MOUNTAIN PROJECTS

Christmas Newsletter, 2022



Dear Friends of Mountain Projects,

As a Community Action Agency, it's our mission to **change people's lives for the better** and **improve our communities** by alleviating poverty and fostering independence and self-sufficiency.

Our clients work to **transform their struggles into stability,** but it's life's smaller emergencies that can knock them off their path. That's why I write these letters, to **request your help** in serving the **most vulnerable members** of our community.

Mountain Projects has become **adept at managing emergencies** of all types. We get upwards of **ten emergency requests** each week during the winter months, and while we can't always help, we do try. That's why **we need your help** in replenishing the **Emergency Fund.**

Many of the **small blessings** we can provide, including heaters, blankets and winter clothing, food boxes and assistance with heating bills, **are made possible through your generosity.** And these kindnesses can shape the next steps in a community member's life - towards **stability** and **achieving life goals** after experiencing setbacks that many of us can't imagine.

Please consider a **one-time donation or a monthly sustaining contribution.** Your gifts are **carefully managed,** and **help people in our own community** through difficult experiences.

Every donation makes a difference!

Mountain Projects' staff wish you and your loved ones **health, happiness, peace and prosperity** this holiday season and in the coming New Year.

Sincerely,

Patsy A. Davis

Patsy Davis
Executive Director



Shoe distribution for kids in need, summer, 2022

Annual Impact: Mountain Projects Provides Life-Changing Services for Over 15,000 people each year

We operate 21 programs in Haywood and Jackson Counties and three programs in the seven westernmost counties, employing 145 of your friends and neighbors and serving many thousands more.

In 2022, our impacts included:

- 33,620 trips provided by Haywood Transit
- 96,370 meals delivered
- 450 food boxes provided through the new Healthy Opportunities Pilots (HOP) Program
- 965 households enrolled in affordable healthcare
- 163 children in Head Start & Early Head Start
- 800 households received Rental Assistance, including 421 children and 349 seniors
- 170 homes were repaired and weatherized
- 13,804 hours spent with children through the Foster Grandparent Program
- 22 individuals advanced their education and job position through Workforce Investment
- 22,572 hours serving the elderly through Senior Companions
- 1,897 seniors provided assistance through the Senior Resource Center
- $332,879 saved for 589 seniors through the Senior Health Insurance program
- 56,006 individuals provided with early intervention and substance misuse information
- Created self-help housing for five families
- Over $4.6 million in rental payments made to landlords in Haywood and Jackson Counties
- Our Emergency Fund helped more than 500 families, households and individuals.

Your generosity supports critical needs in our community, just when our friends and neighbors need it most



Top: Marilyn Tollie with her children Zaylen, Nevaeh, Jocelyn and Ayden. Bottom: Marilyn Tollie and Amanda Gentry

The "HOP" Program Helps! Meet Marilyn Tollie and Amanda Gentry

Mountain Projects staff member Marilyn Tollie says she is a better employee because of what she has in common with the people she serves.

"I've been on both sides of the desk in my journey," she says.

Tollie recently earned degrees from Southwestern Community College and Western Carolina University, all while working and raising four young kids with her husband Matt. Still, she ran into a roadblock when their home proved unlivable due to a mold problem, her children fell ill, and they had no place to go.

"There was no other way to move somewhere else quickly," said Tollie, "we needed help from an outside source. "

And that's where Amanda Gentry came in. She's Coordinator of the new Healthy Opportunities Pilots (HOP) Program administered locally by Impact Health and Mountain Projects.

HOP is a North Carolina program for managed Medicaid recipients. In short, the state has recognized that there are factors besides conventional health issues that impact wellbeing, among them housing, food, transportation, personal safety and toxic stress. All these can lead to poor outcomes, just like illness can, and the program seeks to address the problems.

Gentry's strong efforts helped Tollie's family find a new home, and now Tollie works with Mountain Projects, where she serves as a language translator for GetCoveredWNC and Gentry's HOP program.

Health begins long before we need medical care. HOP looks beyond the doctor's office to other factors that effect a person's health.

DO YOU QUALIFY FOR THE HOP PROGRAM?

- **The HOP program is for Managed Medicaid recipients only**
- **To learn more, call Amanda Gentry at 828-492-4092 or 828-452-1447**

Helping Mountain People



HEAD START

We operate six Head Start centers across two counties, helping youngsters prepare for school.

Shown: Christie Paxton, Director, Head Start



AFFORDABLE HOUSING

SMHP provides affordable housing and home buying services.

Shown: Joey Massie, Maggie Leftwich, Lori Smith and Julia Posey, Smoky Mountain Housing Partnership



FOOD SERVICES

We prepare and deliver 1,200 nutritious meals each day for senior and daycare centers

Shown: Modesta Kirkland and Anita Buchanan, Central Kitchen

GetCoveredWNC Angels Make Liver Transplant Happen





Mountain Projects' Jan Plummer (l), with James Porcello and Jacquie Buttles

Members of the regional network of health care navigators and assisters at a recent gathering

Brenda and James Porcello live in Charlotte, but have family in Waynesville. James had a recent medical crisis, and despite a clean health history it became obvious he needed a liver transplant, fast. His life was in danger. Unfortunately, the Porcello's insurance policy was unacceptable to the hospital that would perform the transplant.

Jacquie Buttles knew just who to call. She's an Insurance Analyst for the state of North Carolina, and she had become involved in the case.

"Jan Plummer at Mountain Projects and I have been program partners for a decade," Jacquie said. "I thought we should talk this case through to see what options were available for this patient."

With their many years of combined experience, the two knew both client processes and large agency needs, and they put their heads together to carve out a complicated path forward. It worked: in September, James had a liver transplant at one of the few hospitals in North Carolina that does such procedures, and he came through with flying colors.

The insurance Jan and Jacquie arranged covered the costs of surgery, medications and recovery, and James's strong family support system was ready to help him fight for his life.

Jan and Jacquie know the intricacies of health insurance, and sometimes they have the opportunity to help save a life. "This story makes my heart sing," says Jan, "we counselors know this work is important, but don't always have such an amazing story to tell."

GetCoveredWNC offers Certified Application Counseling in seven western counties. This is free info about health insurance options, enrollment and health care resources.

Visit getcoveredwnc.org to learn more



MOUNTAIN STRONG WNC

We increase resilience in our community through targeted efforts at reducing substance misuse.

Shown: Lorrie Ross, Libby Ray and Mark Pilon, Mountain Strong

TRANSPORTATION

We provide a wide range of on-call and emergency transportation services, along with daily bus routes.

Shown: Dean Cutshaw and Sheila Evans, Haywood Public Transit

COMMUNITY RESOURCE FAIRS

From resource events and disaster-relief fundraisers to food box delivery and blanket drives, we work to meet the needs of mountain people.

Shown: Katie Meyers, Samaritan's Feet

Holiday Gifts for 2022 – A New Tradition

Looking for the perfect gift for family and friends this holiday season? Here are a few different ideas!

- Would your loved one appreciate help with a car payment? How about a utility bill or mortgage?
- Some friends might benefit from a gas card or help around the house.
- Would your loved ones value a homemade dinner?
- Maybe someone on your list needs help providing gifts for their children or grandchildren.
- And then, some folks don't want anything at all but your company!

Here's another way to give this holiday season

How To Give

Your generosity supports critical needs in our community, thank you!

Make a one-time contribution:

- Give online at mountainprojects.org/giving - or -
- Complete the enclosed coupon and return it to an address below

Make a monthy gift:

- Visit mountainprojects.org/giving

Donate "almost new" household items to one of our Resale stores:

- Treasures, located at 2143 Asheville Road in Waynesville
- Sylva Linings located at 1264 W Main Street in Sylva

Help us establish the Mountain Projects Endowment Fund:

Contact Executive Director Patsy Davis
Phone: 828-452-1447 | Email: pdavis@mountainprojects.org

Want to Help With One of Our Good Causes?

Volunteer opportunities at Mountain Projects range across a wide variety of programs and service projects, from Foster Grandparents and Head Start to affordable housing construction and food delivery.

Call Volunteer Coordinator John Chicoine to learn more!

828-356-2833





Helping People Help Themselves



RESALE STORES IN WAYNESVILLE & SYLVA
Proceeds from "Treasures" and "Sylva Linings" support our efforts

BACK-TO-SCHOOL SUPPLIES
Shown: Ed Sutton, Vivian Bumgarner & Brooke Smith

Contact Us

Waynesville

2177 Asheville Rd.
Waynesville NC 28786
Phone: (828) 452-1447

Sylva

154-B Medical Park Loop
Sylva, NC 28779
Phone: (828) 586-2345

Online: mountainprojects.org

Wish to inquire about our services for you or someone you know? Schedule a meeting with one of our intake counselors, at either our Haywood County or Jackson County offices.

Call for an appointment:

Haywood County	828-492-4103 or 828-492-4114
Jackson County	828-586-2345 or 828-550-5315

Mountain Projects is a 501(c)3 nonprofit charitable organization. Donations to Mountain Projects are tax deductible. Our EIN number is 56-0849092