MOUNTAIN PROJECTS

Summer Newsletter 2023



Dear Friends of Mountain Projects,

Thank you one and all for your investment in our organization! Please allow me to express gratitude on behalf of all of the households we have assisted with the Emergency Fund during the last year. We served over 1,000 individuals over the winter months with your contributions.



Patsy Davis

As I look through our list of supporters and consider all the good work made possible, I can't help but feel proud of our community. The impact of local donations can't be overstated – their impact is felt right here at home, where they help stabilize the lives of individuals in crisis and offer a hand when people need it most. These donations are a measure of the grace in our community, as we help friends and neighbors who find themselves in impossible situations.

I've been in human services for thirty-plus years, and I've learned it takes strength for people to ask for help, even as stability in their lives falls apart. It's a point I always keep in mind – the bravery and humility of our clients when they reach out to us with that first call. Please know, I'm deeply proud of Mountain Projects and its employees for all we accomplish, and grateful that you help make it possible for us to serve in this capacity.

Below I've shared some testimonials from our clients, all good people experiencing difficult circumstances. These are just a few of the stories we hear each week. We've learned that a disadvantaged person needs a lot of luck or a little help to move from poverty to stability, and intervention at just the right time is key.

Our emergency efforts wouldn't be possible without your support. We appreciate your contributions and know our clients do, too.

Sincerely,

Patsy A. Davis

Executive Director

"We reached out in desperation. We appreciate the emergency support, the kindness and the reassurance from your staff."

"I'm a senior citizen and my daughter's family lives with me. My daughter had pneumonia and we needed help keeping our utilities on. I called Mountain Projects and they were able to help our family."

"I focus on working hard and staying positive, but we can't afford for anything to go wrong. Having affordable health insurance gives us peace of mind."

"We never thought of ourselves as poor, but found out the hard way that we were just one family emergency away from disaster."

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

Mountain Projects Programs Support Resilient Communities



19 Machine, M Shift, Pactiv Evergreen Canton Mill

(Photo courtesy Marty Scott)

Mountain people are resilient, and it's a good thing. Just when we thought we might be back on our feet after the floods of 2021, the news of Pactic Evergreen's mill closing in Canton came like a thunderbolt.

Mountain Projects is positioned to offer immediate help to mill workers with affordable medical insurance, but we know the larger impact of the mill closure will be felt in the months to come, and as the effects of the closure ripple out into the community. You can count on Mountain Projects to meet the needs as they arise.

Since 1965 we've been a solid, responsible organization that our local communities depend on in crises large and small, and our programs meet a broad range of needs.

We're proud to do the work that the community calls for, thankful for our staff of over 140, and grateful for the contributions from our community that help make us more versatile and responsive.

YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS AT WORK: *Many of our programs are grant-funded, but local crises of all types require discretionary funds. That's where our Emergency Fund comes in. Gifts to this fund help us do good and necessary work every day.*

Followup: Gresham Family's Flood Story Reflects A Mixed Blessing

"Lou" Gresham, a flood-affected Cruso resident, passed away in March after a protracted battle with cancer. At the time of her death, Lou's family was working to finish the re-construction of the Gresham home, destroyed by the August 2021 flood. It had been Lou's lone wish to return to the family homeplace before she passed away, and the family's story is a poignant example of the resilience of so many area residents.

With the help of community donations, Mountain Projects and the United Way of Haywood County partnered with Baptists on Mission Disaster Relief and the State of North Carolina to replace Lou Gresham's home. Although it'll be bittersweet without Lou, the Gresham family looks forward to the return to Cruso, where a third generation of their family will love the river just as their grandmother did.



Travis Gresham, daughter of Lou, with one of her mother's rescued light fixtures.

The Gresham family home "Twin Oaks" in Cruso was destroyed in the 2021 flood.

YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS AT WORK

Mountain Projects partnered with other local and statewide organizations to help those displaced by the 2021 flood.

Over $1.5 million was raised in this effort.



Mountain Projects Head Start Centers Graduate 56

Mountain Projects Head Start and Early Head Start in Haywood and Jackson Counties opened its doors in 1965, serving thousands of low-income children with early education from ages six months to five years.

Our program works to engage parents and caregivers to identify and meet their own goals, nurture their children and advocate for their well-being whether it's through housing, healthcare, transportation or food security. We are proud to graduate 56 children this school year and know these families have a brighter future as a result of their Head Start experience. Deep gratitude for our outstanding teachers!



New Foster Grandparents Director

Welcome to Sherry Tabor, who joins Mountain Projects as Foster Grandparent Program Director! Sherry has over ten years of experience working in Community Action, most recently in Duffield, VA. She lives in Waynesville.



Food Program Serves 8,000 Meals Monthly

Meet Anita Buchanan, one of Mountain Projects Food Service staff. You may see her driving our red van around western North Carolina where she delivers food each day to senior citizens, Head Start classrooms and to many households that lack regular transportation.

Since January 2023, Mountain Projects has provided more than 48,000 meals to people without the means to purchase their own healthy foods without the assistance of our Food Services team. Thanks to Anita and to her coworkers who ensure the well-being (and full bellies) of others in Haywood and Jackson Counties.

MP Employees & Board Members Honored

The North Carolina Community Action Association, founded in 1964, is a statewide network of agencies like Mountain Projects, serving every county in North Carolina. The NCCAA honored several members of our staff and board at its recent annual conference.

Congratulations to:
Mary Jane Messer, Reception, Essential Piece Award
Mark Carden, Central Intake, Hall of Fame
Bucky Dykes, Board Member, Hall of Fame
Liz James, Central Intake (ret.), Hall of Fame
Carl Matthews, Board President, Hall of Fame
Jane Harrison, GetCoveredWNC, Hall of Fame


Messer


Carden


Dykes


James


Matthews


Harrison

Annual Staff Picnic







The weather was beautiful for this year's annual staff picnic! Thanks to everyone who helped make this event happen, and our deep appreciation to our staff for their service.

SMHP Sees Progress in Waynesville & Sylva, Welcomes New Construction Supervisor







Chris Stevens, Construction Supervisor

Bethel Village, Waynesville (far left)
Harris Estates, Sylva (left)

With excitement, Smoky Mountain Housing Partnership welcomes our new Construction Supervisor, Chris Stevens, a 33-year Canton Mill employee who retired with the closure. Chris, alongside his wife, Melissa Phillips-Stevens supported flood-affected families by taking donated furniture and redistributing it to those who needed to replace lost household items. "Chris Stevens will be a great addition to the SMHP team and I am excited that our clients will have the benefit of his expertise and hard-working nature," says Executive Director Patsy Davis.

SMHP's efforts to build affordable housing continue to move forward. USDA Self-Help houses in Sylva's Harris Estates are 45% complete. Six more houses are scheduled to be constructed in Bethel Village near Maggie Valley in late summer and one of three new finished houses there is under contract.

YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS AT WORK: *SMHP is committed to the development of much-needed workforce housing in Haywood and Jackson Counties.*



Darlene McElrath, Congregate Nutrition Manager

Please consider a contribution. Your support strengthens our community.

To donate ELECTRONICALLY:

- **Visit our website, MountainProjects.org/donate**
- **Fill out the online contribution form**

To donate by MAIL:

- **Fill out the enclosed contribution coupon, note amount**
- **Place coupon with credit card info OR check in return envelope**
- **Add a first class stamp (thank you!) and drop in mail**

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

- **Mountain Projects Resale**
  2143 Asheville Road in Waynesville
- **Sylva Linings**
  1264 W Main Street in Sylva

Want to Volunteer?
Call John Chicoine at the Senior Resource Ctr.
828-356-2833

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

Thank You!

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

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**

Website: mountainprojects.org