



commit to be fit

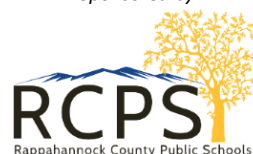
SY 2025-2026 Report

Year 9: Greater Impact

Generously Funded by



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About Us

Commit to Be Fit is a grant funded, school supported program in a rural Virginia county that is geared towards creating a culture of wellness in three key areas:

classroom
cafeteria & community

Realizing that academic performance is strongly correlated to healthy minds and bodies, wellness and healthy lifestyles have become an integral part of our educational culture at Rappahannock County Public Schools. **The Commit to Be Fit program is funded by the generosity of the PATH Foundation.**





Year 9: This year's focus built upon the successes and key learnings from previous years, strengthening efforts to enhance nutrition education through fresh, student-grown and/or locally-sourced produce, increase opportunities for movement-based learning, and expand staff wellness initiatives with a particular emphasis on social connection. **Within the cafeteria prong, these efforts included a renewed focus on nutrition education through the implementation of our garden-based learning initiative.**

Nutrition education took center stage within our cafeteria wellness prong during the 2025–26 school year. Through hands-on experiences ranging from taste tests to garden-based learning, students in the reimagined Farm-to-Table program (grades 6–7) and the new Active Learning in Outdoor Spaces (ALIOS) program (grades K–3) actively engaged in planting, cultivating, harvesting, and sampling a variety of fruits, vegetables, and herbs.

Before establishing the gardens, students participated in taste-testing activities featuring locally sourced produce designed to broaden their palates while learning about age-appropriate nutrition concepts and the health benefits of featured foods. During the colder winter months, students continued their learning indoors by growing lettuce and herbs in an indoor hydroponic tower garden, providing year-round opportunities to connect nutrition education with hands-on agricultural experiences.



Thanks to the generous funding and support of the PATH Foundation and the Headwaters Foundation, RCPS was able to hire Kyle Wensel, a certified horticulturist with more than 20 years of experience working in both public and private schools. His expertise in gardening, combined with his passion for engaging young learners, played a key role in establishing and growing the program during its inaugural year. Students were enthusiastic about learning how food is grown and enjoyed sampling the fresh fruits, vegetables, and herbs they helped plant, nurture, and harvest. Although this was a pilot year for the Active Learning in Outdoor Spaces (ALIOS) program, the school gardens produced enough food to provide boxes of fresh produce to the elementary school cafeteria (*shown left*). As the program continues to grow, we look forward to expanding our gardens and increasing the variety and quantity of vegetables and herbs available to supplement school meals for students and staff in the coming school year.



More Cafeteria Highlights



Taste Testing in the Cafeterias

Shown: RCHS students sampled a 5 ingredient strawberry citrus smoothie recipe and were given recipe card to take home.



Seed Packets for All RCES Students

Shown: During the Trunk-or-Treat, C2BF distributed seed packets with a QR code for families to learn more about the garden-based initiative and at-home gardening tips.



Mindful Eating

Shown: The RCHS Applied Brain Science & Wellness class learned and practiced mindful eating techniques during a C2BF-led Mindful Eating workshop.



Staff Farmers Market

Shown: The Fall Staff Farmers Market continues to be one of our most popular annual events. Special thanks to the REACH initiative for generously funding the staff tickets.



Nutrition Education Push-ins

Shown: Students enjoyed a story and learned fun facts about pumpkins.



Nutrition Education Brain Boosters

Shown: Students completed a puzzle to discover fun nutrition tidbits.



classroom

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Garden-Based Learning (Farm-to-Table & ALIOS)

PROGRAM AIMS

Increase



Increase movement opportunities



Increase fruit & veggie consumption



Increase mindfulness & emotion regulation skills



Increase healthy habits at an early age



Increase student engagement & focus

Decrease



Decrease seat time



Decrease screen time



Decrease disruptive classroom behavior



Classroom Highlights

Farm-to-Table

In the fall of 2025, Commit to Be Fit launched a reimagined Farm-to-Table exploratory for students in grades 6 and 7. Taught by Kyle Wensel, the program expanded beyond traditional gardening and nutrition education to include garden design, construction, and the installation of raised garden beds.

While RCES is fortunate to have a beautiful courtyard, many of the existing garden beds had reached the end of their lifespan and needed to be replaced. As part of the program, students helped redesign the garden space to maximize growing capacity. They played an active role in building and installing 14 new raised beds, including 2 ADA-accessible beds.

By participating in every stage of the process, from planning and construction to planting and harvesting, students gained valuable skills and a strong sense of ownership in the gardens they helped create. Together, the Farm to Table and Active Learning in Outdoor Spaces programs planted 20 varieties of fruits, vegetables, and herbs during the school year.



Guinness World Record

The reimagined farm-to-table program brought world-wide attention to the district when the 7th grade students collaborated with local farmer, Jason Loris, which led to a Guinness World Record for the most peppers grown on a single plant!

Mr. Loris, who grew the record-breaking plant, invited students to participate in harvesting and counting the peppers for the record submission.

Working together, the students carefully harvested and counted an impressive 893 peppers from the Carolina Reaper plant.



On January 16, students (shown below with Jason Loris) were presented with the official award and World Record Holder shirts. Special thanks to Jason Loris and to Katie Cooper, who created the shirts in the RCHS Makerspace.



Classroom Highlights

Active Learning in Outdoor Spaces

The new Active Learning in Outdoor Space (ALIOS) exploratory classes debuted in October to increase daily physical activity while introducing students to age-appropriate concepts in gardening, nutrition, and environmental science. Taught by Kyle Wensel, certified horticulturist and 20+ year teacher, along with Jerney Gates, certified action based learning facilitator, students explored their natural world, planted and tended to school gardens, engaged in several taste-tests of the fresh produce, and conducted fun, age-appropriate science experiments. Check out the photo (right) of students learning about force and motion while taking turns pushing and pulling wagons filled with friends.



Brain STAR Action Based Learning (ABL) Lab

The Action Based Learning (ABL) Lab continued to be a hit with students this year. Students in grades K-3 had an opportunity to participate in a variety of movement stations on a weekly basis. The concept of the lab, grounded in research, strengthens developmental movement foundations while preparing the brain to learn. This year, the lab integrated nutrition education activities with standard movement activities: balance, gross motor, fine motor, cardio, strength, rhythm, proprioception, vestibular development, visual tracking, and cross lateralization.



More Classroom Highlights



Student Healthy Habits Challenge

Shown: A few of the participants proudly posed with the challenge sign on meet-the-teacher day!



Handwashing Assembly

Shown: After hearing a story about germs and handwashing, RCES students tested out their handwashing skills with a special light.



Weekly High School Push-ins

Shown: Ms. Posselt's RCHS students enjoyed regularly scheduled weekly activities such as yoga exercises.



Drop-in High School Push-ins



RCHS Student Wellness Videos for RCES

Shown: RCES students watched wellness videos created by Ms. Burgiss' high school class.



Mindfulness Push-ins

Shown: Deep breathing exercises



community

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Staff After-School Activities AIMS



Strengthen relationships throughout the district to enhance social connection



Increase morale and sense of belonging



Provide opportunities for staff to teach their interests to others



Provide regular outlets for movement, creativity, friendly competition and/or laughs

Pictured:

- BINGO Games
- Circuit Classes
- Golf League
- Hiking Trips
- Pickleball Games
- Pottery Workshops
- Strength Training Classes
- Ukulele Lessons
- Yoga

Special thanks to our staff for leading regular activities: Sean Slaney (golf league), Rebecca Flowers (pottery series), and Kelby Sappington (ukulele lessons)

Community Highlights

Staff Activities



Anonymous Quotes from Staff Survey

"Commit to Be Fit encourages building relationships with coworkers at both schools; as a high school teacher, I don't have the need to visit the elementary school. C2BF provides that opportunity to meet new people with similar interests that you don't work with daily."

"It is so nice having a team like this reminding us to be the best versions of ourselves: physically, mentally, socially. We appreciate the C2BF team."

RCPS STAFF CHALLENGE

OCT. 2025

Community Highlights

OVERALL WINNING TEAM

7830 Active Minutes

Ms. Hill, Ms. Portillo, Ms. Phillips, & Dr. Lowe-Barton

1ST PLACE Rapp Hustle

RUNNERS-UP

6440 2ND PLACE Dumbbell Curve Busters	3821 6TH PLACE Worst Pace Scenario
6295 3RD PLACE Gym Class Heroes	3791 7TH PLACE Power in Motion
4977 4TH PLACE The Crash Outs	3186 8TH PLACE Swole Mates
4440 5TH PLACE Team 6	

Congratulations to ALL participants for putting in the effort to increase their active minutes during October! Way to go!

Staff Challenges

During the 2025–26 school year, Commit to Be Fit expanded staff wellness programming beyond traditional health initiatives to include opportunities for meaningful social connection. Through a variety of engaging activities, staff members were encouraged to build relationships across the district, fostering a stronger sense of belonging, enhancing morale, and strengthening our school community. In addition, staff participated in movement challenges designed to promote teamwork and collaboration among employees from both schools and the School Board Office. Participants voluntarily enrolled in the challenges and were randomly assigned to teams, creating new opportunities for connection and camaraderie across the division.

Shown left: Move More- October 2025- Random teams of four tracked movement and earned extra points during team activities.

Move More- November and December 2025- New randomly selected teams of three tracked movement and earned extra points during team activities.

Not shown: Staff Healthy Habits Challenge (Aug. & Sept. 2026), Staff Step (It Up) Challenge (Jan. 2026), You vs. You Challenge (April 2026)

1st Place

Elaine, John W., & Michelle G.

Staff Challenge WINNERS Points: 1787

Team Awesome Sauce

#2 Grade-A Gains Erica, Kelby, & Morgan 1681	#3 Power of Three Michelle, Tori, & Dawn 1570
#4 Stress Relief Society Matt, Korla, & Amy 1385	#5 Stop, Drop, & Squat Katherine, Dr. Grimsley, & Emily 1187
#6 Too Cool for School Erica, John, & Heather 1075	#7 Team Panthers Robin, Lauren, & Dr. Lowe-Barton 1024
#8 Cirque du Sore Legs Erin, Elizabeth, & Christine 955	#9 The Young & the Breathless Angie, Dr. Slaney, & Bethany 893
#10 Team Two Tears in a Bucket Kreighton, Sallie, & Tasha 890	#11 The Mighty Three Michele, Dr. Boynton, & Erin 885

Anonymous Staff Feedback

“This has been great and helping me make a bigger effort to move every day, not just when I have time.”

“This is amazing and so appreciated. Thank you for the opportunities. It’s great to be supported by my school to take care of myself.”

“The C2BF program has helped me become more mindful about how I’m treating my body, a skill easily forgotten in our busy, stressful adult lives. I’m grateful to C2BF for helping me remember to prioritize myself, so I can be the best teacher I can possibly be for my students.”

“The staff wellness C2BF program helps me reduce stress, stay energized, and feel more supported and valued at work, which make me a better, healthier, and happier educator.”

“I appreciate the C2BF program. I am not able to participate in the after school activities due to my own schedule but I love that there are other ways to get moving. I needed to start taking better care of myself and this Nov/Dec challenge has been just the thing to kick start my journey. Thank you for providing all of us, especially me, with life changing support.”

**Quotes from anonymous staff survey*

Farm-to-Fork Cooking Demo

On Friday, April 10, Commit to Be Fit hosted the first of two Farm-to-Fork Cooking Demonstration as part of Rapp at Home's Fit for Life workshop series. Participants kicked things off with a fun nutrition trivia activity before learning how to prepare a nutrient-dense and delicious Omelet in a Mug, chosen for its simplicity, minimal clean up, and balanced portions of protein and locally grown vegetables.

Attendees gathered around the cooking cart as RCHS Culinary Teacher and former executive chef, Melissa Segrest, demonstrated safe and effective knife skills while dicing and chopping green bell peppers, spinach, tomatoes, and onions. Participants enjoyed sampling the finished omelet and left with a market bag filled with all the ingredients needed to recreate the recipe at home, along with a Commit to Be Fit mug.



The Fit for Life workshop series is made possible through the generous support of the Richard Lykes Rappahannock Community Fund. It is designed to promote healthy lifestyles for Rapp residents aged 50 or better. The series is offered through the collaborative efforts of the Rappahannock Rural Health Network, including Rapp at Home, Mountainside Physical Therapy, Encompass Community Supports, and Rappahannock County Public Schools. Commit to Be Fit will host the second workshop on September 18, 2026.

Headwaters ASEP Collaboration

During the 2025–26 school year, Commit to Be Fit had the pleasure of collaborating with Headwaters Foundation's After School Enrichment Program (ASEP) by offering a few workshops throughout the school year. The workshops included a rubber ducky scavenger hunt, trail mix making, BlazePods and icebreaker games, replanting the school pollinator garden, tug-of-war challenge, and assisting with sushi making!

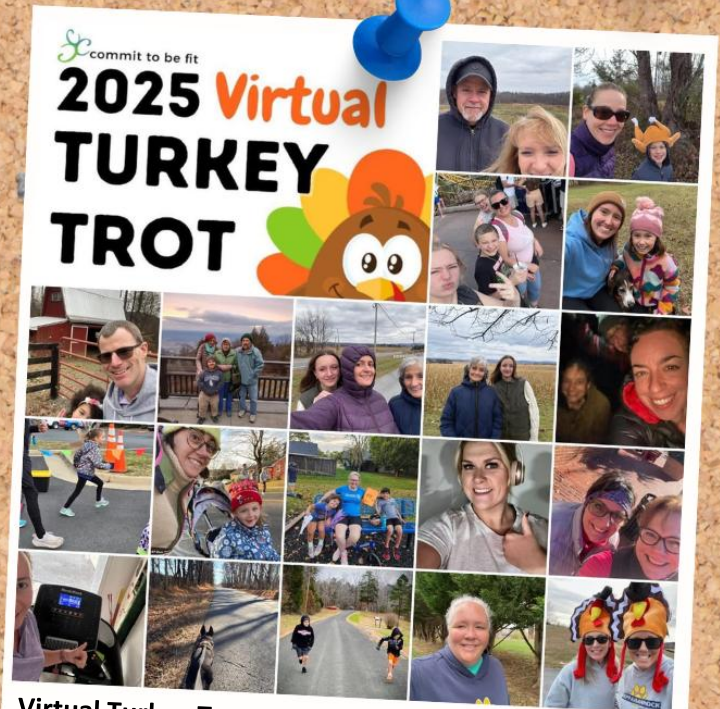
The collaboration also extended beyond the traditional after-school programming. Commit to Be Fit and Headwaters Foundation worked together to host the RCPS Neurodiversity and Autism Awareness and Acceptance Walk and Fly event, where students designed and flew kites in a colorful celebration of inclusion, understanding, and community.



Community Highlights



New Summer Hours in the Fit Kids Clinic
Shown: Tara Prince welcomed RCPS and Rapp at Home friends over the summer.



Virtual Turkey Trot

Shown: 97 community participants completed the virtual event across seven different states!



Spreading the Word

Shown: The clinic set up a booth at the Headwaters Fun Run Dash to promote awareness of services.



More Family Fun

Shown: Winners of the Great Outdoors Family Challenge!



Family Fun

Shown: C2BF held a pop-up family event featuring an obstacle course, tic-tac-toe, scavenger hunt, & more!



Even More Family Fun

Shown: C2BF offered various fun stations, like BlazePods, during the RCES family engagement events.



Presentations

After presenting "Enhancing Employee Wellness for a Healthier School Community," at the American School Health Association's (ASHA) National Conference in October 2025, Holly Jenkins of C2BF was asked to present on our staff wellness highlights to fellow school wellness teams in NY in January 2026. Collaborating with other school wellness professionals across the country has positively influenced so much of the C2BF programming, and the team is honored to pay it forward and share with other schools.

National School District Wellness Coalition

Following the ASHA Conference, Commit to Be Fit was invited to join the National School District Wellness Coalition, formed by Action for Healthy Kids, becoming the first school in the Commonwealth in Virginia to participate in this group of school wellness network. We look forward to learning from and collaborating with fellow school wellness professionals from across the country!



VSBA Showcases for Success

The Farm-to-Table and Active Learning in Outdoor Spaces (ALIOS) program was 1 of 12 programs featured in the Virginia School Boards Association's (VSBA) Showcases for Success. We are honored by the recognition and thankful to be spotlighted alongside so many over innovative programs across the Commonwealth.

HCAT Obesity Prevention Grant- 2026-2029

We were awarded a Healthy Communities Action Teams (HCAT) Obesity Prevention Grant, starting July 2026. This three-year grant, funded by the Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth (VFHY) will be used to build upon our garden-based learning programs with the purpose to encourage students to eat more fruits and veggies, move more, and reduce stress with increased mindfulness opportunities.



SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR FUNDERS

Commit to Be Fit would like to share a special thank you to our funders, who made the successes of SY25-26 possible. This program would not be possible without the ongoing support of the **PATH Foundation**, who generously provides funding this program. We are extremely appreciative of their impactful support. We would also like to thank the **Headwaters Foundation** for their amazing support in helping to fund the reimagined Farm-to-Table/ALIOS classes and hire Kyle Wensel. Finally, we would like to share our gratitude to the **REACH Initiative** for supporting the key components of the staff wellness initiative.

Thanks to each of these phenomenal funders, C2BF continues to promote a culture of wellness for our students, staff, and community.



Photo courtesy of Camden Littleton, Virginia Cooperative Extension

The C2BF Team (L-R): Kyle Wensel (Farm-to-Table & Active Learning in Outdoor Spaces Facilitator), Holly Jenkins (Wellness Integration Coordinator), and Jermey Gates (Wellness Integration Specialist) Not Pictured: Tara Prince, Telehealth Presenter & Dr. Shannon Grimsley, Grant PI & RCPS Superintendent

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