



*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.*

## 2021 Board of Directors

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*President/CEO*

## Enabling Self-Reliance

Estimated Community Wages Earned Since 1994:

**\$7.56 million**

Estimated Reduction in Government Subsidies:

**\$3.02 million**

Job Placements since 1994:

**1377**

Job Placements YTD:

**24**

## WOI's First Supported Employment Participant, Joe Eller, Retires After 30 Years On The Job

In 1991, Watauga Opportunities' first supported employment participant, Joe Eller, received North Carolina's Job Training Participant of the Year Award from Governor Jim Martin and his wife at a special ceremony in Raleigh. Since Joe was employed, WOI has provided community employment services to more than 1,350 participants. We are proud to report that after 30 years of working, WOI has recently been able to help Joe and his wife Donna retire. Joe and Donna, WOI's fourth community employment participant, have recently celebrated 37 years of marriage, paid off their mortgage, and now they have both been able to retire. Thanks to Joe and Donna for keeping the American Dream alive for folks with disabilities.



*Joe receives 1991 Job Training Participant of the Year Award from Dottie Martin, First Lady of North Carolina*

## Community Employment Milestones



### 15 Years!

Congratulations to **Clint Miller** on his 15-year anniversary at Papa John's Pizza! Clint started working at Papa John's Pizza in 2006. He serves an important role at work by folding and staking hundreds of pizza boxes each week. He also makes sure the cooler remains stocked with ice cold sodas for customers. Clint's co-workers and managers describe him as a conscientious worker who always shows up on time and completes his assigned tasks. Clint enjoys his job at Papa John's and is looking forward to being part of the team there for many more years. Keep up the hard work, Clint!

### 5 Years!

**Shannon Quinlan** recently celebrated her 5-year work anniversary with the Mast General Store's Candy Barrel. Shannon serves an important role at work by filling the candy barrels for local residents and town visitors to enjoy. Shannon has a great rapport with her co-workers and supervisor. She is a well-loved employee. Shannon is a dedicated employee who strives to work all of her weekly hours, even if it means switching her work days to accommodate holiday schedules. Shannon is in a highly coveted job which she looks forward to keeping for many years to come. Congratulations Shannon!

### 5 Years!

**Jameel Bumpass** is a dedicated employee who recently celebrated his 5-year work anniversary with Bojangles. Jameel serves an important role at work by preparing food items, working the line, cleaning the work area, and many other roles. Jameel has been a valuable member of the Bojangles team due to his ability to work within several roles and his willingness to learn new responsibilities. He has picked up extra shifts and switched shifts, as needed, to allow co-workers to take time off and to fill in during times of staffing shortages. Jameel is a dependable and reliable employee; even throughout the COVID pandemic Jameel maintained his employment as an essential worker. Jameel enjoys his job and is looking forward to many more years of service at Bojangles. Congratulations Jameel!

## A Letter from the President



### ANNUAL REPORT FY 2020-2021

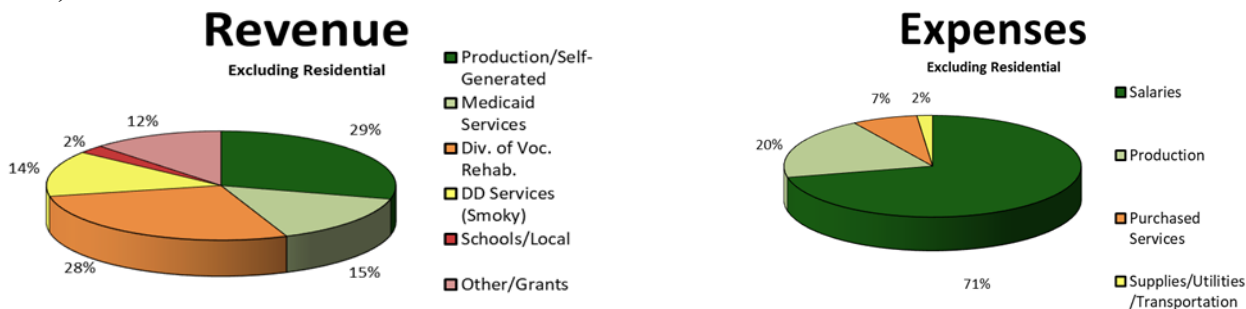
Dear Friends of Watauga Opportunities,

In December of 2020, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Boone Area Chamber of Commerce announced their 2020 Community Award winners through a protocol-responsible documentary called SILVER LININGS. All of the awards were based on businesses and individuals stepping up in response to COVID-19 and keeping our community whole. Watauga Opportunities was honored to be named the winner of the Alfred Adams Award for Economic Development in recognition of our assembly and packaging of

over 10 million sample collection vials used in COVID-19 test kits and lab testing by NIH, CDC, LabCorp, and throughout the country. In our initial response to the pandemic, in March of 2020, WOI leadership developed three goals; to maintain our mission, to be proud of our pandemic efforts as we looked back, and to view the pandemic as an opportunity for excellence. We proudly report that our Mission continues to be enhanced with further growth of WOI's service area through the expansion of our Pre-Employment Transitional Services (Pre-ETS) to 27 high schools. Our LTCS and community services have reopened, with protocols in place, continuing to enhance individuals' lives. Since our inception much has changed in terms of services, expectations and systems; however, one constant continues to be the stability and excellence of WOI's mission driven, high quality, responsive, leading-edge services. The ability of Watauga Opportunities to evolve and prosper through this pandemic and its continuous change is credited to the efforts of a knowledgeable and visionary Staff and Board of Directors.

**Highlighting 2020-2021** was WOI's continued pursuit of service enhancement and growth targets. Through NCDVR, we further adapted and enhanced our Pre-ETS hybrid program while expanding to 27 high schools in 10 counties, with plans to add Catawba, Alexander and Surry counties and new Pre-ETS offices in Catawba and Buncombe counties in 21-22. Through VAYA Health flexibilities, we reopened our Long Term Community Support (LTCS), and Medicaid services, with COVID protocols in place, assuring continuity in the lives of those we served. In the past 14 years our community immersion services have grown over 1,000% with participant community civic hours increasing from 476 to 6,009 hours in FYE 2020 (20% reduction with COVID) and due to protocols 1,837 hours in YE 21. Expansion of employment services also continued in Madison, Buncombe, Caldwell, and Alexander counties. Our controlled environment medical manufacturing has now produced 12 million COVID sample collection vials while our Quality System was recertified in medical manufacturing ISO13485-2016.

We continue to partner with NC Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, VAYA Health, numerous County Boards of Education and others in the provision of vocational, community and residential services. During FY 2020-2021, Watauga Opportunities community and vocational services **grew 15% totaling 872 individuals served**. Our employment programs saw 50 individuals' attain **self-reliance through employment**; with Work Adjustment placing 26 individuals while Supported Employment accounted for 24 community job placements. Evaluation, Work Adjustment, and CBA served 77 individuals, Supported Employment served 48 individuals in job development/training and 70 in Follow-Along, CAET/LTCS served 49 individuals, Innovations served 17 individuals, School Transitional programs served 611 students, and our group homes served 11 individuals. In total WOI served individuals from Watauga, Ashe, Avery, Alleghany, Wilkes, Mitchell, Yancey, Madison, Caldwell 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 2021, 29% 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 \$7.56 million, while their government subsidies have reduced by an estimated \$3.02 million. Community job placements totaled 1353. WOI truly is **enabling self-reliance and enhancing independence**. The above charts show the source of our revenue and its expenditure.

Thank you for your partnership,  
Michael Maybee, President/CEO

## Community Civic Involvement Reawakens

Watauga Opportunities’ participants have engaged in the Town of Boone’s Adopt-A-Flowerbed program for many years. As pandemic restrictions eased, participants were excited to re-engage in the civic duties including caring for Watauga Opportunities’ adopted flowerbed at Junaluska park. Hollowed out logs were sown with annual flowers while the ground was refreshed with new bulbs and shade loving perennial plants. Participants have adorned the garden space with seasonal decorations including brightly painted rocks strategically placed to make large flowers throughout the garden for Spring and Summer. Participants added hay bales, pumpkins, mums, and Fall signs as the seasons changed.

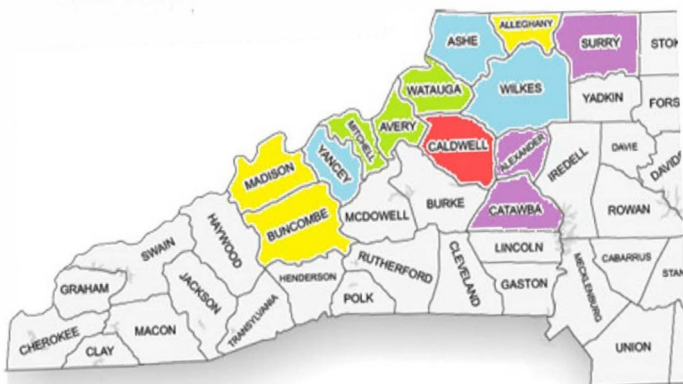


The adopted flowerbed at Junaluska park sits at the entrance of the American Legion Post. They recently sent a thank you card to participants and staff who worked to make the garden space and the entrance to their building look amazing. As stated in the thank you card, the American Legion Post members were “pleasantly surprised” by the transformation of the garden space. Giving back to the local community provides participants with a sense of responsibility and purpose. Through civic activities, the local community is also provided with the opportunity to get to know participants and form new friendships or strengthen existing relationships with participants.

### Watauga Opportunities Pre-ETS Services:

- Year 1** (2017-2018)- Watauga (1), Mitchell (1), Avery County Schools (2)
- Year 2** (2018-2019)- Ashe (1), Wilkes (3), Yancey County Schools (1)
- Year 3** (2019-2020)- Alleghany (1), Madison (2), Asheville City (3), and ½ of the Buncombe County Schools (4)
- Year 4** (2020-2021)- Caldwell County Schools (4), and the second ½ Buncombe County Schools (4)
- Year 5** (2021-2022)- Alexander County Schools (1), Hickory Public Schools (1), Newton-Conover City Schools (3), Catawba County Schools (6) Surry County Schools (3) Elkin City Schools (1) and Mt. Airy City Schools (1).

\*The number in parentheses reflects the number of schools where Pre-ETS services are offered within each district.



## Expanding Reach with Pre-ETS

We are excited to be back working in-person with students and look forward to a successful 2021-22 school year. Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) is in its fifth year of providing services to high school students across northwestern NC. For school year 2020-2021, the Pre-ETS program served over 750 students preparing for the transition to adult life. We anticipate serving 1500 students in the 2021-2022 academic year. We now provide services at 44 high schools in 13 counties: Alleghany, Ashe, Watauga, Wilkes, Avery, Mitchell, Yancey, Caldwell, Alexander, and Surry. We now have Pre-ETS satellite offices in Lenoir, Spruce Pine, Hickory, Wilkes, Asheville, and soon Mt. Airy.

During the transition to a virtual environment the Pre-ETS team has been creative in teaching students the skills needed in the workplace. Students have explored job exploration counseling, work behavior and self-advocacy skills, postsecondary explorations, and more through virtual job shadows, virtual college tours, and video chats with peer mentors and guest speakers!

### 2020-2021 Program Evaluation

WOI served a total of **872** individuals as follows:

LTCS & TN	49	Evaluation, Work Adjustment, CBA	77
Innovations	17	Supported Employment	48
SE Follow-Along	70	School and Pre-ETS	611



A total of **50** individuals were placed in community jobs. Participants provided 1,837 hours of community/civic time (REDUCED DUE TO PANDEMIC). Satisfaction surveys yielded 98% positive responses rate.



## WOI Continues Manufacturing COVID Testing Vials



WOI's manufacturing efforts continue in the fight against COVID-19 by assembling and packaging sample collection vials used in COVID test kits and lab testing. These vials are used by Lab Corp, CDC, NIH, and other testing labs throughout the country. As of Fall 2021, we have produced over 14 million vials for use in COVID testing and test kits. Thanks to all of our hard-working staff making a difference against the pandemic.

## WOIWORKS.ORG has been updated!

WOI's website has recently been updated with a responsive and user-friendly design, plus new examples of community engagement. The site is updated with information on events, employment opportunities, and weather alerts regularly. Come check it out at [woiworks.org](http://woiworks.org)!



## WOI Calendar of Events

- July 5 — Closed for Independence Day
- September 6 — Closed for Labor Day
- October 28—Board of Directors Meeting
- November 11 — Closed for Veterans Day
- November 18-19—CARF Survey
- November 25-26 — Closed for Thanksgiving
- December 10 — In-House Holiday Party
- December 24-31— Closed for Holidays



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



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P O Box 2330  
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[www.woiworks.org](http://www.woiworks.org)

## *Enabling Self-Reliance Through Employment*



Quality Management System – ISO 13485:2016 Cert. # FM560456  
Contract manufacturing, including plastic thermoforming, packaging, & labeling of medical devices to be offered sterile or non-sterile.



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