



OUR MISSION – Watauga Opportunities, Inc. will enable self-reliance and enhance independence through the provision of vocational, residential, and community opportunities to individuals with barriers to employment and community involvement.

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Supported Employment in Action: Greg McCann celebrates 25 years on the job



Twenty-seven years ago the mission and vision of WOI began a shift outside these walls and into other areas of our community. Classroom work focused on preparations to enter the workforce, job coaches were hired, and interviews for jobs in the community began. In 1992, Jeff Cook, Manager of McDonald's of Boone, interviewed Greg McCann and hired him as Lobby Host. That was 25 years ago, and Greg is still on the payroll at McDonald's in Boone! Greg was the 4th employee hired through the new Supported Employment program; WOI

has since placed over 1,100 individuals in competitive community jobs. Greg's co-workers and friends gathered at McDonald's on September 1st to help Greg celebrate the occasion. Over the years, his duties have expanded from the Dining Room and parking lot to also include kitchen duties. When asked about his many years at McDonald's, Greg states, "I love it".

When not at work, Greg participates in the Follow Along program, which offers vocational supports geared towards maintaining both employment and community immersion. Through this program, Greg has become an active member in the community. He has been volunteering at the COC Food Pantry for over 9 years! Greg's steady income has enabled him the opportunity to pursue his hobby of fishing and other interests over the years.

Greg's accomplishments have not gone unnoticed. On October 3rd Greg traveled to the annual MARC meeting at Lake Junaluska and was very pleased to receive the *Marion and Frances Fairey Employee Longevity Award*—"in Recognition of your long and faithful record of work and for serving as a 'Cause Ambassador'". Congratulations Greg on your exemplary employment longevity and dedication!



Enabling Self-Reliance

Estimated Community Wages Earned Since 1994:

\$6,832,604.79

Estimated Reduction in Government Subsidies:

\$2,733,041.92

Job Placements since 1994:

1151

Job Placements YTD:

20

Editorial Shared from the Sept 13th Watauga Democrat

A unique and lasting partnership for the good of our community

In this era of mobility — from our phones to our careers — few are the employees who can claim the longevity of Greg McCann, part of the Boone McDonald's crew who recently celebrated his 25th year on the job. What is more remarkable is that McCann originally found his way into the position — and has maintained it — through Watauga Opportunities Inc., an organization for individuals who need assistance in building self-reliance and independence in vocational and personal living pursuits. Watauga Opportunities Inc., a Boone Area Chamber of Commerce Business of the Year award winner, boasts that there are "no limits to possibilities," and its wide offering of products and services certainly bears this out. From thermoforming and medical products to assembly, packaging and specialty

products, we add the more than 1,000 individuals placed in jobs throughout our community and the success of this one organization is clear. More, the success of employees such as McCann contribute to our employer base. While it may take a bit longer for a Watauga Opportunity employee to train into a position, once there, the commitment, pride and longevity easily surpass what would be the continued training costs forced through churn of other workers.

Our congratulations go to McCann for his dedication to his work, to Watauga Opportunities for its commitment to our community and, especially, for all those businesses and individuals who have chosen to partner with this organization for the good of all.

Visit us online: www.woiworks.org

Letter from the President...



On May 16, 2017, I represented Watauga Opportunities along with MARC members, self-advocates and their family members from across North Carolina as we gathered at the U.S. Capitol to educate our members of Congress. Our group of North Carolina advocates met with numerous Members of Congress and legislative staff to tell our stories and express our concerns about current laws and regulations that limit or restrict government supports for services and employment options that ensured personal choice from an array of options and opportunities.

Mike Haworth, WOI Parent from Ashe County NC, stated, "Cindy and I are thankful for the North Carolina legislators and staff that took time out of their busy schedules to listen to our concerns about the potential impact recent legislation may have on the ability of our daughter Beth to continue to work at Watauga Opportunities. Each of them seemed to appreciate the rather obvious and simple truth that one size does not fit all." All agreed that the trip to the Capitol was a significant opportunity to have a positive impact assuring the same choices of where, how, and with whom they work and spend their time as all other citizens do.

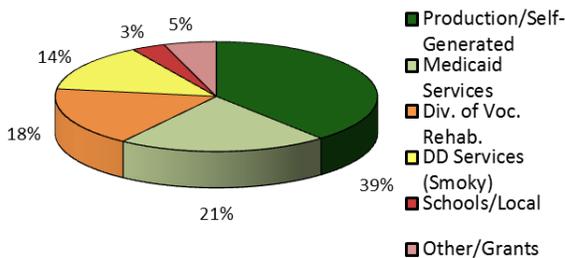


"North Carolina Day on the Hill," at the Capitol in Washington, DC

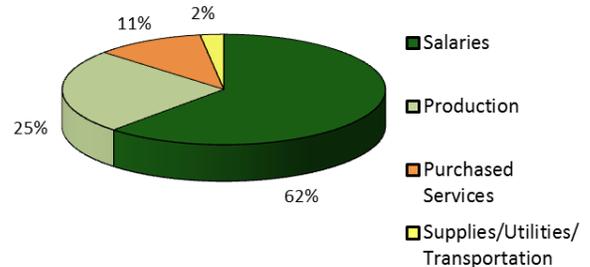
We were pleased that Congresswoman Foxx and staff from Senators Tillis and Burr's office took time to visit with us during our Day on the Hill event. We look forward to working with them, to address both the unintended negative consequences and unfunded mandates resultant from the regulatory over-reach within implementation of the otherwise admirable Workforce Innovations and Opportunity Act. Our contingent from North Carolina gives a special thanks to ACCSES, a Washington based national association for community rehabilitation programs that coordinated and hosted the Day on the Hill.

Highlighting 2016-2017: WOI continues to partner with NC Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Vaya Health, Watauga County Board of Education and others in the provision of vocational, community and residential services. During FY 2016-2017, Watauga Opportunities provided vocational services to 267 individuals. Our employment programs saw 63 individuals' attain **self-reliance through employment** with Work Adjustment placing 30 individuals while Supported Employment accounted for 33 community job placements. Evaluation/Work Adjustment served 74 individuals, Supported Employment served 49 individuals in job development/training & 85 in Follow-Along, CAET/ADVP served 19 individuals, Innovations served 14 individuals, School Transitional programs served 13 students while our residential programs served 12 individuals in our group homes. We served individuals in Watauga, Ashe, Avery, Alleghany, Wilkes, Mitchell and Buncombe Counties.

Revenue



Expenses



Watauga Opportunities continues in our quest to **enable our own self-reliance** through reduction in the use of tax dollars in provision of our services. In FYE 2017, 39% of non-residential operating revenues were self-generated. While the economic impact of Watauga Opportunities is important, the true human impact of our service is best seen in the growth of our participants' own **self-reliance**; since 1994 participant community wages earned are estimated at \$6.83 million, while their government subsidies have reduced by an estimated \$2.73 million. Community job placements now total 1151. We truly are **enabling self-reliance and enhancing independence**. The above charts show the source of our revenue and its expenditure.

Follow Along Participant Employment Milestones

15 Years! Congratulations to **Ricky Corley** who has celebrated 15-years working as a Janitor at Watauga Opportunities. His responsibilities at WOI include cleaning common areas and hallways, sweeping and mopping, and emptying trash cans. Ricky's supervisor says that he is very dedicated to his job and always takes initiative to get it done. Ricky enjoys conversing with his coworkers and being a part of the WOI team. He is an active member of the Boone community; volunteering weekly for the Watauga Humane Society and Adopt-a-Street. He is also a member of the Kiwanis AKTION club. In the photo, Ricky is seen accepting the Community Employment Award in recognition of his 15-year anniversary. WOI would like to thank Ricky for his years of hard work!



10 Years! When a baby begins crying at the Appalachian State University Child Development Center, **Karen DeHart** springs into action. She is prepared to change diapers, feed the baby, or maybe just hold the little one. Karen reports the biggest challenge staff experience is getting everyone quiet for their naps at the same time. She has met this responsibility with much enthusiasm and has spent many hours updating her training each year. Karen has proved to be a very valuable employee and has worked full weeks during ASU breaks to fill in when college students are not available. Congratulations Karen on 10-years of employment at the ASU Child Development Center!

WOI Calendar of Events



November 10th - WOI Closed
Veteran's Day

November 23rd-24th - WOI Closed Thanksgiving

December 4th - Board & Staff Dinner

December 5th - Creekside Holiday Party

December 12th - Kellwood Holiday Party

December 15th - In-House Holiday Party at WOI

December 22nd-January 1st - WOI Closed

January 7th-8th & February 11th-13th - Special Olympics Winter Games at Appalachian Ski Mtn.

January 25th - Board Meeting

2016-2017 Program Evaluation

Watauga Opportunities, Inc. had many positive outcomes during the past fiscal year. A total of **267** individuals were served as follows:

CAET	19
Supported Employment	49
SE Follow-Along and Group	85
Evaluation and Work Adjustment	74
Innovations	14
School (sponsored by Watauga BOE)	13
Community Based Assessments	13

A total of **63** individuals were successfully placed in community jobs. Program participants invested 7,412 hours in community civic and volunteer efforts. Satisfaction surveys from all stakeholders yielded in 98% positive responses of services.

CAET and Innovations Participants Create Art

Individuals in the CAET and Innovations Programs participated in a community art project, *Trash to Treasure*, at the Turchin Center during July. Participants were able to choose from a variety of found or discarded items to complete a piece of art. Several art experts from ASU and the art community were available to assist. It was such a wonderful experience and many participants were able to enjoy this unique art project.

Leah Addison was one individual who participated in the event. She even had the opportunity to attend a banquet the evening before, where she met traveling artists who were showing their work at the Turchin Center and assisting during the Trash to Treasures Event. Leah had a wonderful time and is seen displaying her amazing piece of art in the photo. She is looking forward to attending the event again.



Manufacturing and Quality News

Looking towards the future, the Manufacturing Dept. has been busy expanding our production for existing customers and cultivating new relationships. One project that we are excited about is with Dana Corporation. Dana produces products worldwide for the automobile industry. We have worked with Dana to help them with a thin gauged thermoformed tray that would hold large washers that go into automobile transmissions. We are now manufacturing a third generation tray for large washers. Our relationship with Barry Callebaut continues. Barry Callebaut is the world's leader in chocolate production. We are producing new items for them on a regular basis, as well as maintaining existing contracts.

This fall, our Quality Department had another successful ISO continual assessment audit. Our quality system is certified to ISO 9001:2008 and ISO 13485:2003. Next year we will be transitioning to the new ISO 9001:2015 and ISO 13485:2016 standards.

AKTION Kiwanis Club at NC Conference

Boone AKTION Kiwanis Club members have worked hard on meeting the needs of children in our community in 2017. Projects through COC Food Pantry include the Baby Love Project, the Easter Project, and the Children's Christmas Project. With The Literacy Initiative Project, members purchased children's books for local day care centers and accompanied Boone Kiwanis Club members to deliver books and read to children. The "Pack the Bus" Project raised money for school supplies. Members also prepared lunches and donated proceeds (\$625 total!) to families and children affected by the Hurricanes in 2017.



In September, Susan Jones, Kiwanis Club mentor, along with Boone Kiwanis members Eric Brown and Larry Woodrow, accompanied Avee Huffman, Elizabeth Presnell, Greg McCann, and AJ Reed to the 2017 Carolinas District Conference in Denton, NC, representing Boone and the WOI Kiwanis AKTION club.



– OUR QUALITY POLICY –

Watauga Opportunities, Inc. is Mission Driven, Quality Focused, and Committed to Exceeding all Customer Expectations!



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Enabling Self-Reliance Through Employment



Quality Management System – ISO 13485:2003 Cert. # FM560456
ISO 9001:2008 Cert. # 576680

Contract manufacturing, including plastic thermoforming, packaging, & labeling of medical devices to be offered sterile or non-sterile. Plastic thermoforming of trays to be used in food, packaging and general applications.



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A Equal Employment/Affirmative Action Employer and Service Provider