

WNC COMMUNITIES: WNC HONORS
Community Achievements
11.03.2018

The **64** communities involved in the 69th program represent **5,000** volunteers with an impressive **166,500** hours in outreach programs dedicated to beautification, conservation, education, health & wellness, collaborative efforts with government, extension, community colleges, nonprofits and businesses, all in service to your communities. In addition, your fundraising efforts and grant funds brought in over **one million dollars**. Thank you to all of our communities for making Western North Carolina such a great place to live, work and play.

The following are highlights of the achievements and best practices of the communities that submitted applications to the 2018 program.

PARTICIPATING COMMUNITIES: 21 communities honored for their efforts in community development work over the past year.

ASHE COUNTY

Todd Ruritan focuses on improving the quality of life for the citizens of Todd, while preserving the historic community, its scenic beauty and its rural character. The Todd New River Festival remains their key fundraiser and features local craft and food vendors. The festival raised \$3,600 for scholarships and for families in need.

BUNCOMBE COUNTY

The **Avery's Creek** mission statement is "Progressing While Preserving" and to support this mission, they provide a place for recreation, spiritual growth and community life. Exercise classes are offered every Monday and Wednesday, with a Wednesday lunch provided by Avery's Creek, Skyland Fire Department and a local church. They support feeding the community through the local food pantry and manage a benevolence fund to help needy families. They also collaborate with a large farm in the community, Creekside Farm, who offer cooking and canning classes using local vegetables, fruits, herbs and free-range eggs.

Buckeye Cove Community Club was awarded a grant to have a custom built concession stand/ kitchen. They continue to be the eyes and ears of the Buncombe County Sherriff's Department and the NC Department of Transportation. Their clubhouse is used for weekly exercise classes and their ball field is used by a young girls' softball team (the parents of players keep the field mowed).

The **Cane Creek** Community strives to "make their community better" by serving seniors, youth and families. Cane Creek regularly holds classes on sewing, crafting and CPR. Cane Creek is strongly linked to the churches in their community and partnered with the "Room in the Inn" program by opening their doors and providing meals, hospitality, companionship and a warm bed for up to 10 homeless women one week each summer. Their food pantry fed 3,256 families, helping over 19,000 people throughout the year.

Fariview Community Center's Craft and Gift Fair raised \$1700, which allows them to serve breakfast to all who attend their "Breakfast with Santa" event. Members of the center volunteered 2-3 hours per week from February to April at an adjacent public school for Destination Imagination programming.

Rosscraggon Wood is a 23-acre nature preserve with the objective of encouraging interest in the natural history of Western North Carolina. Events this year included Dr. Darin Waters from UNC-A sharing the

importance of the collective American story. Members also carpooled to the Cradle of Forestry for educational and enjoyable day learning about land and forest conservation.

CHEROKEE COUNTY

2017 marked the 20th year reunion for the march from the old **Martins Creek** School building, which had been destroyed in a fire, to the newly built school building. The community center served as classrooms until the new building was finished. A “pickling green tomato session” was a hard-working, but very enjoyable event where members of the community learned how to safely make pickled green tomatoes, peppers and okra. Monthly gospel singings are enjoyed by many community members, and the new larger stage allows more members to sing in comfort.

Peachtree raised over \$5000 from their craft fair and monthly Bingo events. They assisted the community by buying school supplies for student and feeding 31 teachers at Peachtree School.

EASTERN BAND OF CHEROKEE

The annual **Big Cove** Day is a successful day-long event with musical entertainment, a silent auction and a bake sale. This year’s event was dedicated to Dr. Jerry Wolfe, Beloved Man of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. Big Cove Day gets people together to enjoy time with one another and to experience fun sports such as cornhole, horseshoes and exhibition stick ball. Other activities included a woodworking safety class offered in partnership with BIA Forestry to educate young men and to recruit new members. In addition, Big Cove collaborated with the Tribe’s Chief and Vice Chief to provide school supplies to students.

Snowbird’s most successful fundraiser this year was the Indian Taco Sale and Auction which raised \$1900 to help a local handicapped individual get a motorized wheelchair. Snowbird collaborated with the health department to host a health fair and worked with the Snowbird Youth Center on their litter pickup day. By supporting a neighboring community, Snowbird helped their fundraising goals by hosting a bingo night and assisted in distributing school supplies to students of Cherokee County School.

Towstring’s “Together We Raise” fundraiser brought in \$1800 to help foster children and elders of the community. To honor their ancestors, Towstring held an event to decorate cemeteries in their community and in the Great Smoky Mountain National Park. The community put together boxes for victims of the hurricane in the Virgin Islands and the youth sang Christmas songs at a local nursing home.

Yellowhill added a brand-new dance floor to their center. During the Cherokee Day of Caring, community volunteers built new raised garden beds. Yellowhill also organized and hosted their 5th Annual Skate Jam that raised over \$1900. They hosted two successful craft shows in the winter and also hosted a number of indoor yard sales.

HAYWOOD COUNTY

Volunteers of the **North Hominy** Community worked two times a week for four weeks to make apple pies for their annual Apple Festival which raised over \$4800. All money goes toward their food pantry, which serves over 300 families in their community. Partnering with the American Red Cross on two blood drives during the year supplied 40 pints of life-giving blood.

Thickety received a grant from the Community Foundation of WNC to help them with extensive renovations to their center. So far, they have made significant improvements such as adding a new

kitchen sink, hot water tank, new lights and have made several enhancements to their bathrooms. Even though they cannot use their center while the renovations are going on, they focused on supporting their community by donating electric heaters to Haywood Christian Ministries for their heating program.

HENDERSON COUNTY

Upward strives to be there for the community by providing community facilities and encouraging the exchange of ideas in a respectful environment. Their center received a new water pump this year, paid for by longtime community member Joe King in honor of his mother, Ruby. At Christmas, Santa for Kids was a wonderful event for families that provided food, gifts, holiday activities and, of course, Santa.

MACON COUNTY

Nantahala's project "Winter's Coming On" helped purchase coats and shoes for needy school children. Their "Miles to Go" one-time cash grant helped those who had excessive medical travel expenses. To broaden and improve their efforts to serve the community, the club is actively working to regain their 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status. They are also collaborating with Fontana Regional Library to create a joint building for a new community center which will greatly benefit the community.

Upper Cartoogechaye Community Development Center hosted numerous educational programs including bluebird expert Dr. Cameron and a Macon County Historical Museum educator who presented a program on geodes, gems and other artifacts found in the county. In honor of a member and local author who recently passed away, family member stated a foundation that will provide scholarships for aspiring young authors.

RUTHERFORD COUNTY

Golden Valley held a standing room only candidate forum that brought out over a hundred members of their community. Club president, Ron Gurley moderated the meeting and candidates for Sheriff, District Attorney, Clerk of Court and NC Senate had the chance to speak to an attentive audience. Golden Valley continued their participation in the Adopt-a-Highway program and is partnering with Sunshine Elementary School to help supply much needed essentials for students. They are also working to establish an internet hub at their center to assist local residents, especially students.

Union Mills hosts a covered dish lunch each month and an indoor yard sale is held twice a year where community members are encouraged to "buy a table" for \$5 and sell their goods. Pinwheels were placed around the flower beds in front of their Community House to raise awareness and start a conversation about child abuse. The annual community Trick or Treat is always a well-attended event, with over 55 in attendance this year.

TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY

Quebec Community Club finds much fundraising success in their monthly Bingo games, which funds assistance for needy families in the community. A new "turkey shoot" event held this year was well-received and attended by many community members. Quebec's future goals include increasing membership and community involvement.

WATAUGA COUNTY

Foscoe's annual Home Grown Music Festival is their most successful fundraiser and supports Valle Crucis Elementary School, the Civil Air Patrol, Junior ROTC, the Foscoe Fire Department and medical assistance to community members. The festival required over 400 volunteer hours of work this year. They also raffled off two large Easter Baskets to raise additional funds. To honor the passing of one of Foscoe's charter members, a local craftsman built a bench that now sits on the porch of the Community Center.

ENGAGED COMMUNITIES: 25 communities recognized for being engaged in numerous projects of benefit to their residents

ASHE COUNTY

Peak Creek Ruritan's successful Pancake Breakfast and Indoor Yard Sale raised \$1900, which went to their Freshman Scholarship Fund. This fund provides \$750 to two graduating high school seniors. The club donated 380 hours to their Helping Neighbors project where volunteers assist neighbors with property upkeep and repair, transportation, shopping and childcare. Additional volunteer time was spent providing firewood to neighbors to help with heating costs. A new fundraiser in May featured a local Elvis Presley impersonator for a successful "Dinner with Elvis" event.

BUNCOMBE COUNTY

The **Big Ivy** Community hosted the first Environmental Education Field Days sponsored by Buncombe County Soil & Water. Nine hundred 5th grade students attended the two-day event where they learned about soils, wildlife, falconry, elk, reptiles, the water cycle and stream ecology through hands-on activities. It was a great way to teach kids that environmental education is fun. Big Ivy also works with North Buncombe High School to offer the center to students who need to fulfill community service requirements. Big Ivy offered a history of Barnardsville program at two of their community meetings and their facility is used by farmers for a seed exchange.

Ox Creek continues their work as an exchange zone for the Blue Ridge Relay Race, raising \$2000 this year for operating expenses. A winter coat drive was held in November to benefit Asheville Buncombe Christian Community Ministries. A new "Ladies Brown Bag Lunch" event proved extremely popular and productive as the women lunched together and came up with new ideas for the club. The result was a new monthly Music Jam, yoga classes, and a soup and bread challenge featured at one of their monthly potluck dinners. Ox Creek initiated a tailgate market that highlights local produce and crafts sold by local artists.

CHEROKEE COUNTY

Grape Creek made 20 flannel quilts for homeless veterans, 25 "chemo-caps" for cancer patients, 20 "preemie" blankets for premature babies at the hospital and 30 bibs for the local nursing home. The quilting project alone took 4 months to complete. They collected baskets for the homeless shelter and created baskets of school supplies for teachers in their community. A Veteran's Day dinner for local veterans and their families honored 28 Veterans and a \$500 scholarship was presented to high school graduate Randy Watts, who will be attending Western Carolina University to pursue a degree in engineering.

Unaka recognizes the many talented artists in their community through their Craft Fairs at the Community Center. This year's "Taste of Unaka" fundraising event featured desserts such as banana walnut cake, rose coconut cake, Neapolitan, cherry chocolate cheesecake and peanut butter pie. Members of the Unaka community can take yoga classes on Thursday and play Pickle Ball with new equipment provided by the Cherokee County Senior Games. The community center also keeps and maintains a landing zone for medical emergency helicopters, providing a life-saving location for airlifting patients needing expedited care.

CLAY COUNTY

Brasstown Community Civic Center provides, at no cost, a much-needed location for the Raising the Bar program – a weekly class that gives developmentally disabled adults the opportunity to build skills and engage socially. Their center is also used as a delivery point for local members of the organic food buying club called Gatherers & Gleaners. Brasstown hosted a heritage event, featuring a book signing by Clay County author Bass Hyatt, Jr. for his book Brasstown Myth and History.

EASTERN BAND OF CHEROKEE

Cherokee County Indian Club raised an impressive \$9600 from their monthly bingo and cake auctions. This all-volunteer fundraiser pays for building maintenance, utilities and goes toward helping families in need. A Children's Halloween Carnival provided a safe and fun environment for children in the community. Over 75 community members attended the Easter dinner and egg hunt, where children and adults alike had a wonderful time celebrating the holiday.

The **Wolfstown** Community is enjoying a brand new building, which was just completed in August. They received a \$4400 grant to purchase tables and chairs for the new building. In May, they co-hosted a new Teen Awareness Night to educate young people about the dangers of opioid addiction. The community club collects blankets for the Cherokee Dialysis Center, volunteers at the Day of Caring and sets up a booth at the Annual Safe Trick-or-Treat event. In collaboration with the Big Y Community, Wolfstown won first place and Overall Grand Prize for their Fall Fair parade float.

HAYWOOD COUNTY

Beaverdam collaborates with the MANNA Food Bank for monthly food distributions. They also work with RiteAid pharmacy to hold an annual flu clinic. Beaverdam coordinates with the Haywood County Sheriff's office and Citizen's Patrol to support crime prevention in the community. To aid a community member with cancer, Beaverdam held a yard sale and breakfast to assist with his medical bills.

HENDERSON COUNTY

Crab Creek invites Kindness Rocks to deliver a presentation at their center. Kindness Rocks is based on the idea that one message at the right moment can change someone's day, their outlook, and, indeed, their whole life. Part of the presentation was to provide materials for all to paint and hide rocks in the community. Crab Creek collects personal care items, food and bottled water for Safelight, a safe haven for victims of violence. Crab Creek's December meeting was a time to celebrate the season together and collect non-perishable foods for families in need, as well as collect school supplies and toys for Operation Christmas Child. They are a registered Red Cross Emergency Center and serve as a polling place for the Henderson County Board of Elections.

An estimated 4,550 volunteer hours went into **Edneyville's** numerous programs. They support Boy Scout Troop 605 and purchased Eagle Scout recognition plaques for 2 scouts earning the prestigious

rank. Their Sundae Social event in August proved to be the largest yet as it was expanded to include a Chili Cook-off, in addition to ice cream and bluegrass music. Edneyville raised money by selling lunch at Farm City Day and provided a safe community location for Halloween-type games, snacks and hayrides at the Fall Festival. A unique program was presented by the Edneyville Chocolate factory where local employees shared the secrets of what's going on in their new facility with curious members of the community.

JACKSON COUNTY

The **Pumpkintown** Community Development Center purchased over 50 grave markers for two abandoned centenarians in Jackson County – the Punkpintown Cemetery and the Woodard Cemetery—to ensure that future generations will know the history and leave them undisturbed. They also had a successful letter writing campaign that raised \$950 for the center.

MACON COUNTY

Carson expanded their craft shows at the community building to both spring and fall. The shows are open to all ages and one 13-year-old earned enough from her craft sales to pay for her mission trip this summer. Share Our Stories meets bimonthly at the community building. This is a support group serving family members struggling with addiction or have lost a family member to addiction. Donations of denim jeans were collected at the center to create shoes for children in third world countries. Carson also donated 923 pounds of food and non-food items to Macon County Care Network.

The **Clark's Chapel** mission statement is to make Clarks Chapel a better place to live and work and play. They established flag poles at two cemeteries and planted flowers at five intersections in the community. Two acres of pumpkin were planted to provide every child in the community with a pumpkin at Halloween. They perform roadside cleanup two times a year and present a yard-of-the-month award to the best yard in the community each month of the year.

Cowee's theme for 2018 was Building Community, and they made an extra effort to inform new and existing residents about the Cowee community through welcome letters. The letters provide lists of resources and events and invites members to become part of the organization. They have worked hard to expand their email database and have recently revamped their website. They donated \$1000 to the Leader in Me program at the local elementary school and became a partner in the Healthy Neighbors Network Program.

Otto raised over \$16,000 this past year with their most successful venture, *Go Tell It on the Mountain* 5K race. Proceeds from the race are split with the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation of NC. Community members continue to explore methods for high speed internet and recently started an internet company named "The Little T Broadband." Otto is working with local government, Duke Energy and two conservation groups to establish a pocket park within the community that will allow community members to enjoy clean and safe river access. They also partnered with 2 non-profits to construct and plant a community garden consisting of 8 raised beds that produced over 50 pounds of food that was contributed to food insecure families in the community.

MADISON COUNTY

Center Community Center's most successful event is the Thanksgiving Community Meal. This event brings members of the community together for food, fellowship, music and singing. Proceeds go to assisting operational costs and senior programs. They made an extra effort this year to identify the needs of their seniors, one of the largest populations in their community. They worked with a local tax prep

service providers, county senior and community services, Madison County government and the sheriff's department to make sure seniors are well educated and taken care of.

The **Greater Ivy** Community Citizens Association at the Beech Glen Community Center continues their ongoing land acquisition. Plans are to develop the land to meet the needs of the community with an outdoor pavilion, walking trail and expanded parking. Greater Ivy held a spring flea market that raised \$1628. The center assists the elderly by serving as a meal site four days a week. The Kith & Kin program funded by Smart Start provides families with a safe place for the children to play and the parents to network.

Revere Rice Cove's Friday Outreach provides food to area residents. Those who can afford it are charged \$5 a plate and food is given to those in need. This effort generated over \$2700 to go back into the successful program, as well as for utilities and maintenance on the center. Revere-Rice Cove held a monster bash to benefit Neighbors in Need by collecting canned goods. They participate in Litter Sweep North Carolina to keep community roadsides clean and serve as a polling place for the Madison County Board of Elections. Madison County Cooperative Extension held a number of classes at the Revere-Rice Cove Community Center which included beekeeping, rotational grazing, cover crops and no-till planting.

Walnut Community Center Foundation continues the PAGE or Partnership for Appalachian Girls Education program, which helps insure that promising students get a chance to go to college. They also provided over 125 Christmas gift bags and handwritten cards to the female inmates at a local prison. The community plans and sponsors free tours of historic sites in their area, such as the Folk Museum on the Mars Hill campus and the first Presbyterian hospital built in the area 100 years ago. A benefit dinner and singing for a community member recovering from colon cancer raised over \$4000 to help pay for his medical bills.

Walnut Creek held their 3rd annual Walnut Creek Fall Gathering and BBQ. This event was a huge success with food, bluegrass music, bake sale, silent auction, 50/50 raffle and lots of fun. They also held a fundraiser with nationally known guitarist, songwriter and storyteller, Joe Penland Jr. The Walnut Creek Community Center registered with the NC Adopt-A -Highway program and maintains 8 miles of main road and 15 miles of secondary roads.

RUTHERFORD COUNTY

Gilkey School Community generates \$700 a month through their Saturday morning breakfasts, with the goal of reaching \$1000 in the future. They hold life-saving Red Cross Blood Drives six times a year and scheduled a concealed weapons class with the Rutherford Police Department that brought in over 30 people who attended and passed the course. The Gilkey School Community Center is now the official landing spot for emergency medical airlift helicopters, which is a vital new service to the community and surrounding areas.

Whitehouse Community collaborates with the Rutherford County Community Service and Parole Department to work with individuals who are serving community service in lieu of jail time. This program gives the individuals a dignified manner to fulfill their service through productive work that benefits the community. Whitehouse also created a 2000 square foot wild flower garden and dedicated it to a club member who passed away in 2016. The new Bunny Shoot proved to be a success and the club gained 5 new members through this fun Easter fundraiser

TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY

Balsam Grove raised over \$16,000 through donations, rentals, bingo, yard sales and monthly jam sessions. The yard sale is their most successful fundraiser and allows Balsam Grove to give families in need a private shopping experience, where they can receive free household items or clothing. Balsam Grove's blood drive produced an impressive 29 units of blood. Working with SAFE, Transylvania County's shelter for victims of domestic abuse, the Balsam Grove offered an information session and youth made cookie mix mason jars that were shared with victims so they could make cookies with their children on Mother's Day.

After not having a fundraiser in a few years, the **Little River** Community Development Club's hot dog fundraiser with mountain music and bake sale proved to be very successful. They also received two grants which were used for renovations on their center. They made improvements to their grounds which included installing new plants and flowers at their center and by their roadside sign. They are thankful that the county commissioners recently voted to provide WIFI at their center.

COMMUNITIES OF PROMISE: 15 communities chosen because of the initiatives implemented by the community that show promise and can be replicated around the region.

BUNCOMBE COUNTY

The **Leicester Community** added a Community Art Night held on the first Tuesday of every month. Children and adults enjoy getting creative, making art, learning new things and socializing. Using a grant from Buncombe County, Leicester was able to make improvements to their kitchen and to purchase new items for their playground, all of which were installed by community volunteers. In addition to the dental bus during their Health Fair this year, a mobile mammogram bus provided services to the community at reduced costs. Participants left the Health Fair with goody bags containing essential toiletries to promote good health. As a new fundraising method this year, Leicester produced postcards depicting scenes from Leicester's history. The postcards proved to be so popular, the first printing quickly sold out and a new batch had to be ordered.

Sandy Mush Community saw an increase of over 100 people from previous years at their annual event, The Sandy Mush Mountain Music and Square Dance. It was attended by 300 people and raised over \$12,000. A new High School Equivalency program in partnership with AB Tech hopes to provide a second chance to their community members who left high school without a diploma. Community hand crafters gather once a month for an afternoon of hard work and sharing ideas. Through a partnership with MANNA Food Bank, staff and volunteers attended the Sandy Mush August Food Pantry to share low cost recipes, healthy food ideas on a budget and provided cooking demonstrations. This year's Spring Fling Youth Fundraiser honored local craftspeople and serves as a fundraising opportunity for the 4-H club and the Mountain Lady Farm Project. Their new state-of-the art playground has fitness activities for preschool children through adults.

Property adjoining the **Spring Mountain** Community center was purchased this year and will be used for a nature trail, pollinator garden and additional parking. Community members saw that the playground needed repairs and took the initiative to propose a plan to raise money. Signs were placed at the playground with information on how to contribute which included a donation box at the playground, collections at on-site events, through the Spring Mountain website, a GoFundMe campaign and mail-in donations. Not only was the fundraising successful, it has increased awareness of the playground facility and has resulted in increased participation among young families. Spring Mountain increased the number of American Cross Blood Drives this year and saw a record crowd at their Rabies Clinic. Fourteen volunteers picked up 35 large bags of trash during the annual Roadside Litter cleanup.

EASTERN BAND OF CHEROKEE

Big Y has over 700 followers on their Facebook page. This is their biggest outreach to both community members and people outside their community. The page is updated twice weekly and provides information on events and happenings at Big Y. The resource corner in the community center also provides the community a forum to leave flyers and contact information for events that are easily accessible by walking in the community area. To stress the importance of cultural revitalization, classes are held on traditional foods such as gritted bread, an old-timey bread made out of gritted flour. In partnership with the Kitawah Academy, Big Y hosted an 8-week Cherokee language class for adults. New high-speed internet in their building provides reliable internet access for the community, particularly students. This will enable Big Y to provide online Cherokee language classes.

HAYWOOD COUNTY

On top of the extensive work done on their facility this past year, **Fines Creek** renegotiated their lease with the county in order to be able to provide needed rental space for small businesses in the area. As of August 2018, the community center houses one artist, one crafter, an art gallery and three small businesses. Summer program “Base Camp on the Go” gave children ages 6 to 12 the opportunity to participate in outdoor physical activities supervised by Parks and Recreation personnel. Building on their successful Halloween Carnival, Fines Creek added a Haunted House which filled the basement of the old gym. Volunteers and members of the Mayhem Maydens Roller Derby team constructed the haunted rooms through which brave-hearted adventurers traveled. Due to its popularity, the Haunted House was open more days this year. From family and school reunions, to a Veteran’s Day dinner; from their collaborative “Twelve Mile Project” on the wildlife habitat of elk to community yard sales, Fine’s Creek protects the heart of the community and serves its people.

HENDERSON COUNTY

Many new programs, activities and fundraisers took place at the **Upper Hickory Nut Gorge** Community Club this past year. A new 50/50 raffle increased monthly donations for the club’s expenses by infusing new energy into the fundraising process. For the first time at their 4th of July celebration, Upper Hickory Nut Gorge provided old-fashioned games for kids and adults and offered prizes. They updated an old plan and expanded who can be eligible for their college scholarships and gave two \$500 awards this year. The club offers wheelchairs, walkers, crutches and scooters on loan for those who need short-term help. In recognition of their achievement last year to become FIREWISE certified, the community gathered this May to accept their plaque from Wildlife Mitigation Forester, Justin Query. Upper Hickory Nut Gorge is doing all they can do to be ready for future fire incidents and are organizing events to inform the community of their responsibility to be prepared.

JACKSON COUNTY

Caney Fork started building a little free community pantry and library located directly beside their new information kiosk. The youth of Caney Fork helped in the placement, construction and painting of this project with local church groups asked to help keep it stocked. The Summer BBQ is their most successful fundraiser featuring live music with Junior Appalachian Musicians (JAM) and Southern Vantage, a silent auction, a raffle, a cake walk and two large smokers full of 325 pounds of pork, 70 pounds of chicken and 100 hotdogs all raising over \$3,200. Youth Art Nights are held to incorporate fun learning activities, as well as help teach team building and critical thinking skills. Caney Fork set a strong example of neighbor helping neighbor when the community came together and raised over \$3000 to support a family after a deadly house fire.

MACON COUNTY

Holly Springs held monthly club meetings featuring musical groups, journalists, travelers, health professionals, agriculture and education experts. In addition, Macon County Sheriff Robbie Holland provided an information session this past year. Members of the Holly Springs community volunteered to take the lead in creating and producing the Community Development Council's educational booth at the Macon County Agricultural Fair. As a result of this collaborative effort, the booth won a second-place ribbon for best Educational Booth and the Fair Theme award. Improvements to their 102-year old building requires more help than the community volunteers can provide, so working with local businesses has produced successful results with a new metal sign produced by a local company and installed by volunteers. The new Holly Springs Market, located at their covered shelter, provides a venue to sell plants, fresh garden vegetable and yard sale items. Targeted fundraising efforts provided support to three non-profits; Hospice, the Appalachian Animal Rescue Center and REACH Veterinary Specialists.

MADISON COUNTY

Spring Creek raised \$2,400 through the Spring Fling and Wellness Fair featuring a variety of health and wellness organizations such as the Blood Connection bloodmobile, Haywood Medical Center, AB Tech's Emergency Medical Services and the French Broad Mobile Vet. The event included a giant yard sale, live music, lunch by Dave's 209, homemade desserts sold by community center volunteers, a 50/50 raffle cash drawing and donated door prizes. Spring Creek's Forever Fit Fitness Program celebrated a one-year anniversary in April and is seeing attendance grow. To show support for the educators in the area, a home-cooked lunch was prepared for staff of the Hot Springs Elementary School. Pickin' and Grinnin' is a monthly cultural event designed to preserve the rich musical heritage of the mountains and invites anyone who wishes to join in.

MITCHELL COUNTY

To expand the community center and the services it can provide, **Tipton Hill** Community Foundation added an outdoor covered shelter to the back of their facility funded in part by the Unimin and Quartz Corporations. Local residents also chipped in to help construct the shelter by donating materials and services. The result is a covered space that provides a platform for multiple activities and can accommodate 250 people. Their first ever community-wide Easter Egg Hunt was a huge success with over 100 community members in attendance. Due to its popularity, plans are to expand the event in 2019 and Tipton Hill has already received a donation to pay for the eggs. In collaboration with the Mitchell County Health Department and the Center for Rural Health, a flu shot clinic was held at the Tipton Hill Community Center and the on-going Tele-Medicine Clinic, housed at the center, provided medical services to 90 patients.

RUTHERFORD COUNTY

The Ellensboro Town-wide yard sale attracts hundreds of buyers from outside the community. The **Ellensboro Woman's Club** handles all the advertising to include signs, newspaper advertisements and flyers for the sale. They also provide staffing for the local Colfax Free Fair, which has been operating since 1928. A new event this year involved conducting an estate sale. Items from an estate that had been virtually untouched for 27 years were donated to the club. This new event stretched the skills of the members as they learned to use the internet to research reasonable prices for the unique donated items such as handmade quilts and unusual collectibles. With a focus on women in leadership roles, the majority of their speakers this year featured women who own and operate their own businesses. A new

announcement board on the clubhouse property will assist small businesses by providing a venue to promote their goods and services.

TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY

Cedar Mountain raised over \$16,000 this past year through a letter campaign, annual auction, center rentals and a Soup Cook-Off. The Soup Cook-Off had 21 entries and handmade bowls were given as prizes for the top 3 winners. Cedar Mountain hosted a program on the care and treatment of hemlock trees, as well as a program on bees that focused on the habitat and importance of bees in the food chain. Cedar Mountain awarded a \$1000 college scholarship to Abigail Smith, a Cedar Mountain resident who will be studying marine biology. In collaboration with Transylvania Planning and Development, Cedar Mountain is working on a Small Area Plan to preserve and protect the beauty and quality of life in Cedar Mountain. They have hosted a public informational meeting and are in the process of gathering feedback from the community in order to form a plan that reflects the needs and desires of the community.

Dunn's Rock raised an impressive \$16,220, which were mostly used for improvements to their center, including new HVAC and a commercial refrigerator. Dunn's Rock also installed a dedicated land line, WI-FI, a cell booster and high-speed internet, which officially makes their center a "Hot Spot." A topical program was presented to include the showing of films "The Flood and 1916" and "Be Prepared for Catastrophic Flood/Mud Slides" and was accompanied by a panel discussion with the Sheriff's Department, EMS, the fire department and a local historian. Other programs included nutrition and food preservation, computer safety, The World of Monarch Butterflies and crockpot cooking.

Lake Toxaway raised \$55,000 this past year with a significant portion secured through a grant from Lake Toxaway Charities to pave and widen their walking track. Lake Toxaway also continued to make improvements to their flea market building by upgrading the electric and lighting. The flea market building has proved to be a success, providing a large space to house furniture donations. They continue to add to their Military Wall and hold events on Memorial and Veterans Day to honor those who have served. They have partnered with the Transylvania Heritage Museum and the Military Museum to provide displays during their Heritage Days.

WATAUGA COUNTY

Deep Gap Ruritan divides their projects into five service areas: environment, business and professions, citizenship and patriotism, social development and public service. During the past year, members of their club donated over 2000 hours and raised over \$16,000. Their most successful fundraiser is the annual steak dinner, bringing in over \$10,000. All the money raised is put back into the local community to assist with medical and fuel bills, funeral expenses, five \$1000 scholarships, Christmas presents for needy children, spending money for seniors in nursing homes and for support to other service organizations. They just started participating in the Little Free Libraries program and their first library will be placed at De La Cruz farms.

COMMUNITIES OF DISTINCTION: Three communities chosen for this award because of their overall ability of working together to assess, develop, and implement strategies to address community issues, as well as having numerous, diverse programs to benefit community members.

Through grants and fundraising projects, the **Shiloh** Community Association in Buncombe County raised an impressive \$139,400 for their community. In collaboration with two other neighborhoods, the Shiloh Community Association led the process and was awarded an Isaac Coleman Community Innovation Grant which provided funds to create the Youth Stipend Program. The Youth Stipend Program creates an opportunity for youth, aged 10 to 17, to have work experience in the Shiloh

Community Garden one day a week with the goal of building leadership skills, money management skills and a strong work ethic. A new fundraising project called the Roadside Stand was built to provide entrepreneurial opportunities for residents. Located in the Community Garden, the stand sells products like T-shirts, stickers, mugs, as well as handmade crafts, to raise money for future projects and is staffed by participants of the Youth Stipend Program. Shiloh also partners with the City of Asheville Parks and Recreation and The Council on Aging to provide free healthy meals to senior citizens twice a week. A newly created Communications Committee was formed to focus on outreach in the neighborhood. This new committee informs residents about upcoming events, classes and important issues pertaining to the Shiloh community through a quarterly newsletter and automated phone calls.

Bethel Rural Community Organization in Haywood County has a strong committee structure to oversee, manage and partner with others in the community to successfully complete their projects, programs and events. Bethel's volunteer projects this year ranged from developing a new logo and brochure, to installing energy efficient windows in their dining hall. They expanded their education awards to include a sixth-grade science and math award and donated much needed computer equipment to Pisgah High School teachers. During a recording session for their upcoming Sunburst DVD, Bethel helped a local teenage traditional music group produce their own CD -- one that the band could never have afforded to do by themselves. Both Bethel and the band can now use the CD to raise funds. Bethel installed 4 historical markers made by local artists and applied for a National Register designation for the state's oldest truss bridge located in the community. After a process of collaboration and compromises, Bethel worked with the Western Regional Office of the Presbyterian Church to transfer ownership of the facility to the Bethel Rural Community Organization.

Pigeon Community Multicultural Development Center in Haywood County raised over \$98,000 through grants and other fundraising efforts. They started Phase I of a five stage project that will include a multi-faceted playground, walking track and outdoor gathering space. With help from local organizations and individuals, Pigeon board member and Vietnam veteran Lewis Oates planned the Every Day is Veterans Day event and provided local veterans a day of home-cooked food, fun, free haircuts, essential clothing items, entertainment, resources and fellowship. A new program, the Feliz Navidad Festival, provided a Christmas celebration for the most vulnerable in the community who do not have access to programs for low income families. Pigeon is also moving forward to complete a second book for their Lift Every Voice project – a project started in 2012 to collect and preserve the history of the African-American community in Haywood County. The goal of the group is to help make it possible for all members of the community to live in safety, dignity and without discrimination.