

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

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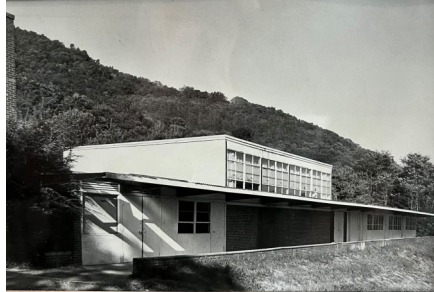
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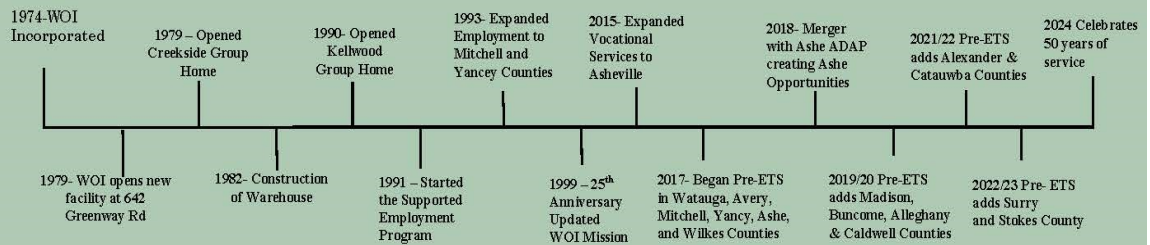
Michael Maybee,
President/CEO

WOI Celebrating 50 Years!



In 2024 Watauga Opportunities is celebrating 50 years of service. WOI was started in October 1974 by Spears Alexander, who was working with the NC DD Council establishing CRPs in Western NC. Alexander stayed in Boone to run Watauga Opportunities where he served as Executive Director until his retirement in 1995 when our current President/CEO Michael Maybee stepped into the position. Initially in 1974 when WOI opened there were three staff members and eight participants in the old Junaluska School Building. Construction began on a new and permanent home at 642

Greenway Road in 1978, with the generosity of Mr. & Mrs. Gordan Winker, IRC, and Watauga County. In the spring of 1979 staff and participants moved into the new home. Over the years WOI has seen lots of change and growth. In 1991 we saw the birth of our Supported Employment Program, where we have placed over 1,500 participants in jobs providing them self-reliance and independence. Our school-based Pre-Employment Transitional Services (Pre-ETS) program began in 2017 with just 6 counties and 9 schools. It has since grown and Pre-ETS is now provided in 19 school systems, across 15 counties, to EC students in over 60 high schools across western North Carolina.



Enabling Self-Reliance

Estimated Community Wages Earned Since 1994:
\$8.14 Million

Estimated Reduction in Government Subsidies:
\$3.25 Million

Job Placements since 1994:
1,554

Job Placements Year End 2024: **69**

During the COVID pandemic our manufacturing division played a significant role in providing COVID-19 test kits resulting in the assembly of over 15 Million test kit vials during the pandemic. This achievement earned WOI The Alfred Adams Award for Economic Development. This award honors individuals and businesses who have worked towards growth and development in Boone and Watauga County. Since the pandemic WOI still continues to work with Sarstedt assembling kits.



“During the past 50 years, much has changed in terms of services, systems, and expectations; however, one constant has always been the stability of our mission-driven, high-quality, leading-edge services,” said Michael Maybee President and CEO of Watauga Opportunities. “The ability of Watauga Opportunities to continue this service evolution and expansion through continuous change is credited to the efforts of a knowledgeable, dedicated, and visionary Staff and Board. It is due to this vision, knowledge, and dedication we look optimistically toward a future which continues our WOI tradition of excellence.

A Letter From the President: Annual Report Financial Year 2023-2024

ANNUAL REPORT FY 2023-2024

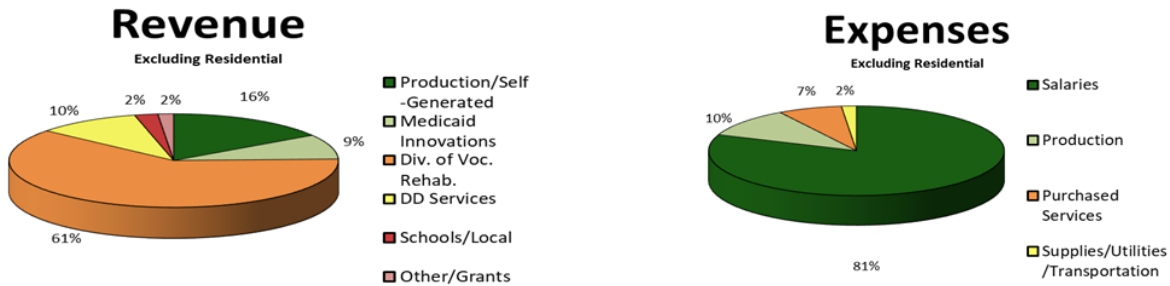


Dear Friends of Watauga Opportunities,

During FY 2024-2025 Watauga Opportunities will celebrate its 50th Anniversary year. Since 1974 it has been WOI’s mission to **enable self-reliance and enhance independence** by offering employment, pre-vocational, and community opportunities to the people of Western North Carolina. During the past fifty years much has changed in terms of services, systems and expectations; however, the one constant has always been the stability of our mission driven, high-quality, leading-edge services. We now proudly report our WOI Mission continues to be enhanced through ongoing growth in WOI’s service area with the expansion of our school-based Pre-Employment Transitional Services (Pre-ETS). Pre-ETS services are now provided in 19 school systems, across 15 counties, to EC students in over 60 high schools across western North Carolina. The ability of Watauga Opportunities to continue this service evolution and expansion through continuous change is credited to the efforts of a knowledgeable, dedicated, and visionary Staff and Board. It is due to this vision, knowledge, and dedication we look optimistically toward a future which continues our WOI tradition of excellence.

Highlighting 2023-2024 was WOI’s continued pursuit of service enhancement and growth targets. Through NCDVR, we further enhanced our Pre-ETS program while expanding to over 60 high schools in 15 counties. In 2023-24, we added new Pre-ETS services in Yadkin county. Through VAYA Health we continued Long Term Community Support (LTCS) and Medicaid services. In the past 17 years our community immersion services have grown over 900% with participant community civic hours increasing from 476 in 2007 to 4,274 hours in FYE 2024. Expansion of employment services also continued in Catawba and Alexander counties. Our controlled environment medical manufacturing and food grade plastic thermoforming continues to producer quality products, while our Quality Management System was recertified in medical manufacturing ISO 13485-2016 and is scheduled to be certified in Safe Quality Food production in the fall of 2024.

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 2023-2024, Watauga Opportunities services grew by 5% **totaling 1,718 individuals served**. Our employment programs saw 69 individuals attain self-reliance through employment; Work Adjustment placed 30 individuals while Supported Employment accounted for 39 community job placements. Evaluation, Work Adjustment, and CBA served 37



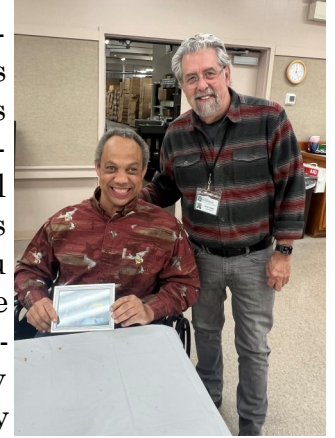
individuals, Supported Employment served 54 individuals in job development/training and 57 in Follow-Along, LTCS served 44 individuals, Innovations served 17 individuals, School programs served 1,486 students, our group homes served 12 individuals. WOI served Watauga, Ashe, Avery, Alleghany, Buncombe, Mitchell, Yancey, Madison, Caldwell, Catawba, Alexander, Wilkes, Surry, Stokes and Yadkin 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 2024 16 % 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 \$8.01 million, while their government subsidies have reduced by an estimated \$3.23 million. Community job placements now total 1,554. WOI truly is **enabling self-reliance and enhancing independence**. The above charts show the source of our revenue and its expenditure.

Michael White Retires!



This year we are celebrating Michael White's retirement from Cheap Joe's Art Supplies after 30 years of employment! He started working at Cheap Joe's in 1994 assembling their welcome bags for new customers and has been an essential employee until his retirement in March of 2024! Michael loved his job at Cheap Joe's and if you've ever met him, you probably have one of his Cheap Joe's business cards in your wallet! He was a proud employee, and his coworkers at Cheap Joe's quickly became family to him. On April 5th, Michael attended a retirement party with all of his friends and Cheap Joe's family and there was not a dry eye in the house. He is now happily living a calm, restful, and well-deserved retired life!



Quality Update

This September we successfully completed our annual ISO 1485:2016 audit by our certification body, BSI, with no nonconformities raised. ISO 13485 is an internationally agreed standard that sets out the requirements for a quality management system specific to the medical device industry. Registration to this standard enables WOI to consistently provide safe and effective medical devices and fulfill customer and regulatory requirements. This marks our 14th consecutive year of ISO certification.

We also completed our second food safety audit by another certification body, NSF International, for our customer Barry Callebaut. We manufacture direct food packaging trays for Barry Callebaut, which is the largest chocolate manufacturer in the world. By meeting the expectations of this food safety audit, we are able to demonstrate that we meet the safety, quality, and food defense requirements of the public, regulatory agencies and customer.

"Watauga Opportunities, Inc. is mission driven, quality focused, committed to meeting all regulatory requirements and exceeding all customer expectations."

Highlight: Ashe Opportunities

In the spring participants from Ashe Opportunities were invited to volunteer alongside Ashe County School teachers and coaches, to make Special Olympics spring games an exciting opportunity for students in the school system, age ranging from kindergarten through high school. Ashe Opportunities provided drinking water for all athletes, helped organize games and cheered on the athletes as they worked for medals in a variety of events. Ashe County School system representatives, Jodi Grubb, reported that Ashe Opportunities, "helped make this day even more special!"

Participants have also volunteered at a local food pantry, the Arts Council, and the Salvation Army. Participants are excited to continue with volunteering opportunities, and making a positive impact within their community.

2023-24 Program Evaluation

WOI served a total of 1,718 individuals as follows:

LTCS	44	Evaluation, Work Adjustment, CBA	53
Innovations	17	Supported Employment	54
SE Follow-Along	64	School and Pre-ETS	1,486



A total of 69 individuals were placed in community jobs. Participants provided 4,274 hours of civic volunteer hours. Satisfaction surveys yielded 98% positive responses rate.

Participant Spotlight



This is Greg McCann! Greg has been a member of the WOI family since 1979. He loves fishing, listening to music, and powerlifting with Special Olympics! Greg started a new job in November of 2022 at the Boone Police Department. He loves his new job and has formed great friendships with his coworkers. This photo of Greg was taken while he was taking a break from his Greenway patrolling route with Officer Jake.



Eugene outside his store!

Meet Eugene Mihai! Eugene is a new member of the Watauga Opportunities family. He moved to Boone from Winston-Salem a few years ago and joined our LTCS program in October. He has made many friends and community connections since starting with WOI. He loves volunteering, especially at the COC food pantry. He loves to get exercise by walking and doing dance workouts! Eugene loves his job at Ingles Grocery Store.

WOI Calendar of Events

Closed:

- May 27**
Memorial Day
- July 4-5**
Independence Day
- September 2**
Labor Day

Events:

- May 26**
Board of Directors Meeting
- August 22**
Board of Directors Meeting
- October 24**
Board of Directors Meeting



OUR QUALITY POLICY

Watauga Opportunities, Inc. is mission driven, quality focused, committed to meeting all regulatory requirements and exceeding all customer expectations.

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(828) 264-5009 • www.woiworks.org

Enabling Self-Reliance Through Employment



FM560456



Accredited by CARF in Community Employment Services: Job Development & Employment Supports; Community Integration; Comprehensive Vocational Evaluation; and Community Housing Services.

An Equal Employment/Affirmative Action Employer and Service Provider