



The WYN Back-to-School Edition

WYNNER Newsletter August 2018



Confident Speeches from WYN's Rising 9th Graders

It is a WYN tradition that rising 9th graders deliver a "WYN graduation" speech to an audience of students, staff and parents at the End of Summer Talent Show. It is their special moment to shine before their WYN community and prove to everyone how much they have grown while at WYN.* With the support of their WYN community, these rising 9th graders find the courage to speak before an audience, many for the first time.

This summer's graduation speeches were extra special because of the incredible generosity of a few fine folks. In the days leading up to their public speaking debut, our rising 9th graders received awesome training and guidance on the art of public speaking from Cindy Wallace. In the hours before their debut, our students got a complete confidence-boosting makeover. The makeover started with a shopping trip to pick out a dressy outfit and a finished with a transformational haircut and salon experience with [John Mena's team at Haircut 101](#).

Confidence boost complete, our soon-to-be 9th graders returned to WYN to deliver their final thoughts to their WYN community before they left WYN and started high school in August. One of our kiddos remarks can be found below. With the support of WYN at their backs and their bright future ahead, our graduates are off to Watauga High School!

"Hi everyone. My journey with WYN started 2 years ago with mentoring. My mentor has been amazing and so has my time at WYN because of all the awesome people and experiences we have at WYN. Also the way you are treated as family here and how anyone is allowed to participate in the wonderful experiences we have at this program so I encourage all my younger peers to stay apart of WYN and if there's anyone here who is not apart of this wonderful program I hope you start. And trust me it won't disappoint with all the fun trips and memories.

Also I feel as though WYN has better prepared me for high school in many ways one being the way you have to work in a group with people and using my social skills. Just as a person in general I've grown and I will miss you all goodbye."

*Note: WYN summer camp and after-school programs have historically worked with middle school youth. With funds raised at the 2018 Wish Upon a Star Gala, WYN will launch a new program to ensure that rising 9th graders will no longer be "leaving" the protective and supportive WYN community when they start at Watauga High School.

WYN Students Benefit from Back 2 School Festival



On August 4th, a record number of Watauga County K-12 students had their school supply needs met at the 6th Annual Back 2 School Festival. Close to 1,150 students were served!

According to an article in [Watauga Online](#), "The Back 2 School Festival, started in 2013 as a collaborative effort between The Children's Council, Western Youth Network, Hospitality House, Quiet Givers and others seeks to streamline local school readiness efforts in order to have a greater impact on the community. It was designed to serve any family struggling to afford the high costs of back-to-school shopping in a fun, dignified and respectful environment. Their goal is for all kids to start school feeling confident and prepared for the year ahead."

Many of our WYN students and their families were served.



Above: WYN's Director of Mentoring, Angela McMann, has served on the Back 2 School Festival planning committee since the event's inception.

Below: The Festival transforms Watauga High School into a school supply wonderland!



Please consider becoming a monthly donor to Western Youth Network. For as little as \$5 a month, **you can make a difference** in a child's life.

"Do your little bits of good where you are; it's those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world"

-Desmond Tutu.

[Give Today](#)

WYN's Prevention team works at the policy and structural levels to make a healthier and substance free High Country community for all

**E-cigarettes:
A Threat to Health**

The American Academy of Pediatrics believes e-cigarettes and other electronic nicotine delivery systems are a significant danger to the health of children and nonsmokers. For more information, visit bitly.com/AAPpolicy.

- More than 7,700 flavors of e-cigarettes exist, including fruit and sweet flavors that appeal to children and youth.
- It is not safe to use e-cigarettes near children: There are cancer-causing chemicals in the exhaled e-cigarette vapor.
- Minors can easily purchase e-cigarettes online, or - in some states - at convenience stores.
- Less than half a teaspoon of a nicotine-containing e-cigarette solution can be fatal to the average toddler.
- Ads for e-cigarettes are targeting adolescents and appear on TV, radio, and online.
- Most e-cigarettes contain nicotine. Nicotine is a highly addictive, harmful drug.

AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS
Julius B. Richmond
Center of Excellence
www.richmondcenter.org

As vaporizers become an increasingly popular accessory among teens, our WYN Prevention team is paying careful attention to the latest research on its consequences.

He gets his music online.
His t-shirts at the mall.
And his drugs from his friend's medicine cabinet.

67% of people who abuse prescription drugs get them from family or friends. Prevent your children, friends and relatives from abusing your own medication by securing your meds in places they cannot access.

BE AWARE. DON'T SHARE.®
LOCK YOUR MEDS.®
www.lockyourmeds.org/nc

Supported by the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Disaster-Related Services, with funding from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Opial: 578/Cases (GSM) 10791061027, and 59F-04 (Grant # 11792022087)

Western Youth Network's Prevention Department is proud to be working in collaboration with National Family Partnership and the Lock Your Meds campaign. This campaign is designed

to reduce youth prescription drug abuse by raising awareness about the unwitting role family and friends play in supplying prescription drugs. According to the campaign, youth often get the prescription drugs they abuse from family medicine cabinets, purses and closets.

To learn more about this campaign or to access resources about the problem of youth prescription drug abuse, please visit the campaign website: **www.lockyourmeds.org**

