



*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

## Board of Directors

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## Enabling Self-Reliance

Estimated Community Wages  
Earned Since 1994:

**\$6,341,092.42**

Estimated Reduction in  
Government Subsidies:

**\$2,536,436.97**

Job Placements since 1994:

**1036**

Job Placements Year to Date:

**15**

## Building Social Capital in Our Community

One of our Core Values at Watauga Opportunities is “Community”; the services that we provide support this value by placing a strong focus on building “social capital”. Volunteering often provides an excellent way for participants to form these important connections. Last fiscal year, our Follow-Along department participated in over 6,300 hours of community experiences as part of our community immersion pilot. Of those hours, 3,168 were spent with civic organizations or volunteering. Innovations Community Networking is another one of our services that is based around forming new relationships and community connections. We would like to highlight 2 individuals who exemplify this strong commitment to our community and have thereby built social capital.



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**Ricky Corley** has been volunteering at Watauga County Humane Society (WCHS) for the past 2 years and has clocked in over 200 volunteer hours. In September, Ricky was recognized at the Volunteer Appreciation picnic as a WCHS Volunteer of the Year. Ricky tells everyone he meets that he loves doing “clothes” (washing & drying dog & cat blankets) and that his work is never done! Charlie Duke, President of WCHS, states that, “Ricky is always on time, focused on his responsibilities, and is pleasant to be around. We always enjoy him.”

**Clint Miller** has been volunteering with Faith Bridge in their Casting Bread Food Pantry program for over 2 years. Clint wears many hats when volunteering. He helps unload, organize, and shelve food items. He shows the clients which food items they are approved to have and helps carry boxes of food out to their vehicles; which is very much appreciated. He also helps deliver food from local businesses to Casting Bread. Diann Miller the Operations Manager at Casting Bread Ministries says that “Clint is always willing to help! He is friendly, kind and is a true asset to Casting Bread.”



Without the hard work and dedication from volunteers like Ricky and Clint, these community organizations would not be as successful. Volunteering provides a sense of purpose, which can be directly tied into the concept of Community Networking. During the first quarter of the fiscal year, Innovations Community Networking participants logged approximately 540 volunteer hours in the community! Watauga Opportunities would like to commend Ricky, Clint, and all of the hard working volunteers for their dedication to the Boone community.

Throughout this issue, you will read more about our community immersion opportunities and ways that you can contribute to our community while building social capital.

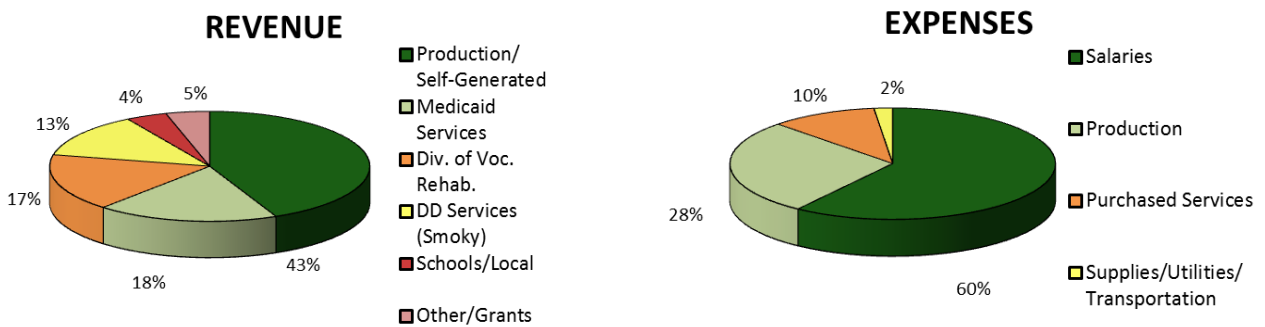
## Letter from the President...



During 2014-2015 Watauga Opportunities celebrated its 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year. Since 1974 it has been WOI's mission to **enable self-reliance and enhance independence** by offering employment and community opportunities to the people of northwestern North Carolina. We are very proud to report that in the spring of 2015 WOI's community job placements surpassed 1,000; what a perfect way to celebrate 40 years of enabling self-reliance! The individual we first placed and his wife, who was our third placement, not only just celebrated their 31st anniversary but also recently paid off their mortgage; while our one thousandth placement just graduated from high school employed! One is living a life bright with realized opportunity while the other is just starting on a future bright with potential opportunities. The ability of Watauga Opportunities to continuously enable these life altering outcomes for 40 years is credited to the efforts of a knowledgeable, dedicated and visionary Staff and Board of Directors. We look forward to a future bright with opportunities and excellence.

**Highlighting 2014-2015** was the planning, pursuing and achieving of WOI's service enhancement and growth targets. Our community immersion pilot with Smoky Mountain Center (SMC) saw a 7 year 665% increase in participant civic community experiences, from 476 to 3,168 hours, Medicaid Waiver services provided 16,556 hours of individual service. In conjunction with SMC we are expanding this pilot of small group, community immersion social capital building service to other participants in FY 2015-16. In the fall of 2015, after much research and planning we expanded our community employment service into the Asheville area. In manufacturing we continued ISO 9001 and ISO 13485 Quality Registrations, participated in a facility wide energy audit, and a lean green manufacturing efficiency exercise through NC State University.

We continue to partner with NC Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Smoky Mountain Center, Watauga County Board of Education and other partners in the provision of vocational, community and residential services. During FY 2014-2015, Watauga Opportunities provided vocational services to 250 individuals. Our employment programs saw 46 individuals' attain **self-reliance through employment** with Work Adjustment placing 25 individuals while Supported Employment accounted for 21 community job placements. Evaluation/Work Adjustment served 66 individuals, Supported Employment served 29 individuals in job development/training & 79 in Follow-Along, ADVP served 26 individuals, Innovations served 17 individuals, our School Transitional programs served 14 students while our residential programs served 12 individuals in our group homes. We served individuals from Watauga, Ashe, Avery, Alleghany and Wilkes Counties.



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 2015, 43% 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 \$6.34 million, while their government subsidies have reduced by an estimated \$2.5 million. Community job placements now total 1020! We truly are **enabling self-reliance and enhancing independence**. The above charts show the source of our revenue and its expenditure.





## *Make a Difference this Holiday Season*



As the Holiday season approaches, WOI welcomes the opportunity to give to our neighbors in the spirit of making the holidays more joyful for our community. This year, there are several ways that you can participate in our community outreach efforts:

**Santa's Toy Box**– You may have noticed that the big red box in the front office area already has toys in it! You can donate toys to local children up to age 15 by placing new items in the box. Staff and WOI participants usually fill it up one or two times during the Holiday season.

**Hunger Coalition Sharing Tree**– WOI has supported this effort for 16 years with SE/LTF taking the lead in selecting a family with children, shopping for & wrapping gifts, and delivering items in time for Christmas. Staff and participants can make donations for purchasing clothes, coats, and other items requested by the children. Staff members can sign up to donate food items for a nourishing Christmas meal. Response was so great last year that we have decided to include a Senior Citizen in addition to the family for this year!

**Salvation Army Bell Ringing**– WOI Bell-ringers will be in the Boone Mall at the entrance to Belk Department Store from 12:00-2:00 pm on Mon., Nov. 23, Wed., Nov. 25, and Tues. – Fri., Dec. 1-4. Come by and donate!

**COC Food Pantry**– During the 2014 Holidays, SE/LTF staff & participants, along with Santa Claus, distributed gifts to 107 children through the "COC Food Pantry". Throughout 2015, the SE/LTF Dept. have been working in collaboration with the staff at COC, area churches, and interested individuals who have donated money. Our Kiwanis AKTION Club prepared and sold lunch to help fund this project. The process of packaging the items has begun as some of Santa's busiest elves are getting ready for Dec. 14<sup>th</sup> when the gifts will be distributed at COC.

**Kiwanis Aktion Club** – Our club will decorate the Tree at the Watauga County Library at 12 noon on Monday, Nov. 30<sup>th</sup>. AKTION Club members have worked on the ornaments all year and will have the tree ready in time for Boone's Annual Parade that takes place on Saturday, December. 5<sup>th</sup>.



### Photo Spotlight

Creekside and Kellwood residents attended a Hickory Crawdads baseball game in August. Picture here are Greg, Paige, Brent, Sandy, and Hope.

In October, ADVP and Innovations participants enjoyed a trip to The Orchard at Altapass. Janet, Beth, Sarah, Shannon, Brent, and Hope are pictured on a hay ride.



### Congratulations to the Ellers!

"Blueprints and Bowties" was the theme for the 2015 "Habitat for Humanity" dinner as the Boone community came together to celebrate fund-raising efforts. Also celebrating during the evening's festivities were Joe and Donna Eller who presented the final mortgage payment on their house to Alex Hooker, Executive Director of **Habitat for Humanity**. They spoke to the attendees and expressed appreciation to Habitat for Humanity for assisting them in building a home in 1995. At the time, Habitat for Humanity set up a 30-year mortgage, and The Ellers paid it off in just 20 years! Both Joe and Donna have been employed in the community since 1991. The Ellers are pictured on stage with Andy Hooker just before he tears up the note signifying completion of mortgage payment.



### WOI Calendar of Events

November 26th-27th - WOI Closed Thanksgiving

December 7th - Board & Staff Dinner

December 8th - Creekside Holiday Party

December 15th - Kellwood Holiday Party

December 21st-25th - WOI Closed

January 1st - WOI Closed New Years

January 3rd-4th - Special Olympics Winter Games at Appalachian Ski Mtn.

January 28th - Board Meeting

February 7th-9th - S.E. Regional S.O. Skiing



*Enabling Self-Reliance Through Employment*



## Happy Hearts Extension & Community Club

The Happy Hearts club has been busy at Watauga Opportunities and in the community with emphasis on local foods, health issues, and healthy foods. Members have begun a "Coffee/Snack Shoppe" at breaks and lunch to make participants at WOI more aware of healthy items such as yogurt parfait, fruit cups, and cheese-sticks. Karen DeHart, Rebecca Nelson, and Stephanie Silver hosted an Easter Party for residents at Mountain Care Facility; Karen and Margaret Dunbar prepared a Fruit Salad for an "AKTION Club" meeting. Julia Whitesides and Kim Braswell have also shopped and helped prepare and serve healthy snacks. Dianne Brown, Donna Eller, and Margaret Dunbar traveled to Forest City in April for the Annual "Spring District Day" for West District Extension Community Association. They are pictured here with Faye Lanier, 2015-16 President of NC Extension & Community Association.



**– OUR QUALITY POLICY –**  
*Watauga Opportunities, Inc. is Mission Driven, Quality Focused, and Committed to Exceeding all Customer Expectations!*

## Manufacturing and Quality News

As we approach the winter months, Manufacturing at Watauga Opportunities has been staying busy. In August, the production department achieved our highest monthly manufacturing revenue to date. This fiscal year, we have seen substantial increases in our plastic thermoforming division. We have converted one of our thermoforming machines to run both male and female molds. As a result of this new capability, we have recently completed our 1st order of tray lids for gelato and are working on additional new trays for this company. We look forward to continuing our growth in manufacturing. This fall, our Quality Department had another successful ISO continual assessment audit and microbiology audit. Our quality system is re-certified to ISO 9001:2008 and ISO 13485: 2003 for another year.



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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 Employment Services: Job Development & Employment Supports,  
 Community Integration, Comprehensive Vocational Evaluation and Employee Development Services  
 A Equal Employment/Affirmative Action Employer and Service Provider