



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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Enabling Self-Reliance

Estimated Community Wages Earned Since 1994:

\$6,641,655.78

Estimated Reduction in Government Subsidies:

\$2,656,662.31

Job Placements since 1994:
1098

Job Placements Year to Date:
30

Moving Into the Future: CAET Program expands Community Based Opportunities



CAET participants volunteer at the Watauga Humane Society Dog Park and Junaluska Park with Adopt a Flower Bed



If there is one thing we can always count on, it is change. Watauga Opportunities has grown and evolved through many changes since its' beginning in

1974. 2016 has presented us with the opportunity to mark another Positive Change in the progress towards fulfilling our mission of enhancing independence and enabling self-reliance. In April of this year, WOI celebrated the implementation of the Community Activity and Employment Transitions model, known as CAET, and the retirement of our ADVP (Adult Developmental Vocational Services Program) service.

The CAET model brings a focus to community immersion and promotes independence through integration into the local community. CAET allows participants to develop social skills, explore vocational options, engage in wellness activities, build daily life skills, and contribute by volunteering. It is through these activities that individuals are able to establish social capital.



Steve, Hope, & Isaiah volunteer with Horse Helpers of the High Country

Since the program started, CAET participants have been staying very busy! Favorite destinations include the Senior Center, ASU events, Watauga County Library, Higher Grounds Coffee Shop, the Greenway, and the Blue Ridge Parkway. Volunteering is a big component for CAET, with participants engaging in weekly opportunities that include Horse Helpers of the High Country, Casting Bread Food Pantry, Adopt-A-Street, and Farm Cafe.



Clyde plays Disc Golf at the Sports Expo

One of the primary components of the CAET model is the focus on transitioning to community employment. Recently, two CAET participants have obtained jobs in the community and have plans to transition into WOI's Follow Along program; which provides long term vocational and community supports. WOI currently serves several individuals that have been participating in our programs since the 70's. For those individuals, an important aspect of CAET is access to community retirement opportunities. We all hope to have a meaningful retirement someday and CAET allows participants to benefit from valuable local retirement resources.

There is one thing that has not changed since our 25th anniversary in 1999; our mission statement. As we continue to grow, evolve, and strive for the best path to serve that mission; CAET offers a bright future.

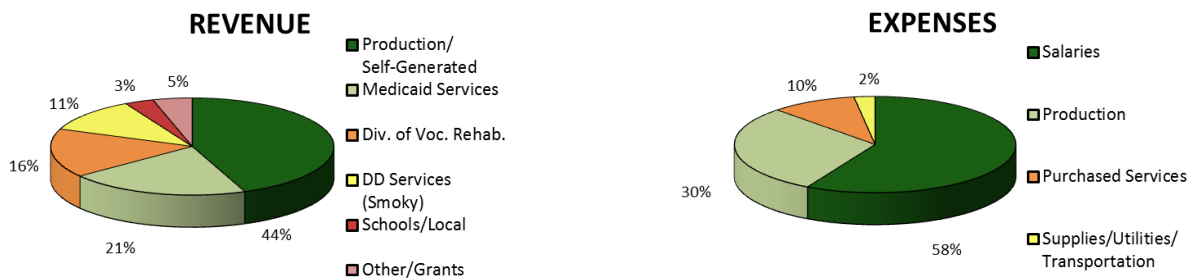
Letter from the President...



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 western North Carolina. This year our 42 year tradition of excellence was exemplified in the results of our 11th consecutive 3 year CARF accreditation; as stated in the December 3, 2015 survey report ... "WOI's participants and their families appreciate the services received, and many of them refer to staff members as family." During the past 42 years much has changed with services and systems however one constant has been WOI's innovative leading edge services as recognized in the CARF report... "Funding and referral sources spoke highly of WOI services and feel the organization provides proactive, holistic and out-of-the-box thinking to ensure participants receive the support they need to obtain employment and community involvement." This ongoing excellence is credited to the efforts of a dedicated and visionary Staff and Board. We look forward to a future bright with further opportunities for excellence.

Highlighting 2015-2016 was the continued pursuit of WOI's service enhancement and growth targets. In conjunction with SMC, in April we expanded our small group, community immersion, social capital building pilot to ADVP participants as we retired our ADVP service and became the first in NC to fully implement the new CAET (Community Activities and Employment Transitions) model. In the past 8 years our community immersion services grew over 1,100% with participant community civic hours increasing from 476 to 5,552 hours this year. In the fall, after research and planning we expanded our community employment services into the Asheville area. Our manufacturing department experienced growth with continued ISO 9001 and ISO 13485 Quality Registrations and realized the largest manufacturing sales year in WOI's history.

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 2015-2016, Watauga Opportunities provided vocational services to 271 individuals. Our employment programs saw 47 individuals' attain **self-reliance through employment** with Work Adjustment placing 24 individuals while Supported Employment accounted for 23 community job placements. Evaluation/Work Adjustment served 73 individuals, Supported Employment served 38 individuals in job development/training & 78 in Follow-Along, CAET/ADVP served 27 individuals, Innovations served 16 individuals, School Transitional programs served 26 students while our residential programs served 12 individuals in our group homes. We served individuals from Watauga, Ashe, Avery, Alleghany, Wilkes and Buncombe 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 2016, 44% 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 \$6.64 million, while their government subsidies have reduced by an estimated \$2.65 million. Community job placements now total 1098. 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

10 Years! Congratulations to **Clint Miller** who has celebrated 10-years at Papa John's Pizza. Clint spends several hours each week folding and stacking boxes which are later filled with delicious pizzas! He recently gained new responsibilities at his workplace due to his unwavering dedication to Papa Johns for the past ten years. He is now responsible for stocking the soda cooler as well as continuing to fold and stack pizza boxes. "Clint has always been a huge asset to Papa Johns. He does a great job," states Store Manager, Derwin Likens. Wonder how many boxes he has folded in 10 years? We estimate around 3/4 of a million!



5 Years! **Kim Braswell** celebrated her 5-year anniversary of employment at Hardee's at New Market Centre. "Dependable", "awesome", and "hard worker" are words used by the managers at Hardee's to describe her. Kim works diligently to keep the dining area and restrooms clean, but always has time to greet customers and make them feel welcome. Her duties have increased over the years, and she often helps her co-workers behind the counter and in the kitchen area. The managers have also noted that Kim takes on extra tasks when asked and assists customers anyway she can. Kim was recognized by "Hardee's" as their "Employee of the Month" in January, 2015. Great Job Kim!



Happy Hearts Extension Club Operates Snack Shoppe

With an emphasis on healthy lifestyles and local foods, Happy Hearts ECA Club has been operating a 'Snack Shoppe' and leading classes on health and nutrition. The club received a grant from the NC Extension & Community Assoc. Foundation and used it to purchase a sign and personalized aprons. Money was also set aside to support local farmers through the 'Community Supported Agricultural' program. Club members have been busy preparing healthy, local foods. Many participants noted they had never tried some of the foods offered. In the photo, Club members Margaret Dunbar, Karen DeHart, and Kim Braswell present a 'Snack Shoppe' sign to WOI President, Michael Maybee.



2015-2016 Program Evaluation

Watauga Opportunities, Inc. had positive outcomes during the past fiscal year. A total of **271** individuals were served:

CAET	27
Supported Employment	29
SE Follow-Along and Group	78
Evaluation and Work Adjustment	66
Asheville SE and WA	16
Innovations	15
School (sponsored by Watauga BOE)	26
Community Based Assessments	14

A total of **47** individuals were successfully closed in community jobs. Program participants invested 5,552 hours in community based civic volunteering. Satisfaction surveys from all stakeholders yielded in 97% positive responses of services.



WOI Calendar of Events

- November 11th - WOI Closed
Veteran's Day
- November 24th & 25th - WOI Closed
Thanksgiving
- December 6th - Kellwood Holiday Party
- December 13th - Creekside Holiday Party
- December 16th - In-House Holiday Party at WOI
- December 23rd-30th - WOI Closed
- January 8th-9th - Special Olympics NC Winter Games
- February 5th-7th - S.O. Regional Winter Games



WOI receives visit from NC Secretary of the Department of Environmental Quality

In September, WOI was pleased to host the Secretary of the NC Department of Environmental Quality, Donald van der Vaart, along with Assistant Secretary Tom Reeder, Deputy Secretary for Public Affairs Stephanie Hawco, and Chief Deputy Secretary John Evans. The visit focused on WOI's efforts to improve productivity and save energy through a partnership with Waste Reduction Partners; a state sponsored Technical Assistance group. Through this partnership WOI has been able to improve productivity of our medical production line by 25 percent and make changes to reduce energy costs. During the tour Donald van der Vaart stated to the High Country Press that "From our standpoint (DEQ), I'm impressed with their ability to work with our group in terms of identifying energy savings as well as savings in the manufacturing process. Outside of my duties with the Department of Environmental Quality, I am very impressed with the ability of this organization to bring folks into our society, and it's just really exciting for me. But that's purely on a personal note." Check out the article with additional photos featured in High Country Press at www.hcpress.com.



Photo by Jesse Wood Courtesy of High Country Press



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

Check out our new mobile friendly website!

WOIWORKS.ORG has been relaunched with a responsive web design. The new site is user-friendly to view on a device with any screen size. We update the site regularly with valuable information such as Inclement Weather Announcements, Upcoming Events and Employment Opportunities. Check it Out!



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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