadership
- Lack of mutual understanding and respect among partner organizations
- Lack of well-established relationships and communication links with potential partner organizations”

Understanding the changing landscape of health and nature can help address these major barriers. For example, new sources of funding may be made available through nonprofit hospital community benefit programs. Large foundations and existing partnerships, like the Convergence Partnership, could share lessons learned as they continue to navigate these obstacles. Overcoming these barriers and continuing to build partnerships is an imperative for the foundations looking to connect public health and nature in the future.

Land Trusts

A key component to these partnerships, particularly in the northeastern United States and urban areas elsewhere, is the local land trust. To be successful in navigating foundations and building partnerships, land trusts should:

- Identify the foundations that are operating in their regions
- Assess the missions of the foundations, as well as the types of grants that have been successful, and determine opportunities for future collaboration
- Network and partner with organizations that focus on community health and physical education, particularly regarding obesity, children’s health, and/or safety
  - Cite foundation reports (e.g. RWJF Commission to Build a Healthier America) and/or federal missions (e.g. Healthy People 2020)
• Develop a grant proposal with partners explicitly listed
• Reach out to program officers in relevant foundations (based on location and grant topic), either directly or through the organization’s partners/networks
• Document successes and needs for the project to pursue further funding

2.5 Conclusions: Improving the Health Foundation and Nature Link

The link between health and nature is becoming a more common part of the dialogue at health foundations. The foundations mentioned in this chapter are among the leaders that others can look to in developing innovative programs that improve public health through access to nature. The greatest contribution health foundations can make is to help catalyze partnerships across interested local organizations.

Parts of the medical community will likely call for more studies similar to the NYRP-Sanghvi project and foundations will need to make decisions as to the number and type of research projects to fund. Yet while some foundations fund research, others, such as the Houston Endowment, are already pursuing the actions and policies that the research seeks to drive. As such, foundations are playing a critical role in joining both action and research across the nature and health connection.

Possible Questions for Discussion
• Considering the major barriers outlined in Section 2.4, how can health or environmental foundations better facilitate partnerships across the land conservation/park and health communities?
• How might large employers act like foundations and help support local partnerships to help fund public-private health initiatives?
• How can foundations help local communities better access federal, state and local funds for community health initiatives, like Healthy People 2020?

Useful Reading/Works Cited


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