Isn’t it nice to live in a community that takes a deep interest in the well-being of its neighbors and residents? WNC Bridge Foundation is fortunate to share the great work of our non-profit partners, volunteers, and donors who are investing in our communities.

Providing urgent home repair for elders, helping individuals facing financial crisis with compassion, and supporting innovative early childhood programs exemplify how our IMPACT Grants are making a difference. I am excited for you to learn more about our non-profit partners who are doing this vital work.

Seven-year-old Dominic’s story is an excellent reminder of the importance of being able to share a meal with the ones you love. And speaking of the importance of being together, WNC Bridge Foundation was honored to be the non-profit partner of Green Man Brewery’s 25th Anniversary Street Music Festival. It had been quite some time since we could be together in a large group, and it felt great to be back in person with our community. I hope you enjoy learning more about the different ways WNC Bridge continues to invest in our region and realize how grateful we are for your support.

Sincerely,

Scott W. Buchanan
President & CEO, WNC Bridge Foundation
SAFE AND HEALTHY HOMES

**Asheville Area Habitat for Humanity Repairs Homes for Aging Residents**

An IMPACT grant from WNC Bridge Foundation allowed Asheville Area Habitat for Humanity (AAHH) to complete health and safety home repairs on the homes of 44 low-income older adult households during the grant period. Thirty-one of those households reported improved health and safety after AAHH provided repairs. Nineteen of the households reported reduced utility bills after AAHH’s services.

“Keeping our older neighbors in homes and neighborhoods they love is critical for their health and the stability of our community. This investment from WNC Bridge Foundation has touched so many lives. It clearly signals that housing is health care,” notes, Andy Barnett, AAHH’s Executive Director.

Founded in 1983 as the first Habitat affiliate in NC, Asheville Area Habitat for Humanity has constructed more than 359 affordable homes and completed over 450 home repair projects, helping more than 2,000 WNC residents achieve strength, stability, and self-reliance through shelter. AAHH’s home construction, homebuyer education, volunteer engagement, affordable mortgage lending, and home repair services build and preserve safe, livable communities, helping low-income families build better lives for themselves.

**SAFE LIVING**

Carolyn knew it was time to do something about her floor when she had to move heavy furniture off it and avoid walking on the floor altogether. Fearful of falling through the floor and injuring herself, she turned to Asheville Habitat’s Home Repair Program. She was no stranger to Habitat because Carolyn served as a ReStore volunteer for four years.

Built in the 1940s, Carolyn’s home, like many older homes, was suffering from water damage,

“I am at high risk for falls and have fallen several times due to the condition of my front deck and side porch. You have made me feel safer and at ease knowing I can sit on my front deck without falling through. I can never repay you enough for the blessing you gave not only to me but several others in need. Thank you.”

—AAHH HOME REPAIR CLIENT
which caused her home’s floor and wall to rot, creating an unsafe living situation. Thanks to IMPACT Grant funding provided by WNC Bridge Foundation, the Home Repair team rebuilt the 16’ x 14’ section of the flooring system in Carolyn’s living room, where the framing was failing from water damage.

The home repair included removing the existing flooring and subflooring, installing new floor framing and support posts, and installing subflooring. The team also repaired the 16’ x 8’ exterior wall, bathroom plumbing, and bathroom floor. Now with a walk-in shower and stable walls and flooring, Carolyn can live comfortably and safely in her home again.

SAFE AND HEALTHY HOMES

LOOKING AHEAD

In FY22, AAHH will complete 70 Home Repair projects for low-income homeowners. AAHH estimates that 50 or more of these projects will be for homeowners age 60-plus. In the face of rising construction costs and limited availability of buildable land, AAHH’s home repairs are a critical piece to the puzzle to addressing Buncombe County’s affordable housing crisis.

THE AAHH HOME REPAIR TEAM REBUILDS SECTIONS OF WALLS AND FLOORING TO REPAIR DEVASTATING WATER DAMAGE.

A GRATEFUL CAROLYN MOVES BACK INTO HER REFURBISHED LIVING ROOM
DIGNITY DURING CRISIS

Burke United Christian Ministries Provides More than Assistance

For 45 years, Burke United Christian Ministries (BUCM) has served as a “one-stop-shop” for people experiencing homelessness and living in poverty in Burke County. Families can address multiple needs with BUCM staff, including hunger relief, crisis assistance, and clothing assistance.

An IMPACT Grant from WNC Bridge Foundation helped BUCM divert 54 families from becoming homeless or displaced from their homes. Other highlights from the grant cycle include the organization providing over 43,000 meals in its soup kitchen, helping 17 participants commit to making changes in nutritional eating habits, and connecting 72 individuals to new services or supports.

A client who received services from BUCM shared that when she first contacted the organization, she had little hope that they would be able to assist and was completely humbled by her experience.

“I spoke with Joan, a social worker at BUCM, and she spent a good deal of time on the phone with me collecting information about our current situation. Patiently, Joan worked to gather details while speaking to me with respect and understanding. Actually, dignity might be a better word to describe my experience, given the awkwardness I felt in having to ask for help. Joan and BUCM couldn’t have possibly treated me better. After a few more conversations, Joan shared BUCM would be using grant money to help my family with our utilities. Thanks to BUCM, a financial burden has been resolved, and an emotional weight has been lifted.”

“Thank you so much for helping to provide for our family. Burke United Christian Ministries, especially Joan, will forever live in my heart as a generous benefactor who gave freely to my family during a very challenging time.”

—BUCM CLIENT
Smart Start of Transylvania County (SSTC) envisions a community in which every young child in Transylvania County is thriving, and families are maximizing their health and well-being. An IMPACT Grant from WNC Bridge Foundation allowed SSTC to complete foundational work to define an early care capacity plan for its county. The project includes increasing licensed family home childcare options, creating a Family, Friends, Neighbor (FFN) early care pilot and engaging stakeholder businesses in the childcare and early educator workforce development space. One notable outcome from the IMPACT Grant was Smart Start’s ability to identify 20 Friends, Family, & Neighbor providers to participate in its pilot during December 2021. The goal was to support the healthy development of children being cared for in alternative settings. In addition, SSTC developed milestones and provided education on age-appropriate developmental materials, resources for support, and safe community spaces where learning through play could be modeled. The participants in the pilot were from locations all over the county and included aunts, grandmothers, cousins, babysitters, and parents/caregivers. All participants achieved their milestones and provided a high level of enthusiasm and feedback. Many caregivers reported learning of community resources such as the county’s recreation department, the Family Place, and learning about fun educational opportunities. FFN pilot participant, Natasha shared, “We really enjoyed the classes given by Smart Start of Transylvania to learn of the different resources available to us. The incentives we received to attend the classes were a real blessing. The gift card provided pull-ups and wipes, which I routinely stress about purchasing. I’m working on making an educational playroom for our home thanks to the toolkit I received from class. I just wanted to say thank you so much for everything, and I pray you can continue the program.”

“We are grateful for the support of WNC Bridge Foundation; our IMPACT grant has enabled us to lay a foundation to create innovative solutions for early care and education! Work of this nature takes time, and we appreciate WNC Bridge Foundation supporting us as we endeavor to work with community partners in this space.”

—DEB TIBBETTS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, SMART START OF TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY.
HANDS ON LEARNING IN NATURE

Wild Watch Program Connects First Graders to Science

For academic year 2020–2021, educators from the Grandfather Mountain Stewardship Foundation collaborated with Avery County Schools to provide significant educational enrichment opportunities for students through its Wild Watch program, thanks to funding from a WNC Bridge Foundation NOW Grant.

The program engages every first-grade student in the county and supports the instructional efforts of nine teachers in their classrooms. Wild Watch provides hands-on, experiential learning in line with the North Carolina Standard Course of Study curriculum for students being introduced to key concepts in biology and science for the first time.

Wild Watch began in August with the children learning about the importance of making observations and scientific inquiry. Throughout the rest of the school year, the itinerary sees children learning about what plants need to survive, using tools to learn about geography and mapmaking, recognizing the needs of animals, and learning about the different types of soils.

In April, the program culminates in a field trip to Grandfather Mountain to see the mountain’s plants and animals up close and to learn about the different ways people work to protect and improve their environments.

Additionally, each classroom “adopts” an animal from Grandfather Mountain, who they learn about during the school year and get a chance to visit when they come to the mountain in April.

“I love the Wild Watch program,” Loretta Sluder, a first-grade teacher at Crossnore Elementary, said. “It takes our science curriculum to another level and having experts from Grandfather Mountain here to guide us and answer questions from the students has been great and has expanded their knowledge tremendously. They look forward to it, and it gets them engaged.”

DID YOU KNOW?
100 NON-PROFITS RECEIVED NOW GRANT FUNDING IN 2021.
NOW GRANTS ARE AWARDED MONTHLY THROUGH AN EASY ONLINE APPLICATION WITH THE PURPOSE OF PROVIDING GRANT FUNDS QUICKLY TO NON-PROFITS WITHIN THE 18 COUNTIES OF WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA.
EMPOWERING RURAL HEALTH SOLUTIONS

**WNC Bridge Foundation Receives $760,700 USDA Grant**

WNC Bridge Foundation is working to advance health equity in Cherokee, Graham, and Swain Counties and the Qualla Boundary of the Eastern Band of Cherokee. In collaboration with county managers, health department leaders, transportation coordinators, and other experts in the 3-county area, WNC Bridge Foundation received a grant of $760,700 from United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to implement WNC Health Partnership. Funding will broaden rural health care services for uninsured and under-insured county residents, with no age requirement. Vaccine clinics, providing medical equipment and supplies, telehealth services, and food distribution are the four areas WNC Health Partnership will support.

Sara Coplai, Special Initiatives Officer for WNC Bridge Foundation, explains, “The idea for WNC Health Partnership stemmed from the Foundation’s experience as a grant-maker the past three years and feedback from the communities where we work. These counties have some innovative solutions for increasing rural access to health care and health equity that we want to support with resource development as soon as possible. In addition, WNC Bridge Foundation can amplify the impact of our funds by leveraging them with other funders as a trusted financial management partner.”

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**A MOBILE MEDICAL CLINIC SIMILAR TO THE ONE USED BY NON-PROFIT VECINOS WILL BE PURCHASED THANKS TO FUNDING FROM WNC HEALTH PARTNERSHIP.**
FAMILY TIME

Children’s Services Fund Proves to be a Game-Changer

WNC Bridge Foundation’s Children’s Services Fund has been a game-changer for Dominic Taylor and his family, as expressed by his mom Crystal. Daily activities are challenging for her seven-year-old son, diagnosed with intellectual and developmental disabilities, including suffering from a feeding delay and swallowing difficulty. Dom’s doctors recommended a feeding seat to help with mealtimes; however, finding the right chair for Dom proved to be challenging.

Crystal notes, “Dom has had a couple of different seats/chairs in the past to use for his feeding seat. The first chair was unbelievably huge and bulky. Although it provided the support he needed, it did not work for our small space, and it was so heavy that we couldn’t take it with us for outings.” The difficulty of transporting the chair meant the family, who resides in Bryson City, NC, avoided many of their favorite activities, including attending church fellowship dinners and going out to eat as a family. The second chair the family tried for Dom was an adaptive stroller, but it still took up too much space for the family to eat comfortably around their kitchen table. Crystal shares, “Before we received assistance from WNC Bridge’s Children’s Services Fund, we had not been able to sit down to eat at the kitchen table for three years; it left us feeling disconnected from each other. Not having the right type of chair for Dom also meant he had not been able to work on self-feeding or any therapies that require sitting as he requires a harness/belt to keep him from moving.”

Thanks to the Children’s Services Fund, WNC Bridge Foundation provided Dom with a more supportive and transportable chair, The Special Tomato Out & About Seat. “This new Seat has made such a difference for our family,” Crystal explains. The Tomato’s pelvic harness keeps Dom from scooting under the table. In addition, the chest harness is extremely useful in helping him sit up straight and keeping Dom from leaning as he does when he gets fatigued, which increases his risk for choking.”

“The Special Tomato Out & About Seat has truly been a blessing. We can now gather as a family around the table for our meals, take the Tomato Seat to restaurants, and go with ease to our church fellowship dinners. Dom is now finally included in everything that typical families do on a routine basis. We are so very thankful to WNC Bridge for making life more inclusive for our entire family.”

DID YOU KNOW?

100% OF FUNDS DONATED TO OUR CHILDREN’S SERVICES FUND GOES DIRECTLY TO HELPING CHILDREN LIKE DOM

DOM TESTING OUT HIS NEW SPECIAL TOMATO OUT & ABOUT SEAT.
CELEBRATING A MILESTONE

Brewery Marks 25th Anniversary by Supporting You’re Special Fund

The sound of live music and the gathering of friends was a welcome sight on Asheville’s South Slope the weekend of March 19th. The cause for celebration was the 25th anniversary of Green Man Brewery, located on Buxton Avenue.

The Asheville-based brewery celebrated its anniversary and hosted a two-day music festival at its South Slope location on March 18-19. A portion of beer sale proceeds benefited WNC Bridge Foundation’s You’re Special Fund.

Thanks to the generosity of Green Man and event attendees, over $10,000 was raised for You’re Special. This community initiative program supported by WNC Bridge Foundation gives hope and support to WNC neighbors in need who have no other source of funding for healthcare essentials.

Whether providing funds for a grab bar to make showering safe for an older adult or purchasing lifesaving medication for a low-income stroke survivor, the You’re Special Fund is available to help.

“WNC Bridge Foundation, its staff, and volunteers are incredibly grateful for everyone who attended the Music Festival benefiting our You’re Special Fund and would like to thank Green Man Brewery for choosing to support our community initiative. The event’s proceeds and donations will directly impact our WNC neighbors in need. As an organization, we look forward to the opportunity to collaborate with Green Man for future community events and to continue serving Western North Carolina,” shares Morgan Bradley, Development Officer for WNC Bridge Foundation.

WNC Bridge Foundation raises funds to support programs that connect individuals in our community with essential resources. Unlike our grants, which are funded through endowment investments, our 5 Community Initiatives—Rathbun House, You’re Special Fund, WNC Greatest Needs Fund, Health Scholarships, Children Services Fund—rely on the generous support of individuals who donate money and support our fundraising efforts.

Every cent donated to WNC Bridge Foundation goes directly to support our five community initiatives.

DID YOU KNOW?

Every cent of your donation supports our 5 community initiatives.

Donate today by filling out the enclosed envelope or scan this code linked to our website’s donation page. WNCBRIDGE.ORG/GIVE/MAKE-A-GIFT
DOORS WIDE OPEN

Rathbun House Thrives with Volunteer & Community Support

In 2021, Rathbun House welcomed 951 individuals whose loved ones were experiencing a medical crisis at an Asheville area hospital. Rathbun staff and volunteers provide a caring and supportive environment where families and caregivers can stay at no charge for up to 14 days while their patient receives treatment.

The heart of Rathbun House continues to be the support we receive from our community. Volunteers contributed 1,048 hours in 2021, ensuring time spent at the Rathbun House is as peaceful as possible.

Countless individuals, church groups, and community organizations collect and donate food and other items, providing Rathbun guests with essentials they will use during their stay.

We are pleased to share this list of regularly needed items and welcome supply and monetary donations to Rathbun House.

Food & Pantry Items

- Canned fruit
- Canned and shelf-stable meats—chicken, tuna, salmon
- Canned pasta—ravioli, spaghetti, mac & cheese
- Canned vegetables
- Soups—canned, dry mixes, ramen
- Gravies & broths
- Quick meals—mac & cheese, shelf stable prepared foods
- Coffee—regular and decaf
- Coffee creamer—liquid, powder, shelf-stable milk
- Sugar packets (do not need sugar substitutes)
- Condiments—ketchup, mustard, hot sauce, etc.
- Snacks—chips, crackers, granola bars, nuts, etc.
- Cookie, cake, brownie mixes
- Jell-O & pudding cups
- Applesauce & fruit cups
- Fresh fruit—apples, oranges, bananas, grapes

Kitchen, Bath & Laundry Items

- Dishwasher detergent
- Liquid dish soap (Dawn)
- Trash bags—4-gal, 13-gal, 56-gal
- Plastic bags & storage containers—all sizes
- Aluminum foil & plastic wrap
- Paper towels, Kleenex, toilet paper
- Hand soap and hand sanitizer (pump bottles)
- Toothpaste, toothbrushes, razors, shave cream in hotel/personal sizes
- Shampoo, conditioner, lotion in hotel/personal sizes
- Laundry detergent (HE Only)
- Dryer sheets

Gift cards to Walmart, Ingles, etc. are a wonderful treat!

We are unable to accept expired items.

To schedule a time to drop off your donations, email us at info@wncbridge.org or call 828.251.0595.

“Rathbun House is simply a wonderful place for family and friends to stay while a loved one is hospitalized. The House sits on 17 acres and feels more like a luxury resort. With comfortable rooms, beautiful balconies, and cozy sitting areas, this House helps families and loved ones have an easier time with hospitalization and the stress that goes with it. Thank you Rathbun House.” —M.W. January, 2022
THrift STORE FUNDRAISER

Over $9,000 Raised for Student Intensive Needs Program

During February, WNC Bridge Foundation directed all proceeds and cash gifts from our Weaverville Thrift Store to the Children’s Services Fund, benefiting North Buncombe Elementary School. Whether a child needs assistance purchasing medications, specialized equipment, or home improvements to enhance daily life, the Children’s Services Fund recognizes that everyday challenges can present significant obstacles for children with neurological or developmental disorders.

As we attempt to meet this tremendous need, WNC Bridge Foundation partnered with North Buncombe Elementary to allocate Children’s Services funding to the school’s Intensive Needs Program. This program provides specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parent, to meet the unique needs of children with disabilities.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Debbie Decoteau Finds Inspiration in WNC Bridge’s Mission and Community Support

For over five years, Debbie Decoteau has devoted 10–15 hours each week to volunteering for WNC Bridge Foundation’s Thrift Store in Biltmore. Debbie is originally from Farmington, Maine, where she went to college and met her husband, Paul. The couple moved to Asheville in April 1996. When asked, “Why Asheville?” Deb explains, “After living in Maine since birth, we were both tired of the long Maine winters and were looking for a new adventure in our lives...Best decision we ever made!”

Debbie, who lives 30–40 minutes away in Alexander, lists volunteering as a favorite hobby. “If not for the long commute, I’d spend more time volunteering,” she says.

When asked why she chooses WNC Bridge as a place to volunteer, Debbie explains, “The feeling of being part of something so much bigger than myself. The community support that we provide and the mission of the Foundation touches my heart.” She adds, “It’s hard to express the appreciation and respect that I have for all of the volunteers and staff at WNC Bridge and the generous folks in our community who donate their items to us.”

Debbie declares it an honor to be part of an organization that’s helping to meet the community’s needs, saying, “It is truly a labor of love.”

WNC Bridge Foundation helps meet the community’s needs through Thrift Stores and Estate Sales. Your purchase power 100% supports our five community initiatives: WNC Greatest Needs Fund, You’re Special Fund, Children’s Services Fund, Health Scholarships, and Rathbun House.

How to Support Our Thrift Stores

SHOP! Housewares, kitchenware, furniture, clothing, accessories, and more are restocked daily and bargain-priced.

Biltmore | 75 Fairview Road
Monday–Saturday | 10am–4pm

Weaverville | 285 North Main St.
Tuesday–Saturday | 10am–4pm

Donate! Accepting gently-used household items, clothing, and furniture at each location.

Want to Volunteer?

WNC Bridge Foundation Thrift Stores are upbeat, positive places to volunteer. If you want to know more, call 828-575-2509 or click the Volunteer link under SHOP at WNCBridge.org.
Crossings
the newsletter of WNC Bridge Foundation
SPRING/SUMMER 2022

CONTACT US
Mailing address
294 Overlook Road
Asheville, NC 28803
Main number 828.277.4815
Web WNCbridge.org
Email info@wncbridge.org

WANT TO DONATE?
Fill out the envelope inside
or scan this QR code linked
to our website to make a
secure donation.

Consider an Estate Sale?
Whether you are downsizing, moving,
settling an estate, or eliminating
clutter, Estate Sales & Services can
make your home transition easier.

Estate Sales & Services

May
5–7
19–21

June
2–4
16–18
6/30–7/2

July
14–16
28–30

Thursday–Saturday | 10–6:30

August
11–13
25–27

September
8–10
22–24

October
6–8
20–22

Each bi-weekly sale is different, offering
something for every taste and budget.

75 Fairview Road in Biltmore

WNC Bridge Foundation is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization. Financial information is available upon request. If you wish to be removed from our mailing list, please contact us.