



NEWS RELEASE

This grant will fund projects in Hyde, Beaufort, Chowan, Edgecombe and Tyrrell counties.

Grant to fund health program for middle-school students

GREENVILLE (1/31/12) - Schoolchildren in six eastern North Carolina counties will benefit from a health education program led by East Carolina University experts and funded by the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust.

With a grant of \$408,693, the Winston-Salem-based charitable organization has funded an expansion of **MATCH** (Motivating Adolescents with Technology to Choose Health), a program that teaches healthful lifestyles to middle-school students.

MATCH will expand its program from six to 12 counties with an approach to student wellness that combines physical activity, nutrition education, and technology. It was developed in Martin County by then-seventh-grade teacher Tim Hardison, who now directs the program at ECU.

For 16 weeks, students learn goal-setting, self-monitoring, decision-making and other skills to help them achieve and maintain a healthier lifestyle, including reaching and maintaining a healthy weight. The **MATCH** curriculum parallels the seventh-grade N.C. Standard Course of Study, and lessons are designed to improve performance on end-of-grade tests in reading, writing, math and computer skills.

Led by Hardison and Dr. Suzanne Lazorick, an ECU assistant professor of pediatrics, **MATCH** has been working in schools in Martin, Onslow, Pamlico, Washington and Jones counties along with one school in Pitt County. The new grant will allow ECU to expand **MATCH** into Hyde, Beaufort, Chowan, Edgecombe and Tyrrell counties and an additional school in Pitt County.

"As **MATCH** has expanded from one to seven schools, consistently anywhere from 50 to 75 percent of kids who were overweight at the start of the program are less overweight after they finish, and also over 75 percent of all kids in **MATCH** improve their cardiovascular fitness as measured by a standardized fitness test in P.E.," Lazorick said.

The new schools in the **MATCH** program have obesity rates among the highest in the state and have more than half of students receiving subsidized school meals, according to Hardison and Lazorick.

The Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust was established in 1947 and is one of the largest private trusts in North Carolina. Its mission is to improve the quality of life and quality of health for the financially needy of North Carolina. Wells Fargo Bank N.A. serves as sole trustee.

The East Carolina University Division of Health Sciences comprises the Brody School of Medicine, the colleges of Nursing and Allied Health Sciences, the School of Dental Medicine, the East Carolina Heart Institute and Laupus Library. The medical school is affiliated with Vidant Health in Greenville, N.C.