



Toward Zero Waste is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting waste-conscious living in North Carolina through inspiration, education, and action.



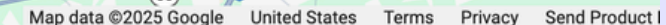
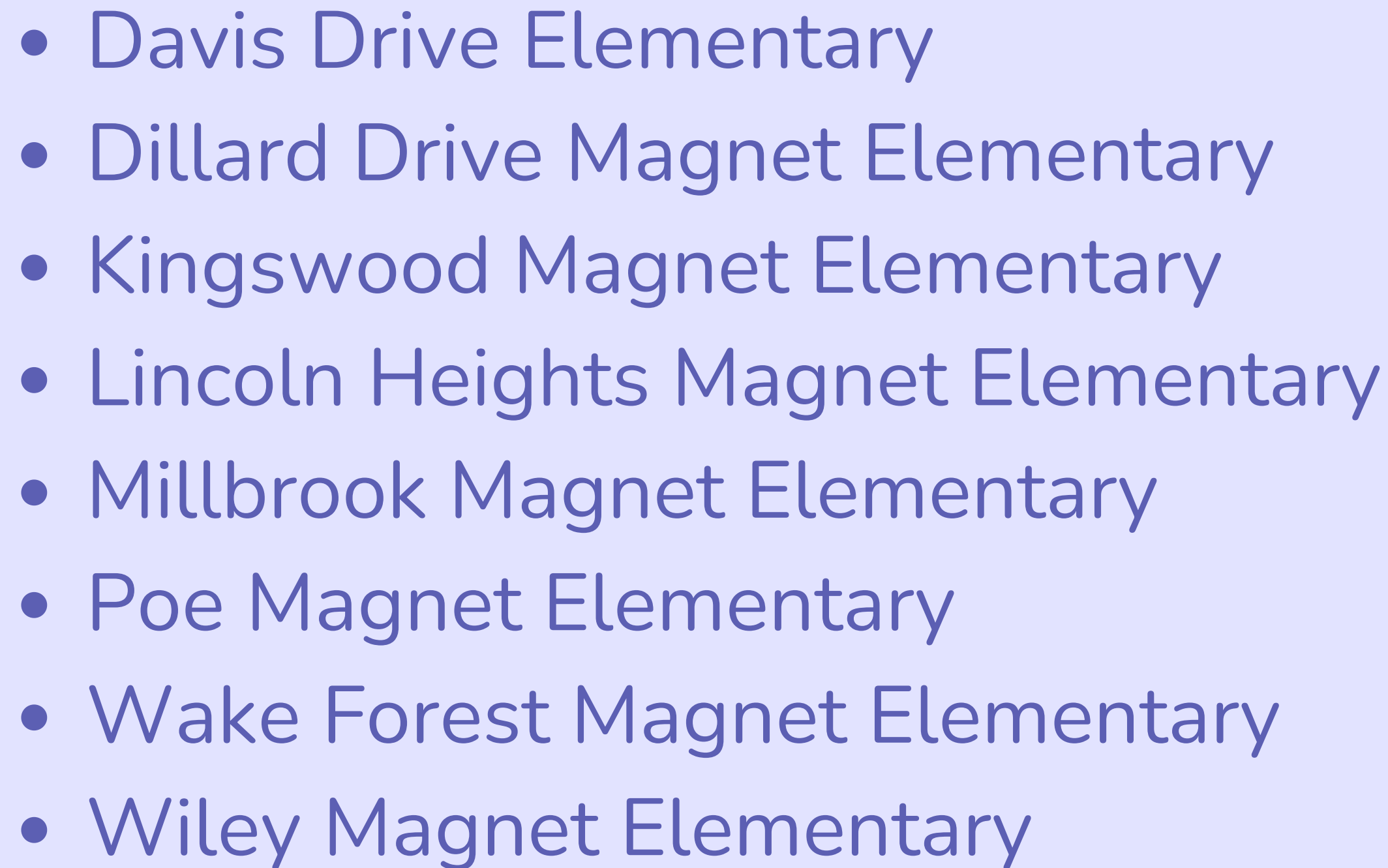
A food recovery program by Toward Zero Waste with Wake County Public School System to capture wholesome leftovers from Child Nutrition Services and feed students, rather than landfills.



SHARE PROGRAM GOALS



- **Reduce** the amount of wholesome prepackaged unopened food thrown out as waste at schools.
- **Establish** a food recovery program to distribute the food items first to students. The food is available to any student in the school, thereby eliminating stigma.
- **Increase** student engagement by increasing awareness of hunger and respect for their environment.
- **Respect** resources and guidelines of WCPSS Child Nutrition Services by feeding people, instead of landfills.



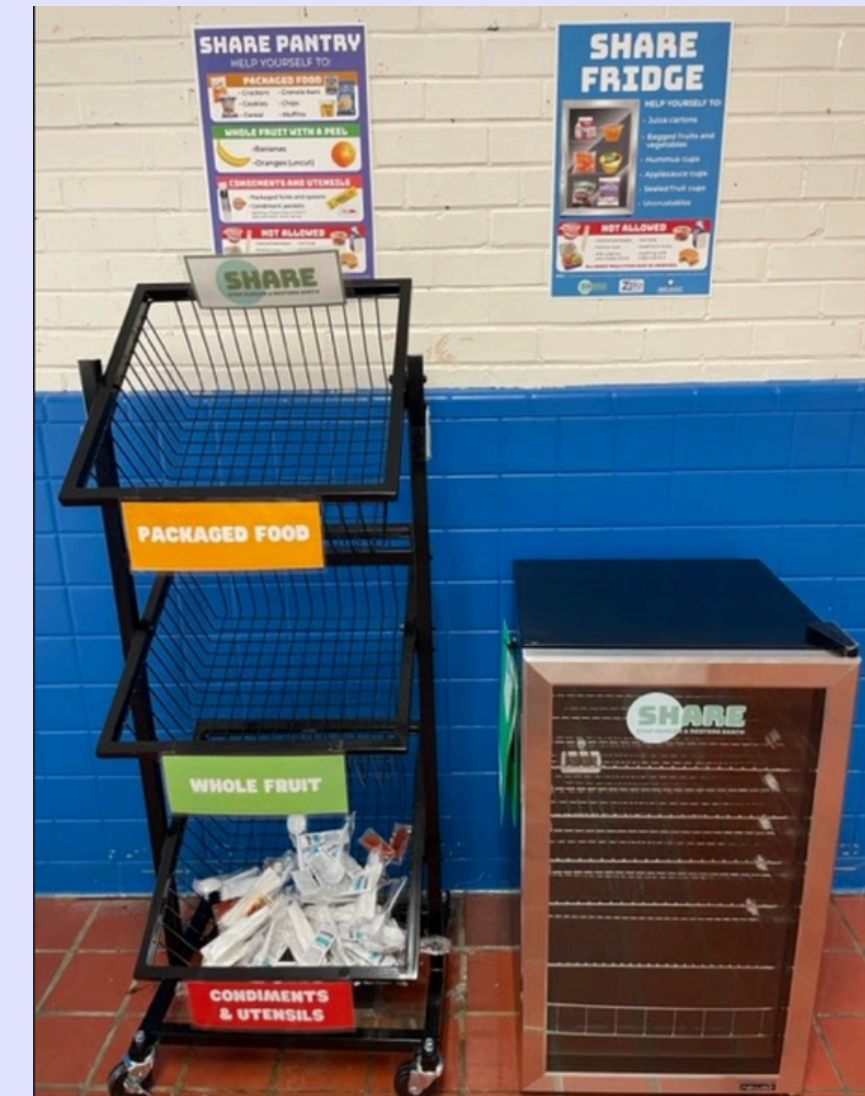
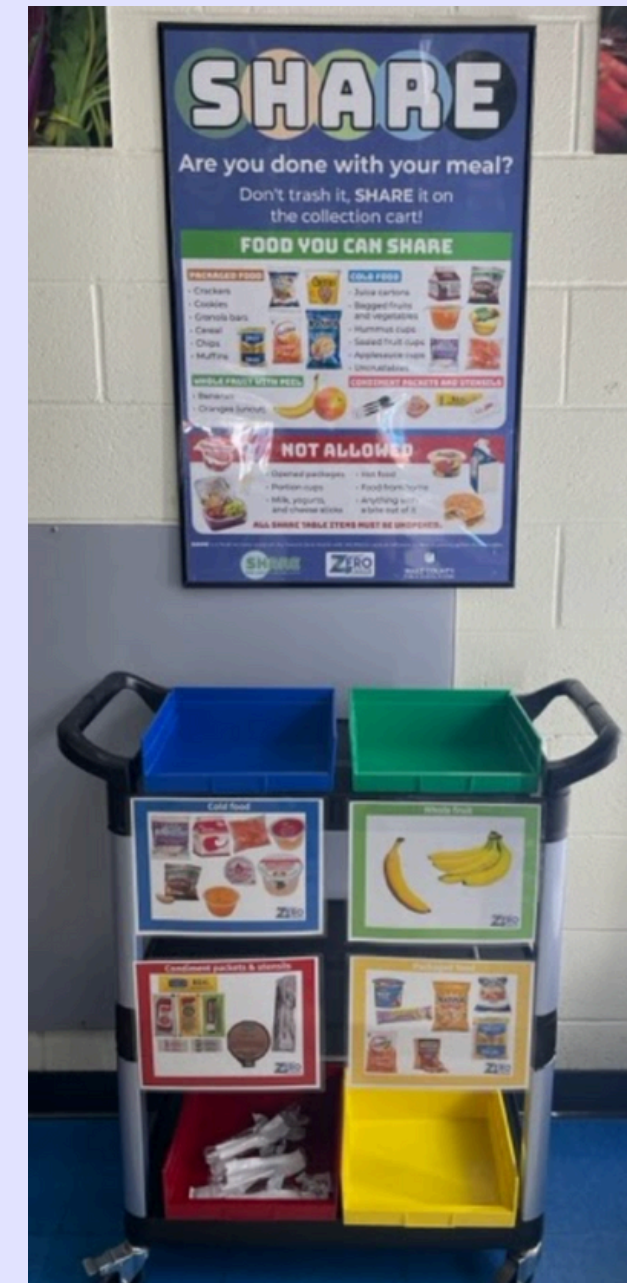


SHARE PROGRAM PILOT

PHYSICAL SETUP



- **SHARE Collection Cart** stationed in the cafeteria during meal services (breakfast and lunch)
- **SHARE Fridge and Pantry Cart** located in a central area or front office
 - Pantry Cart is mobile to easily offer food in various settings
- Throughout the week, items in the SHARE Fridge and Pantry Cart can be obtained as needed by students & staff...
 - Students coming in late and missing breakfast
 - Students missing classroom snacks
 - Students that just need a snack
 - Students at dismissal
 - Students attending after school activities, etc.





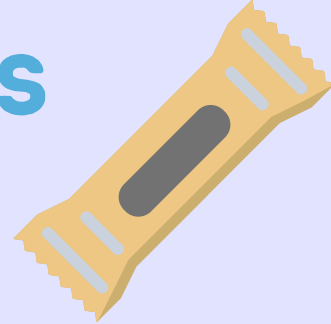
SHARE PROGRAM PILOT

RECOVERABLE ITEMS



PACKAGED FOODS

- CRACKERS
- COOKIES
- PASTRIES/MUFFINS
- CEREAL
- GRANOLA BARS
- CHIPS

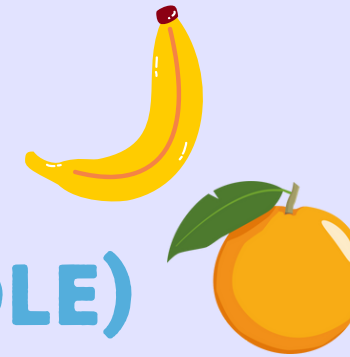


CONDIMENTS AND UTENSILS

- PACKAGED FORKS AND SPOONS, KETCHUP PACKETS, SYRUP, ETC.

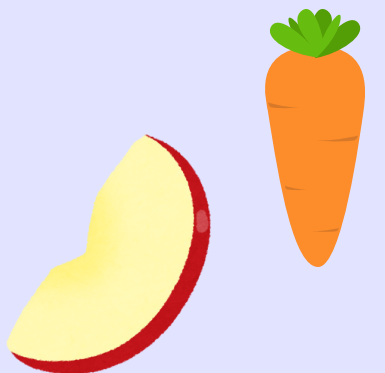
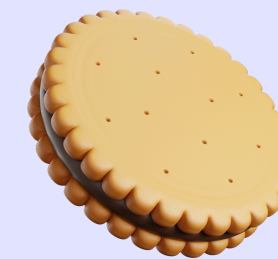
FRESH FRUIT

- BANANAS
- ORANGES (WHOLE)



COLD FOOD

- FRUIT JUICE
- PRE-PACKAGED AND SEALED FRUIT CUPS (APPLESAUCE, DICED PEACHES, MIXED FRUIT, ETC)
- HUMMUS CUPS
- UNCRUSTABLES
- BAGS OF FRESH FRUIT OR VEGETABLES



NOT RECOVERABLE DURING PILOT:
TIME/TEMPERATURE CONTROL FOR
SAFETY FOODS (MILK, YOGURT, ETC.),
FOODS FROM HOME, OPENED FOODS



SHARE PROGRAM PILOT

MEASURING PROGRAM SUCCESS



Quantitative Data

- Volunteers collected data during breakfast and lunch, tallying the number of items donated, per category

Qualitative Data

- Pre and post implementation surveys were conducted with SHARE Program Administrators at each school
- Post implementation surveys given to staff who monitor the cafeteria during meals

School Name: <u>Wilkes</u>		Date: <u>3/12/25</u>		SHARE				
Breakfast Recorder Name: <u>Cathy Ruiz</u>		Time Present (Start - End): <u>8:45 - 9:15 a</u>						
Lunch Recorder Name:		Time Present (Start - End):						
Lunch Recorder Name:		Time Present (Start - End):						
Category	Items	Donated during breakfast	Selected during breakfast	Transferred to pantry cart/fridge from breakfast	Donated during lunch	Selected during lunch	Transferred to pantry cart/fridge from lunch	
Packaged Snacks	Crackers							
	Cookies							
	Pastries/Breakfast muffins	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>				
	Cereal	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>				
	Granola Bars							
	Chips							
	Other:							
Fruit	Whole fruit - non-edible peels							
	Fruit Juice	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>				
	Bagged baby carrots							
	Bagged apple slices	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>				
	Bagged green beans							
	Applesauce cups							
	Fruit cups (factory sealed only)							
Cold Food	UnCrustables sandwiches							
	Hummus cups							
	Other:							
	Other:							
	Condiments and Utensils	Packaged forks and spoons						
		Condiment packets (ketchup, mayonaise, jelly, syrup, etc.)						
		Other:						
COMMENTS:								



SHARE PROGRAM PILOT

MEASURING PROGRAM SUCCESS



Data Highlights

- During their first lunch, Millbrook Elementary collected 18 juices, 65 bags of carrots, 50 bags of apple slices, and 25 packages of graham crackers.
- At one breakfast, Lincoln Heights Elementary donated 26 bananas. 12 of those were eaten and 14 went to the SHARE Pantry Cart.
- In one day, Dillard Drive students donated 50 applesauce. 43 of them were eaten and 7 went to the SHARE Fridge.





SHARE PROGRAM PILOT

MEASURING PROGRAM SUCCESS



Data Highlights

- A student at Poe Elementary arrived late, missing breakfast. She was able to get a bag of apple slices and a juice carton from the SHARE Fridge.
- At Kingswood, a student stopped in the front office and asked for an afternoon snack. They came out with an applesauce cup and spoon.

**41 FOOD ITEMS DONATED
PER DAY/PER SCHOOL
(7,380 PER SCHOOL YEAR)**





SHARE PROGRAM PILOT

PILOT SCHOOL FEEDBACK



Who oversees the SHARE Program?

- Principal/AP
- STEM/Environmental specialist
- Teacher
- Magnet coordinator

**WILLINGNESS AT VARIOUS LEVELS -
WHATEVER WORKS FOR THE SCHOOL**



Students at my school access SHARE donations ...

- During snack time
- As an extra component of breakfast or lunch
- During dismissal/after school
- When breakfast was missed (late arrival)



SHARE PROGRAM PILOT

PILOT SCHOOL FEEDBACK



How often did your school have a surplus of food items, such that you had to dispose of items or needed to donate items offsite?

- Never
- Rarely
- Every week

**STUDENTS ARE SEEKING OUT AND
CONSUMING DONATED FOOD
ALMOST IMMEDIATELY**

What information would you share with other schools considering SHARE?

**“ It's well worth it
and the kids
love it! ”**

**“ What ever effort is
required, the benefits more
than double the effort. ”**

**“ EVERYONE SHOULD DO
IT! There is no reason
not to! ”**



SHARE PROGRAM PILOT

CAFETERIA MONITOR FEEDBACK



“ I have been extremely pleased watching the program become a part of the students routine at breakfast and lunch. From the very first day watching the students add to the cart, and seeing our walkers leave the school at dismissal with a healthy snack was a real treat. I love that the students can depend on the SHARE cart when they need it.

”

“ I LOVE the SHARE program and am so, so happy this is finally happening! ... I am so thankful that our students have started to internalize the concept of not wasting food, condiments, etc. I think the program has really started to shift the mindset of both staff and students towards conservation, and to me that is more valuable even than the saved food.

”

“ I do love this program. I believe it's helpful for students to see the giving back and able to share with others. I like the option of the bin being available at the office throughout the day... The SHARE program while in the cafeteria is being such a positive experience for all ages ...

”

“ Thank you for running this program. It is truly helpful in reducing food waste and benefiting children who don't have snacks or are eagerly looking for the SHARE basket.

”



SHARE PROGRAM PILOT

CAFETERIA MONITOR FEEDBACK



Challenges or desired program changes:

- Consistency with SHARE program oversight in the cafeterias
 - Impacts recoverable item collection rates
- Ongoing education and support for students and staff
- Desire a way to share unopened milks, as many get thrown away
- Desire a way to recover additional whole fruits (pears and apples and precut oranges)



SHARE PROGRAM PILOT

PILOT SCHOOL GUESTS

LAURA WOOD

ENVIRONMENTAL CONNECTIONS INTEGRATION SPECIALIST

Lincoln Heights Environmental Connections Magnet Elementary

**KAREN PROCTOR, STEM SPECIALIST &
WAFA BENRABRA, INSTRUCTIONAL ASSISTANT**

Dillard Drive Magnet Elementary

RANDI JONES
MAGNET COORDINATOR

Millbrook Environmental Connections Magnet Elementary



SHARE PROGRAM PILOT PHASE TWO (2025-26)



- Continuing SHARE program management in existing pilot schools (8)
- Expanding to new elementary and middle schools (10)

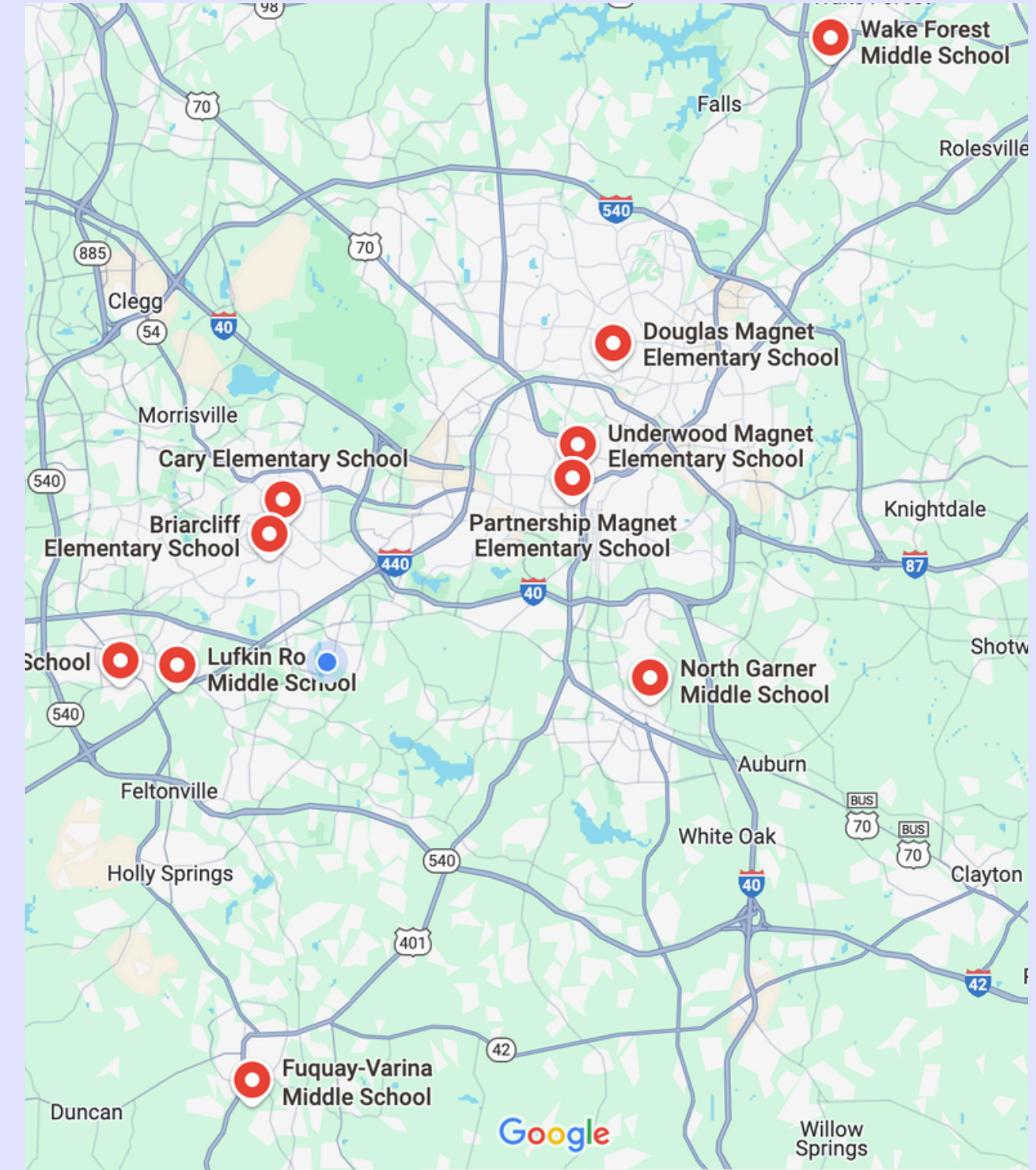




SHARE PROGRAM PILOT PHASE TWO (2025-26)



- Apex Elementary
- Briarcliff Elementary
- Cary Elementary
- Douglas Elementary
- Fuquay Varina Middle
- Lufkin Road Middle
- North Garner Middle
- Partnership Elementary
- Underwood Elementary
- Wake Forest Middle





BEYOND THE PILOT

OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH

- Expansion of SHARE to any interested school within WCPSS
 - Partnering with WCPSS for program supplies
- Collaboration with other school districts looking to develop food recovery programs
- Advocacy at the State level for expanding the definition of recoverable items (e.g. milk, yogurt, cheese sticks)



SHARE PROGRAM CONTACTS

MEGAN HOLLER

MEGAN@TOWARDZEROWASTE.ORG

KATHLEEN LIEBOWITZ

KATHLEEN@TOWARDZEROWASTE.ORG