

The Works



WATAUGA OPPORTUNITIES, INC.

ENABLING SELF-RELIANCE THROUGH EMPLOYMENT

Watauga Opportunities, Inc.

Spring-Summer 2015

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.

2015

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Community Job Placements Surpass 1,000

Enabling Self Reliance and Enhancing Independence; this was the objective in mind when Watauga Opportunities established the Supported Employment program in 1990. In 2015, WOI celebrates the ongoing success of that mission with the accomplishment of placing over 1,000 individuals in Community Employment positions. In recognition of that milestone WOI brought together our 1st individual and our 1000th individual that have been placed through our services and are employed in the community.



Joe Eller stands with Paul Wellborn; representing WOI's 1st and 1000th community job placement.



Joe receiving the Governor's Award

Joe Eller is a testament to the opportunities that employment provides individuals. In 1991 he began working at Hardees in Boone and was the first person to benefit from WOI's Supported Employment services. That same year, Joe received the Governor's Award for Job Training Participant of the Year. In 2003, Joe continued his career path at Appalachian State University where he remains currently employed as a dishwasher. Joe says that his favorite part about working at ASU is that, "We have good supervisors and good staff." Steady

employment has assisted Joe in achieving many accomplishments in life. In April of this year, Joe celebrated 31 years of marriage with his wife Donna; who has also been employed through the SE program since 1991. The Eller's are home owners and are looking forward to making their final mortgage payment in January of 2016. Joe will be the first to tell you that hard work can pay off. Congratulations Joe!

Enabling Self-Reliance

Estimated Community Wages
Earned Since 1994:

\$6,229,464.48

Estimated Reduction in
Government Subsidies:

\$2,491,785.79

Job Placements since 1994:

1015

Job Placements Year to Date:

41



Paul Wellborn began his employment path in March of this year when he started working in the maintenance department at the Village of Meadowview Apartments. When asked about his job, Paul says with an enthusiastic smile that he likes it all. Paul's supervisor Jennifer Davidson states that, "Paul has been a wonderful addition to our Village of Meadowview staff. He has become an integral part of our little family and we appreciate his hard work and positive attitude so much. We hope he stays with us for a very long time." Like Joe, Paul is an accomplished individual. In June he will be graduating from Watauga High School. While attending WHS he has been an active participant in Mountain Alliance and, as a senior, Paul is the recipient of the Jerry Cantwell Service Award. He has also received the WHS Pioneer Spotlight award on two occasions. Congratulations Paul, your future looks bright!

Visit us online: www.woiworks.org

Letter from the President...



Opportunities.... Our lives are full of Opportunities.... Opportunities that always involve some risk, Opportunities that always involve some effort, and Opportunities that always involve some gain. Those Opportunities with the proper mix of risk, effort and gain often lead to success. You can't keep your foot on first and simultaneously steal second. Mix in some persistence and determination and there are few limits to one's life of Opportunities. Most importantly, our communities grow and evolve as new Opportunities are realized by one individual, thereby reducing the risk and opening the path for others to follow.

On the cover of this newsletter you can read about two remarkable men, Joe Eller and Paul Wellborn, both filled with persistence and determination. One is living a life bright with Opportunities realized while the other is just starting on a future bright with Opportunities yet to be realized.

In 1990, while we were developing the nuts and bolts of our new Supported Employment service, I sat down with Joe Eller and talked of the Opportunities that he and his wife Donna had with this new service. We discussed the risk, the effort, and the gain. We discussed how with his persistence and determination, Joe's success would open the path for our community to grow and others to follow. I told Joe that he and Donna may someday earn over \$1,000 a month... he laughed and said I was crazy.

So here is the real life Outcome of those Opportunities; Joe and Donna recently celebrated their 31st wedding anniversary. Joe and Donna have both been employed in our community for over 24 years earning far more than \$1,000 a month. Joe and Donna are homeowners who will pay off their mortgage in 6 months and now more than 1,000 people have been placed in community jobs following Joe's path... Paul Wellborn is the one thousandth person to follow that path! Paul is also a persistent and determined young man who has a future bright with Opportunity. Paul is graduating from Watauga High School with an OCS diploma this June. Paul has been the recipient of community service awards. Paul has twice received the WHS Pioneer Spotlight award and Paul is a highly valued team member at his job. We are certain Paul will be realizing more and more of life's Opportunities as time goes on...

My Congratulations to Joe and my Congratulations to Paul; we couldn't ask for better examples for the next 1,000 to follow... on their path of Opportunity!

Employment Anniversaries and Milestones

10 Years!

May 23, 2005, was a "red-letter day" for **Charlie Woodard**. He was a student at Watauga High School and began a new job as janitor for Bandana's, the popular Barbecue Restaurant in Boone. Duties over the years included washing dishes, taking out trash, and cleaning the dining room and restrooms. On occasion, kitchen staff have called on him to perform some kitchen duties. Bandana's has recently been sold to current WOI Board Member, Ben McKethan and is now "McKethan Brothers Barbecue".

5 Years!

August 26, 2015, marks a 5-year anniversary for **A.J. Reed** at Alray's Tire Co. He also began his job while a student at Watauga High School. A. J. works as shop janitor and when he completes those duties, he assists the shop technicians with their jobs. He reports that his favorite task is rolling the tires into their storage spots. After work, he delights in giving a report of the number of tires moved for that day.

Employee of the Month

Kim Braswell was selected as "Outstanding Employee of the Month" at "Hardee's #2" for the month of February. Kim has cleaned the dining area and provided friendly customer service at that site for almost 4 years. Congratulations, Kim!



Congratulations Charlie and AJ!



– OUR QUALITY POLICY –

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

Staff Honored with Marilyn Sturgill Award

2015 marked the second year that a Watauga Opportunities staff member was the recipient of the Marilyn Sturgill Award for dedication to Special Olympics endeavors. Dianne Brown was honored in 2014 and Paige Jones in 2015. The awards were presented during the opening ceremonies at the Watauga County SO Spring Games by Hugh Sturgill, husband of the late Marilyn Sturgill. Mr. Sturgill fondly remembered Marilyn's dedication and volunteer efforts to assure the success of the local athletes. He recalled that Marilyn, a long time WOI Board Member, had worked on many levels of Special Olympics; State, National, and World, but she recognized that the most important work is performed locally when volunteers give of themselves to make certain that all athletes are winners. Watauga Opportunities appreciates Dianne and Paige's dedication and service to our Special Olympics athletes.



Dianne and Paige with Hugh Sturgill

Programs focus on Getting Healthy



Sandy, Ben, RL, and Janet out for a walk at the Greenway

WOI has started a "Healthy Living Initiative" that is focusing on everyone's overall health and wellbeing. We are receiving assistance from Caldwell Community College's Compensatory Education Instructors who are teaching classes and participating in activities that promote healthy living. Smoky Mountain Center provided backpacks with water bottles,

cups, stress balls and Frisbees to help us meet our goals. We are pairing up with Special Olympics to participate in activities together. In the Summer we will be planting a straw bale garden here at WOI. Everyone is very excited about getting healthy and feeling better!



WOI Calendar of Events

May 25th - WOI Closed Memorial Day

May 28th - Board Meeting

May 29-31 - SO State Games in Raleigh

June 19th - Relay for Life

July 3rd - WOI Closed 4th of July

August 27th - Board Meeting

September 7th - WOI Closed Labor Day

October/November - CARF Re-Accreditation Survey

WOI Gears up for Relay for Life



Every spring and summer, staff and participants at Watauga Opportunities volunteer to raise money and awareness for Relay for Life. The 2015 Watauga County "Relay for Life" event will be held at Watauga High School on Friday night,

June 19. Last year, there were 28 people in attendance representing WOI. Survivors Donna Eller, Kim Braswell, and Janet Isaacs walked in the Survivors' lap. In 2014, WOI was saddened to say good-bye to 2 long-time friends. Former staff member Jeanette Johnson lost her battle with cancer and cancer survivor Ronnie Walker passed away after a brief illness. Fund-raising for the 2015 Event has already begun with a Soup Lunch, "Ice Cream Social" and the annual "Italian Lunch". You may help our Relay Team raise money for the American Cancer Society by purchasing luminarias in honor or memory of loved ones with cancer. New this year are luminarias for "Caregivers". All luminarias are \$10.00 each. Please join us on **June 19th at Watauga High School** to support our cancer survivors! Events begin at 5:00 pm with "Survivors' Lap" at 7:00 pm.

Photo Spotlight



Greg and Clyde get their shoes shined at Joy Prom

Enabling Self-Reliance Through Employment



Manufacturing and Quality News

The Watauga Opportunities Production Department has had an exciting opportunity recently. On March 13th and 14th, we partnered with Waste Reduction Partners to facilitate a hands-on Lean Manufacturing training event that included value stream mapping, line diagramming, and environmental impact review. Waste Reduction Partners is a state-sponsored technical assistance group of staff including retired industrial professionals, engineers and scientists. Their team has helped over 2,030 NC business and institutions save more than \$71 million in utility costs and operational savings since the year 2000. We chose our Sarstedt Corporation production jobs to focus on during the workshop because of the volume of cell scrapers that we produce. Three individuals from the Waste



WOI staff attend Lean Green Manufacturing Workshop

Reduction Partners' technical assistance group worked with a cross-function 10 member WOI staff team to review and implement process line improvements to WOI's laboratory appliance assembly area. The team generated fourteen opportunities for improvement, including the redesign of assembly layout, inspection, and packaging. The project team estimated a 25 percent improvement in part flow and time savings as well as other ergonomic, motion, space, and environmental improvements. What resulted was a more efficient, flowing work area. We are looking forward to utilizing the techniques learned to maintain a streamlined and effective production process.

In May, Watauga Opportunities welcomed the completion of a new roof on the building. This was a much needed improvement that will benefit Watauga Opportunities for years to come.



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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.



CARF Accredited in Community Integration, Community Employment: Job Development, Job Supports, Job Site Training and Employee Development Services
A Equal Employment/Affirmative Action Employer and Service Provider