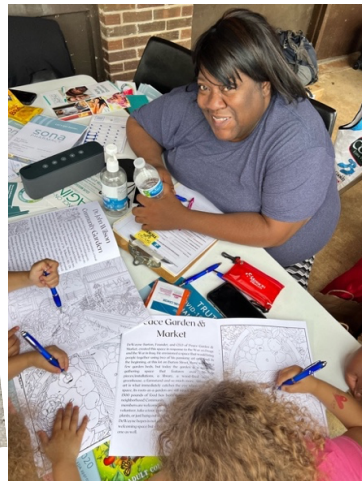


PART 2: Out and About & On the Road “IFPHA and other organizations 'say' we serve WNC, or the region, but most have never visited any of the outlying counties,” Avery notes. “Considering where IFPHA is trying to go long-term, we don’t want to just make this statement. We want to truly connect.” So, **Summer 22's Road Trip mission**, begun in July, was to visit with all the county health departments, introduce IFPHA, and find out who provides healthcare in their counties, and what is most needed for improved services. “We are also visiting the regional hospitals, FQHCs, (Federal Qualified Health Centers), and fire departments as time allows. This builds our connection and helps us truly know how WNC is doing.”

About 2,200 miles later, and eight counties visited with, IFPHA intends to continue this regional approach in pursuit of its mission: To promote optimum health for - all - residents of Buncombe County and beyond. For more about this regional outreach, see <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/5949f2dd29fb490084f34ed91fcf783e>

We paired that work with dusting off our teal festival table covering and canopy and getting out and about and back to basics. Limited in 2021 to participation in Juneteenth and a months-delayed Goombay celebration, perhaps we along with others went a bit overboard on festivals in summer and fall 2022. We kicked it off by hosting our own. **A Block Party** at Klondyke in Asheville in late May to re-introduce ourselves and other services providers to residents and get to know them and their healthcare challenges and needs.



BLOCK PARTY at Klondyke 2022. Host IFPHA and seven other services providers got their word out. There was good food, which soon-to-be mom Allison Prince is relishing. Sign-ups with CHW Angeliqe Scott, LPN, for on-site vaccines in June in cooperation with SONA Pharmacy. Activities for young and young at heart with CHW LaShea G. Davis. Vaccine information from Dr. Shuchin Shukla of MAHEC and community nurse Kathey Avery. And some prizes, of course.
Wayne Thomas, happy winner of a gift card.

And it seems as if every weekend since then has had a festival—or two. We've been to Goombay 2022, the East End/Valley Street Community Heritage Festival, Public Safety Day in Haywood County, and Back to School Fest in Green Meadows Park in Hendersonville, to name just a few.

Typically, we provide routine blood pressure and glucose checks, talk with people about their health concerns, encourage them to schedule other routine diagnostic tests that many of us have put off the last two or three years because of the pandemic. We provide personal protective items for those who need them and links to resources. We have fielded lots of questions about COVID boosters and vaccines for children with back-to-school and more indoor gatherings closing in.



On the Festival Circuit 2022: Frank Castelblanco, RN, DNP, of MAHEC testing glucose levels and community nurse Kathey Avery, IFPHA Founder, recording blood pressure numbers **at Goombay**. IFPHA CHW Supervisor Angelique Scott, LPN, doing glucose checks **at Back to School Fest** in Hendersonville. Among those tested Matthew Gash, with daughter Mattie, and Katy Gash, a Hendersonville math teacher. Mattie became a volunteer recruiter and brought a large number of people to our table. IFPHA volunteer Keena Steffin helping with set-up at **East End Heritage Fest**. Angelique at the ready for **Rooted in Wellness event**, Linwood Crump Shiloh Center, July 30. Kathey with Back to School Fest organizer Debbie Roundtree.



In partnership with Office of Rural Health/NCDHHS grant funding under UNETE/NC, IFPHA staff has also provided the clinical checks at a number of other community events throughout the late summer and fall, including a series of vitals checks for employees of Costa Farms. “Promoting wellness is also about getting to know each other and collaborate with each other,” notes UNETE’s Norma Duran Brown, who trained as a CHW with IFPHA in early 2020 and then established her own nonprofit utilizing CHWs and what she calls intentional co-creating. She and Ana De la Garza serve as IFPHA’s volunteer Spanish language interpreters.



Collaborative Community Outreaches 2022: IFPHA CHW supervisor Angelique Scott, LPN, provides vaccine education to Gilbert Whiteside, with his grandchild at a wellness outreach at Glade Creek Baptist Church in Transylvania County. “Thank you so much for doing this,” he tells us. “Your education helps us know what to do.” Angelique Scott and Kathey Avery supporting UNETE CHWs Isis Colex and Adelaide Pinon at a food-box distribution outreach in Sylva, Jackson County. Kathey doing a BP check at a wellness and vaccine clinic at Hola Cultural Center in Hendersonville that included Hola Carolina, NC Counts Coalition, Pardee UNC Health Care and Blue Ridge Health.

CHW Angelique Scott, LPN, at a Bounty & Soul Latino food distribution in Swannanoa in partnership with UNETE. In community health work the line between services provider and services recipient can be fluid.



Between mid-August and mid-October, IFPHA staff participated in 14 of these events. We provided PPE and vaccine education, self-test COVID kits to those needing them, and we did **routine blood pressure checks and non-fasting glucose testing** for about 230 people. They received *What IS Blood Pressure* information, tips on lowering blood pressure, and a records card to share with their primary care providers, plus blood pressure and glucose evaluation and explanation from community nurse Kathey Avery. But one of those checks was **anything**

but routine. At Tried Stone Missionary Baptist Church, where we had 17 participants, one of the 10 who opted for glucose checks identified as diabetic and was found to have a level of 559. Anything above 500 means your blood sugar is uncontrolled and your health is at risk. Ketoacidosis and hyperosmolar syndrome can lead to coma.

Tried Stone host Pam Johnson, herself an RN, and IFPHA's team encouraged the participant to seek help that day, the sooner the better. When community nurse Kathey Avery called to follow up that evening, the woman was at the VA Hospital emergency room, where she gets her care. She said they were giving her intravenous insulin and had filled her metformin prescription, which she had been without for several days because of a lapsed prescription. On a follow-up call the next morning, she told Kathey she had taken her metformin and checked her blood sugar after eating, reporting a level in the 300 range. Detecting some confusion from her about her understanding of diabetes and its management, Kathey asked if she could put together a personalized diabetes education plan for her, and she agreed. Truly, real help in real time.

Another fortunate outcome from that outreach at Tried Stone was meeting Torca Waters, pictured below with her children and IFPHA CHW supervisor **Angelique Scott**. On finding out more about what CHWs do, Torca became IFPHA's newest CHW trainee. We will work with her so she makes a living wage and has a schedule flexible enough she can also manage care of her baby and other children. She will join Angelique and the rest of **our CHW team**, **LaShea G. Davis** and **Ana Baranda**, and **Latika Poore**, community nurse apprentice. Staffing is one of IFPHA's challenges as a new nonprofit. Retention and expansion of staff require dedicated, longer-term funding.



Torca Waters and children with Angelique Scott; Ana Baranda; Angelique and Latika Poore checking records.

Our strategic plan focuses on securing multi-year funding. We will continue building trust and relationships with people and organizations in rural counties and supporting people in crisis. We have worked closely with faith-based communities and increased culturally responsive outreach with Latino communities. A high percentage of the community members we support are from hard-to-reach rural areas, are people of color, and have very limited resources. At the systems level, we have met regularly with health departments and facilitated meetings to better coordinate services across sectors. We work regularly with larger medical organizations in the region and have seen the needle move on the way some of them view IFPHA's care model, a few even working it into their own training and practices such as MAHEC's Home-Based Primary Care.

As we approach our third year, we count some significant achievements in both the number of people reached and the results of those encounters, the flexibility we demonstrated in providing safe, timely services during an ongoing pandemic, and our perseverance in countering misinformation and mistrust for a variety of political and cultural reasons. We also find that community members are tired of COVID and think it is over, even as new variants prove to be more infectious, and so we know there is much more work and perseverance ahead. Some days what keeps us pushing on is focusing on that *one* client . . .

Like **Leila Little**, a familiar face, who showed up at a recent blood pressure and glucose check at an outreach at Pisgah View Apartments, which along with Hill Crest, is in our expansion area for IFPHA’s HELP2Day initiative. She had been a client of CN Kathey Avery in 2020 and is diabetic. When her doctor found out we had helped her in managing her condition previously, he asked that we start checking in on her again since her A1C started going back up in 2022. Continuity of care.



And continuity in caring. As always, we appreciate your continued support as we continue to grow IFPHA, its HELP2Day initiative, and all the other work that we do in making our city, our county, and our entire Western North Carolina region a healthy, safe place for everyone. *Every single one.*

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