

A warm, golden-hour photograph of two children, a girl and a boy, looking down at a plant in a garden. The girl is on the left, wearing a dark hoodie, and the boy is on the right, wearing a green plaid shirt. The background is softly blurred, showing other people and foliage. The overall mood is peaceful and community-oriented.

2015

Annual Report

ACTIVE LIVING BY DESIGN

*Your strategic partner through
healthy community change*

In 2015, we catalyzed change by coaching change agents.

We are so proud to co-author this letter and to reflect on a year of strong collaboration and transition. This is true about both our work and our organization. Throughout 2015, Active Living By Design (ALBD) continued to diversify our projects in exciting ways as a strategic thought partner to funders, community leaders and mission partners. We are also proud that our work always includes opportunities for mutual learning. Some of the key ways we provided leadership in the field included leading collaborative learning and networking sessions, supporting strategic planning and advising national initiatives, all with the goal of deepening capacity and advancing the healthy community movement.

For example, we explored emerging opportunities to link community-based organizations with medical clinics. We also supported a number of local foundations as they invested in coalition building and strategic planning to improve health in their regions. Moreover, we deepened our services and expertise related to collaborative learning and networking and partnered on multiple projects to create sustainable practices of learning among peers and allies. And finally, ALBD team members provided leadership to various local, state and national groups as we all continue to grow the field.

In keeping with ALBD's culture of collaboration, we took a proactive and transparent approach to succession planning, which has been recognized as a model for other nonprofit leaders. As part of that plan, various team members' roles changed to reflect the importance of personal and organizational growth and renewal along with emerging needs in the field. More specifically, after nearly 14 years of leadership to ALBD, Sarah Strunk transitioned from Executive Director to ALBD's Strategic Advisor. In October, Risa Wilkerson was appointed Executive Director. Risa joined ALBD in 2008 (after having been a grantee since 2002) and, since then, has served in a variety of positions. We worked closely together for much of 2015 to ensure a smooth leadership transition with the support of our team and Advisory Board.

These changes came at an exciting time for our organization. Our commitment to healthy communities, the social determinants of health and equity is unwavering. We have an increasingly diverse group of funders, partners and projects. Our relationship with Third Sector New England, our fiscal sponsor, provides the flexibility and nimbleness that is required to meet our clients' needs. And we have a strong, versatile and passionate team with experienced leaders throughout the organization.

Finally, it continues to be an honor to support so many community leaders, funders and partners who are on the ground making impressive changes so that all people, in every stage of life, can live healthier. We can't imagine a more meaningful way to spend our days. Thanks for your trust in us. We look forward to another year of working together as well as forming new relationships for mutual learning and impact.



Risa Wilkerson
Executive Director



Sarah Strunk
Strategic Advisor



thanks for your support!

REFER US

We value the trust you place in our team when you recommend ALBD to others. Thank you for spreading the word about the good work we've done together.

PARTNER WITH US

From brief telephone consultations to long-term partnerships, we're your strategic partner through healthy community change. Let's start a conversation to explore how we can collaborate.

CONTACT US

Visit activelivingbydesign.org to read our blog, learn about new projects and explore our resources page.

We supported collaborative learning and networking to deepen capacity and impact.



Healthy community leaders from across the state of New York learn how their peers are transforming the Two Bridges neighborhood through an experiential walking tour.

When a full-service supermarket in a Lower East Side neighborhood closed in 2012, it generated the perception that the community—which was an ethnically and economically diverse neighborhood with one of the highest rates of reliance on food subsidies in Manhattan—had become a “food desert.”

However, results from a local community food assessment conducted by the Two Bridges Neighborhood Council (TBNC) had confirmed the existence of ethnic and independently owned markets which could provide fresh and affordable food to the neighborhood in the supermarket’s place. TBNC saw this as an opportunity to counter the “food desert” narrative and improve access to healthy food in the community.

In 2015, community partners in East Harlem found themselves in a similar situation. As part of the Healthy Neighborhoods Learning Collaborative, they were able to visit the Two Bridges neighborhood to learn about the impacts of the supermarket closure and how the community was responding. Partners engaged in enlightening conversations that explored assumptions about supermarket closures and perceived food deserts. They gained new perspectives, learned from others’ experiences and brainstormed around a shared goal. Nine other partnerships across New York are part of this Healthy Neighborhoods Learning Collaborative, which supports their efforts to increase access to healthy, affordable food; improve access to safe places where residents can be active; and connect children and adults to programs that support healthy behaviors. The **Healthy Neighborhoods Fund** is a joint initiative of the **New York State Health Foundation (NYSHealth)** and **New York Community Trust (NYCT)**.

Active Living By Design (ALBD) led the ongoing development and implementation of the Learning Collaborative by bridging connections across the sites; providing access to resources; offering opportunities for sharing, collaboration and experiential and interactive learning; and engaging community partners in the co-creation of self-sustaining networking. Other services included planning and facilitating in-person learning convenings and virtual networking sessions as well as ongoing dissemination of opportunities and resources through the Healthy Neighborhoods Roundup e-newsletter and Learning Collaborative web page. ALBD also provided coaching and

technical assistance to the funded partnerships, served as a strategic advisor for NYSHealth and NYCT staff, and supported dissemination activities by contributing to case studies, lessons learned and other opportunities to showcase the partnerships as examples for other neighborhoods and communities.

“ALBD is a resource for everything—a learning collaborative resource and subject matter resource. And we could not have asked for a better partner when planning learning meetings.”

Bronwyn Starr, Program Officer
New York State Health Foundation

In addition to the Healthy Neighborhoods initiative, ALBD supported collaborative learning and networking for **County Health Rankings & Roadmaps**, a collaboration between the **Robert Wood Johnson Foundation** and the **University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute**. We also provided support to other learning networks in 2015, including two in North Carolina: a network of communities working on community-centered health with funding from the **Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina Foundation** and six municipalities in **Wake County** with funding from the **John Rex Endowment**.

2015 HIGHLIGHTS

We guided strategic planning for healthy community coalitions.



The first public walking track in Pittsylvania County, located at an elementary school, is open year-round.

In rural Pittsylvania County, fewer than one in three residents have access to nearby opportunities for physical activity. Part of the Dan River Region, the county is the largest in Virginia yet has limited funding to address that lack of access.

Despite those hurdles, Recreation Director Mark Moore started Pittsylvania County's first Parks and Recreation Department in 2011. Mark had his work cut out for him: like many others who live and work in rural settings, he had to be innovative and collaborative in order to successfully lead the fledgling department.

He and others in the county have done this by recruiting new funding partners and securing local support for initiatives ranging from shared-use agreements to sports programs. Since 2014, a group of passionate, multi-sectoral community leaders, including Mark Moore, have convened the **Health Collaborative**, supported by the **Danville Regional Foundation**, to address troubling health trends in the Dan River Region. The Collaborative's mission is "to improve the health of the region through a shared vision of wellness that drives a framework of sustainable solutions." They are making this happen by focusing on five broad goals: active living, healthy eating, access to healthcare, cross-cutting approaches and the combined goal of capacity building, leadership development and community engagement.

Active Living By Design (ALBD) supported the Collaborative's work by identifying evidence-based strategies, promising practices and innovative models from across the country. Collaborative members deepened their understanding of the local culture and the uniqueness of the region as ALBD helped them identify and narrow the policy, systems and environmental change strategies that were most likely to succeed in their community. Some of the Collaborative's greatest assets are its existing relationships, shared vision and willingness to avoid turf conflicts. To help the Collaborative leverage these strengths, ALBD helped to: plan and facilitate meetings and key informant interviews; share different approaches to collaborative structures; and identify indicators to measure the Collaborative's success.

"It's extremely helpful to work with [ALBD team members] who have seen this happen in other communities—rural and urban—and can condense that into lessons learned across the board. It's been wonderful to work with an organization that allows our group to lead the way, who is really flexible and able to customize the approach."

Annie Martinie, Senior Program Officer

Community Health and Wellness, Danville Regional Foundation

ALBD also provided planning and capacity-building support to the **Alamance Wellness Collaborative** in Burlington, NC, funded by **Impact Alamance**; the **Suffolk Partnership for a Healthy Community** in Suffolk, VA, funded by the **Obici Healthcare Foundation**; **Active RVA** in Richmond, VA, funded by **Sports Backers**; and the **Benton County Health Department** in Corvallis, OR as they all work toward creating healthier communities.

2015 HIGHLIGHTS

We shared our expertise and experiences to advance the healthy community movement.

During a May 2015 dinner conversation in Nashville, TN, Active Living By Design (ALBD) staff convened two teams to help create healthier transportation systems in Oregon and Michigan.

Planners, engineers and public health practitioners from these states exchanged challenges and opportunities to promote safe walking in their communities and participated in the first **Walkability Action Institute (WAI)**, a training developed

by the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)** and the **National Association of Chronic Disease Directors (NACDD)**. The course was designed to equip multidisciplinary teams from 12 states to respond to Step It Up! The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Promote Walking and Walkable Communities.

The Oregon team included professionals from the state's Health Authority, Department of Transportation (ODOT), Chapter of the American Planning Association, the Benton County Health Department and a city councilor from Eugene, OR. With funding through ODOT's Transportation and Growth Management Program, the team moved quickly to implement transportation and health planning workshops in their local communities, which brought together elected officials, residents and advocates, as well as professionals from planning, transportation, housing, conservation and public health.



Action Institute faculty member, Leslie Meehan, and other participants return from a mayor's Walk to School Day event as they ride over the Shelby Street Pedestrian Bridge in Nashville in May 2015.

The collaborative working relationships were strengthened during the WAI training and helped to inform the planning process for these well-attended workshops. Important results from Oregon's collaboration include initiatives aimed at aging in place, greater use of health impact assessments, new health content on ODOT's website, increased opportunities for collaboration with a regional Coordinated Care Organization and additional funding proposals for public health and planning partnerships.

“Attending teams and partnering organizations alike benefit from ALBD's stellar healthy community and built design knowledge and leadership—a true win-win for all involved. NACDD is grateful for the ongoing partnership and support of ALBD and cannot imagine a scenario where ALBD is not involved in future walkability action institutes.”

Karma Edwards, Public Health Consultant
National Association of Chronic Disease Directors

ALBD contributed its experience and public health expertise as part of the steering committee and core faculty team for the Nashville training. In addition to coaching state teams, ALBD staff led learning sessions on cross-sector partnerships and presented ALBD's Community Action Model as a tool for advancing walkability. Prior to the Institute, ALBD helped the steering team determine selection criteria, rate applications and develop the action plan template used by participating state teams. ALBD staff also worked with Oregon's team as it created a practical action plan to define and prioritize its future collaborative work. Before 2015 ended, CDC and NACDD engaged ALBD to help plan for the April 2016 Step It Up! Action Institute, which will train 10 multidisciplinary teams from Metropolitan Planning Organization regions.

ALBD team members also helped advance the healthy community movement by participating in 11 national, five state and five local organizations and initiatives. For example, we served on the Strategic Advisory Council of **Voices for Healthy Kids**, a national childhood obesity prevention initiative led by the **American Heart Association** in partnership with the **Robert Wood Johnson Foundation** (RWJF). We provided leadership to the Board of Directors for the **Safe Routes to School National Partnership**, a coalition of more than 750 organizations that advances policy and catalyzes support for active, healthy communities starting with walking and biking to school. We participated in a variety of application and proposal review teams, such as the **RWJF Culture of Health Prize**, the **Kansas Health Foundation’s Community Engagement Initiative** and the **National Association of Counties County Health Learning Challenge**.

And closer to home, we remained active in North Carolina and in our local communities with leadership and volunteer roles addressing myriad issues ranging from food security to positive youth development. It continues to be an honor to collaborate with such esteemed programs and passionate people, and to learn together at local, state and national levels.



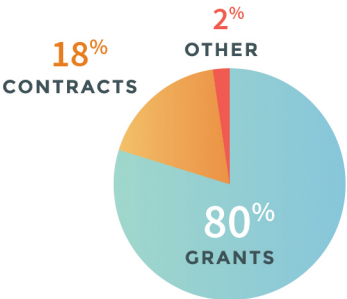
2015 FUNDING

Over the past decade, ALBD has expanded our focus from a national program office with a single issue area (physical activity) and a single funder (the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation) to an organization that seamlessly serves an array of partners addressing the social determinants of health at local, state and national levels. Our commitment to diversification continued in 2015, with 12 major engagements supported by 11 different funding partners plus a number of smaller, shorter-term projects. More than half of these engagements were with repeat clients. New partners referred by current clients accounted for the remainder.

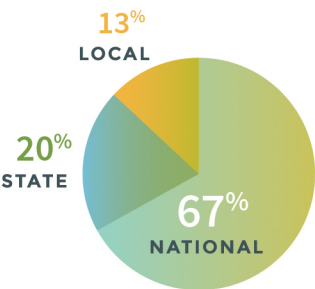
ALBD strives to go beyond simply meeting commitments to bring a fresh perspective and to leave capacity behind. To that end, there is no better testimony than a satisfied client. In the words of one of them, “We bring in experts for a reason—not just to increase our capacity to do the work, but to bring something new. ALBD has really done that.” And the numbers speak for themselves. In a survey of our 2015 clients, 100 percent indicated that they were satisfied or very satisfied with our work, and 100 percent said they would refer us to colleagues within or outside of their organizations.



REVENUE BY TYPE



REVENUE BY GEOGRAPHIC IMPACT



OUR 2015 TEAM



Casey Allred, BS
Operations Manager

Customer service extraordinaire with southern hospitality and charm



Richard Bell, MCP
Senior Project Officer

Student of systems change and advocate of the small, slow and connected



Philip Bors, MPH
Technical Assistance Director

Recovering advisory board member, weeknight advocate and active weekender



Fay Gibson, MSW
Senior Project Officer

Old-school community organizer and equity and social justice advocate



Julia Katz, BA
Research Assistant

Public health and urban planning graduate student and advocate for active cities



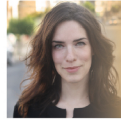
Charla Hodges, MPH, MCP
Research Assistant

Avid consumer of books and emerging public health planner focused on inclusivity



Joanne Lee, MPH, RD
Collaborative Learning Director

Adventurous strategist, cross-cultural explorer, and human and animal welfare champion



Sarah Moore, MArch
Communications & Marketing Manager

Designer, artist, traveler and urban enthusiast with rural roots



Mary Beth Powell, MPH
Senior Project Officer

Environmental advocate, self-proclaimed policy wonk and die-hard Carolina basketball fan



Tim Schwantes, MSW, MPH
Project Officer

Life-long learner, community-focused connector, proud lefty and pop culturist



Sarah Strunk, MHA
Strategic Advisor

Healthy communities networker, integrator and distance runner on the go



Risa Wilkerson, MA
Executive Director

Encourager, collaborator and simplicity seeker with a heart for social justice

ADVISORY BOARD



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Program Officer, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation



Josh Sattely, JD

Compliance and Legal Affairs Specialist, Third Sector New England

ALBD's experienced, multidisciplinary team has backgrounds in public health, public policy, planning, community development, communications, nutrition, design, architecture, business and social work.

Our advisory board members and external advisors represent a variety of disciplines and perspectives. They provide valuable input and expertise related to our work.



**ACTIVE LIVING
BY DESIGN**

Catalyst for a culture of health

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Active Living By Design partners with nonprofits,
local leaders and funders to create healthy communities.
Since 2002, Active Living By Design has worked to build
a culture of active living and healthy eating.



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