

WNCbridge.org
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Crossings

the newsletter of WNC Bridge Foundation

WINTER 2023



Safely at Home FOR THE HOLIDAYS

A Hard-to-See Problem

WNC Bridge supports unmet needs

I know for many of us when we close our eyes at night, we give thanks for many things: Our loved ones, our jobs, our health, and a safe place to come home to every night. And while we know many of our neighbors who live in the 18 counties of Western North Carolina and the Qualla Boundary are experiencing need, it can often be hard to understand a problem you can't always see. One of those hard-to-see problems is safe housing.

Safe housing means housing that does not jeopardize its occupants' health, safety, or welfare and

permits access to electricity, heat, and running water for the benefit of those occupants.

This issue of *Crossings* will look at how WNC Bridge Foundation and others are working together to help provide more opportunities for our neighbors to have a safe and healthy place to live, not only during the holidays but every day.

Sincerely,



Scott W. Buchanan
President & CEO, WNC Bridge Foundation

Did You Know

Over 125,000 people in our region live in poverty, including one in five children.

That's 14.4% of the population in WNC that have income below the poverty level.

Nearly 4,000 people in our region are living in houses without complete kitchens or plumbing according to a Western North Carolina Housing Assessment, conducted by Dogwood Health Trust.

Complete plumbing is defined as having running hot and cold water, a flush toilet, and a bathtub or shower.

Building Towards Home Safety

Partnering is essential for safe housing in WNC

For the past five years, WNC Bridge Foundation has been hammering at the problem many in Western North Carolina face: safe housing. Since 2019, we have awarded

7 IMPACT Grants, 8 NOW Grants, and have focused our AIM Grant and Community Initiatives resources to address this daunting issue. Through conversations with

our trusted non-profit partners, collaborations with funders, and building a solid referral network, including departments from health and human services and school systems, WNC Bridge is working to ensure our neighbors can access safe housing.

Thanks to a \$200,000 investment from Dogwood Health Trust, WNC Bridge was able to pool Dogwood Health's funds along with our WNC Greatest Needs Community Initiative funding to increase the number of people served over the last calendar year. WNC Bridge served more than 90 people, including 23 children, providing essential housing needs to our neighbors.

IMPACT GRANT
FUNDING ALLOWED
ASHEVILLE AREA
HABITAT FOR
HUMANITY TO
COMPLETE HEALTH
AND SAFETY HOME
REPAIRS ON
THE HOMES OF
44 LOW-INCOME
OLDER ADULTS.



CRITICAL NEEDS

Home safety modifications

continue to increase in requests throughout the region as our population ages, and items such as bathroom grab bars frequently need to be professionally installed for people who live alone or are physically unable to install them after surviving strokes or other life events impacting their mobility. These modification costs are often out of reach for under and

uninsured people in our region. WNC Bridge's donor-supported Greatest Needs Fund helped make many of these requests possible.

Urgent home repair

for very low-income people is also a tremendous need. WNC Bridge quickly responded to conditions created by gaps federal funds do not cover, including the installation of modifications on specific residences, pest control payment, and rental assistance.





AFTER LEARNING OF CHILDREN UNABLE TO TAKE REGULAR BATHS DUE TO AN UNSAFE BATHROOM, WNC BRIDGE PROVIDED FUNDING TO COMPLETELY MAKEOVER THE FAMILY'S ONLY BATHROOM.

A Fresh Start

Unsafe bathroom receives makeover

Lisa Messer, a school social worker in McDowell County, reached out to WNC Bridge Foundation to assist in providing home repairs for a family of three living in unsafe conditions. She shared that the children were straight-A students being bullied at school due to hygiene issues. After speaking with the children's guardian, Lisa learned the family could not bathe regularly due to major repairs needed in the home's only bathroom.

The guardian invited Lisa to meet at the family's 600-square-foot two-bedroom home, where she could evaluate safety issues preventing the bathroom from being functional. Lisa confirmed

the bathroom floor was caving in and falling apart, and the toilet was sitting on plywood. Black mold was also growing in the bathroom.

Over 200 homes in McDowell County have incomplete indoor kitchens or plumbing.*

WNC Bridge partnered with another home repair group to purchase materials to completely refit the bathroom and appliances, as well as install a low-entry shower for the guardian's safety. WNC Bridge Foundation also provided funds for the guardian to purchase clothing for the children so they could feel confident in their fresh start.

* Source: 2015-2019 American Community Survey; ESRI; Urban Decision Group; Bowen National Research

Welcome Jazmyne Boyd

Public health fellow will focus on healthy homes

WNC Bridge has been grateful to learn alongside experts in our region regarding housing needs in Western North Carolina. In the coming year, WNC Bridge will continue focusing on The Green & Healthy Homes Initiative. This national program addresses social determinants of health, opportunity, and equity by creating healthy, safe, and energy-efficient homes.

Jazmyne Boyd has joined WNC Bridge as part of the 2023 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Public Health Associate Program. As a public health fellow, Jazmyne will establish and implement a home visiting program to help people with severe respiratory problems like COPD and asthma live safely and healthfully in their homes.



A Peaceful, Safe Place to Stay

When you can't be home, Rathbun House provides more than meets the eye



Rathbun House's doors are open 365 days a year to welcome individuals who need a safe and peaceful place to stay while their loved ones receive care at local healthcare facilities. Besides free lodging for 14 days, Rathbun House provides other safety amenities, including a complimentary shuttle service and security on the property from 8 p.m. until 8 a.m. daily.

Staff, volunteers, local businesses, and former guests support Rathbun House in countless ways, including providing holiday meals. It is not uncommon for Rathbun House to receive gift cards and donations of food throughout the year.



RECENTLY, THE HOUSE WITH A HEART RECEIVED THIS NOTE WITH SEVERAL GIFT CARDS FROM A FORMER GUEST:

"You welcomed me for two weeks last year when my dad broke his leg. I was homeless, and you took me in till I could get Dad back to Georgia.

I made friends [who] prayed for Dad and [me] and who I truly try to stay in touch with.

You blessed me and made a difficult time easier [for] us. I have wanted to bless you and the people you help. Please accept these gift cards as a small thank you."

DONATION WISH LIST



Top 3 Essential Needs

Bottled water

Coffee—regular, decaf, dry creamer

Individually packaged snacks—chips, cookies, crackers, granola bars

Gift Cards

Walmart, Target, Ingles, and similar store cards are beneficial to address the range of needs that out-of-town guests confront.

Pantry and Food Items

Canned and shelf-stable meat—tuna, chicken, SPAM, salmon, sardines

Canned pasta—spaghetti, ravioli, mac & cheese

Canned vegetables, beans, fruit

Quick meals—mac & cheese, shelf-stable entrees, stews

Soups—canned soup, beef stew, dry soup mix, ramen

Fresh fruit—bananas, apples, oranges, grapes



Want to help the House with a Heart? Gift cards, pantry donations, and monetary contributions can be mailed or delivered to Rathbun House, 121 Sherwood Road, Asheville, NC 28803.



A Home for Everyone

CHC of Madison County addresses affordable housing crisis

Community Housing Coalition (CHC) of Madison County is a non-profit organization that has promoted healthy, safe, and affordable housing for over 20 years in a mountain county where 25% of residents live in substandard housing. CHC is the only agency in Madison County providing services at no expense to its low-income clients, most of whom come from underserved populations, including older adults, differently abled, single parents (or grandparents), and veterans.

WNC Bridge Foundation awarded CHC a three-year capacity grant to support the organization's Affordable Replacement Housing Program, which aims to replace substandard housing for homeowners living at or below 80% of area medium income. The need to replace people's older

purchase, mobile homes typically require major repairs within 20 years, including roof replacement, electrical overhaul, and new flooring.

Community Housing Coalition's Affordable Replacement Housing Program was launched in 2022 to provide new construction replacement homes for clients whose homes cannot be repaired. Partnering with WNC Bridge Foundation, Asheville Regional Housing Consortium, and Dogwood Health Trust, the goal is to build four energy-efficient homes by the end of 2024, leveraging existing water, electric, and septic systems. WNC Bridge funds are providing salary support to CHC's house replacement manager, Matthew Bennet, who oversees the development, design, and construction of the homes.

"Funding through WNC Bridge has transformed our agency, providing the capacity to expand our program to include new home construction, allowing us to build the first home in CHC's 21-year history. This is a critical step to developing affordable housing options in Madison County."

—CHRIS WATSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CHC

homes is directly tied to the fact that nearly all of CHC's clients live in stick-built houses built before 1940 or in mobile homes. Older mobile homes make up one-quarter of Madison County's housing stock. Though affordable at the time of

Celina Uribe is the program's first replacement home recipient. CHC had provided frequent urgent repairs to Uribe's former home, including roofing and plumbing overhauls. Uribe shared with *The Asheville Citizen-Times*, "I feel really blessed and honored that I was given this opportunity. It's an amazing program that I'm so excited about, and so proud that our county is taking part in this program and that Community Housing Coalition is leading the force in affordable housing in this community."

CELINA URIBE, RECIPIENT OF CHC'S FIRST REPLACEMENT HOME. CHC SERVES ALL OF MADISON COUNTY, A COMMUNITY WHERE 14% LIVE IN POVERTY.



Nearly 90% of CHC's current clients live on less than 50% of area median income

The majority of CHC clients are single parents, differently abled, frail elderly, and veterans.



CHC AND HOMEOWNER CELINA URIBE BREAKING GROUND AT CHC'S AFFORDABLE REPLACEMENT HOUSING PROGRAM.

LEFT TO RIGHT: Matthew Bennett, CHC's Construction Manager; Celina Uribe, homeowner; Chris Watson, CHC's Executive Director.



Scooting Freely

Helping Finn move safely

Three-year-old Finn Culler of Hendersonville was born with a rare brain malformation, polymicrogyria, causing him to experience severe epilepsy, resulting in as many as ten seizures a day. In February 2022, Finn underwent surgery, which has been successful in preventing additional seizures. However, the surgery has caused severe weakness in one side of Finn's body.



WNC Bridge Foundation's Children's Services Fund provided Finn with a mobility device called Scoot. Finn's mother, Lauren, told us, "The difference the Scoot has made for Finn is enormous. He can now move freely through our

home and community with ease. We have several dogs, and before receiving his Scoot, Finn did not enjoy our pets at all. The dogs would give him kisses, but he felt overwhelmed by their presence as he could not escape them. Now he loves on our fur babies and enjoys spending time with his dogs."

In addition to providing mobility for Finn, the Scoot also helps strengthen his legs. "The near constant use of both legs to motor himself around in his Scoot has strengthened Finn's muscles tremendously. He is now pulling himself into a standing position and even cruises on furniture when not using his Scoot," Lauren shares.

Finn is putting his increasing strength to good use; he loves to play hide and seek with his big brother Grayson. "Every time Finn finds his big brother, laughter fills our home. I cannot thank WNC Bridge supporters enough for

THE SCOOT IS DESIGNED TO HELP FINN PLAY, EXPLORE AND PARTICIPATE IN A WAY THAT BEST SUITS HIS ABILITIES.



Play, Explore, Participate!

SCOOT frees up kids to explore their home, play with pals, chase big brothers and race little sisters without any help. Scoot facilitates play—a key factor in the early years of development in a child's life.

its generosity. Your donations have provided Finn with mobility equipment we would not have been able to provide on our own. Thank you."

PLEASE MAKE YOUR HOLIDAY GIFT TODAY

Empower WNC Bridge Foundation's Community Initiatives Supporting:

HOME repairs
MOBILITY devices for children
MEDICAL equipment for seniors
REFUGE at the Rathbun House



FINN IS ABLE TO TAKE HIS SCOOT WITH HIM TO PRESCHOOL, MAKING LEARNING THAT MUCH MORE FUN.

Volunteer Spotlight

Wilma Carlisle has a passion for helping others

As one of WNC Bridge Foundation's original Estate Sale volunteers, Wilma Carlisle has helped orchestrate countless bi-weekly sales. Her knowledge of the entire estate sale process allows Wilma to step into any situation and see what needs to be done. She has even enlisted the help of her husband, Everette, to evaluate tools and equipment that come with some estates. Wilma has been a dedicated, reliable, good-natured colleague for over 14 years at WNC Bridge.

Recently, Wilma has needed to limit her time volunteering to care for her siblings and their families. When her younger brother in Texas suffered a stroke and wanted to move back to the Weaverville area, Wilma stepped in to find a care facility that met his needs. She checked in regularly to ensure her brother got to appointments and helped with his daily needs.

Now, her younger brother lives independently, and Wilma continues to be closely involved in his life. She checks to make sure he has food in the refrigerator, his apartment is clean, and he's getting to his appointments.

Wilma is also helping with the care of her older brother's wife, who has progressed into an advanced stage of Alzheimer's. Wilma spends time with her sister-in-law at the couple's home so her brother can tend to their farm. As a companion with



WILMA AND EVERETTE

whom her sister-in-law is at ease, Wilma can encourage her to help with things like cooking and cleaning, so her sister-in-law feels active and present in her own life.

This holiday season, Wilma will ensure that her brothers and their families are safe and taken care of. She'll be decorating for Christmas in her own home and will be making apple stack cake, a family recipe her mother taught her. It's a tradition Wilma likes to share with her young great-granddaughter, ensuring she experiences the joy of being home for the holidays.

Wilma's unflappable capacity to step in and provide a helping hand shows up throughout her life. No matter how busy she is, Wilma always makes time for her family, friends, neighbors, and colleagues at WNC Bridge Estate Sales.

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Crossings

Safely at Home FOR THE HOLIDAYS WINTER 2023



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5 YOUR SUPPORT EMPOWERS OUR Community Initiatives

throughout the 18 Counties
of Western North Carolina



Children's
Services
Fund

Health
Scholarships

Rathbun
House

WNC
Greatest
Needs Fund

You're
Special
Fund



CAN WE COUNT ON YOUR SUPPORT?

Fill out the envelope tucked inside or scan
this code to make a secure online donation
at wncbridge.org/give/make-a-gift.

Please be sure to designate the community
initiative you wish to support.

Estate Sales & SERVICES



CONSIDERING AN ESTATE SALE?

Whether you are downsizing, moving,
settling an estate, or eliminating clutter,
we make home transitions easier.

Clients receive 50% of the proceeds, the remaining
portion supports our 5 Community Initiatives.

There are no other charges for our services.

To schedule a free in-home or virtual consultation,
call 828.575-2509 and select option 2.

EXPLORE OUR ESTATE SALES!

DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY
30-1	4-6	1-3	<29-2	11-13	9-11
14-16	18-20	15-17	14-16	25-27	23-25
		29-2>	28-30		

THURSDAY-SATURDAY 10:00-4:30

WEDNESDAY PREVIEWS 1:00-3:00

75 FAIRVIEW ROAD IN BILTMORE VILLAGE

