



Summer Fun for Everyone

WYNNER Newsletter July 2018

The opportunity to play, grow and learn during the summer should be available to every child, regardless of their circumstances. At Western Youth Network, our summers are dedicated to that belief.

Four days a week, staff drive our WYN vans and buses out across Watauga County to pick up our campers from their homes and bring them to our facility on WYN Way. From the moment the young person enters the car to the moment they are dropped off at home at the end of the day, they get the chance to have fun while learning a bit in the process. Our youth enjoy car singing sessions, outdoor adventures, social and life skill development, dance parties, and healthy food, just to name a few. Without WYN, most of these middle schoolers would be spending their summer largely unsupervised and in front of screens (television, computers, phones, etc.). It is during the unsupervised hours that youth risk taking (substance use, sexual exploration, criminal behavior, etc.) is most likely to occur. WYN keeps these youth engaged in activities that use their minds and bodies in healthy and productive ways.

WYN's program provides these youth more than just supervision, however. Through careful curriculum planning and relationship-centered programming, **our highly trained staff create a trauma-informed space in which young people who have faced unimaginable obstacles can find the support they need to overcome their adversity.** Most powerfully, for nearly 90% of our campers and their families, this entire summer experience is available to them at no cost.

Our 2018 summer will wrap up this week. Let's take a look at some of the summer highlights:



Above: A fun day of games and cultural exchange with the young African leaders of the Mandela Washington Fellowship Program at Appalachian State University



Above: Hiking near Mount Rogers
Below: Laughing with the ponies at Grayson Highlands





Above: Lunch and a show at Lees McRae, thanks to Sandi Solomon and Sorrento's.
Below: Lessons in fly fishing at Valle Crucis Park with Taylor and treats from Mast Store



Summer 2018 was made possible by all those who sponsored a child, offered their skills, welcomed our group, covered our costs, and donated their services. Special thanks to supporters of the Sonny Sweet Scholarship Fund, the Sons of Mountaineers, Carolina West Wireless, and Sandi Solomon. *Thank you.*

Gala Success Begins WYN's Journey of Service Expansion

At the 5th Annual Wish Upon a Star Gala, guests answered the call to help the youth in our community by raising \$78,000 in the fund-a-need to launch a new program for Watauga High School students. With this program, WYN will connect students to the vital resources they need to not only graduate, but to thrive.

With the program for high school students now launched, WYN can set its sights on funding the next pieces of its complete vision for service expansion. In our vision, as articulated by the Board and staff in our recent Strategic Planning process, WYN will:

1. expand services into neighboring counties
2. extend after school hours (including into weekends)

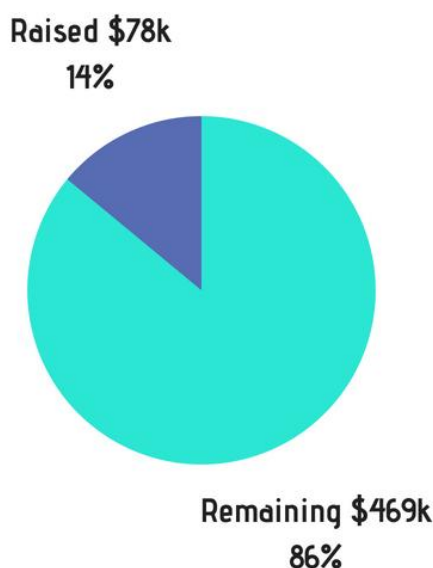
3. serve more middle school youth
4. hire a professional counselor
5. launch after school and summer camp programs for elementary aged children

Careful financial calculations estimated that \$547,000 would be required to fund the high school program as well as goals 1-5 (above). With the Gala successfully raising \$78,000 for the high school program, WYN has \$469,000 or **86% left to raise**.

The chart below represents the total budget required to achieve WYN's vision with the dark blue piece representing the percentage raised during the request to fund a high school program at the 2018 Gala. The turquoise portion represents the portion left to be raised before WYN can fill the remaining gaps in services for local youth.

We were blown away by the support shown for our youth at the recent Gala. Though there is much left to do for the youth in our community, we are confident that our community cares for its kids and will do whatever necessary to see that every child has the chance to reach their full potential, regardless of circumstances.

Breakdown of Funds Required for Complete Program Expansion



Quotes from the Kiddos

What was the 2018 WYN summer camp like for our kiddos? We asked them and, as always, they made us laugh!

"What is something you are proud of from this summer camp?"

"I felt like I got to conquer some of my fears at High Gravity [Zip Line and Aerial Park]."

"Awesome! So you are afraid of heights?"

"Yep."

"So how high did you climb?"

"Well I didn't actually leave the practice level but it still felt real good."

"What is something you will remember from summer camp this year?"

"The Grayson Highlands. It was really really beautiful. It looked like Ireland."

"Have you ever seen Ireland?"

"No. But I know it's beautiful."

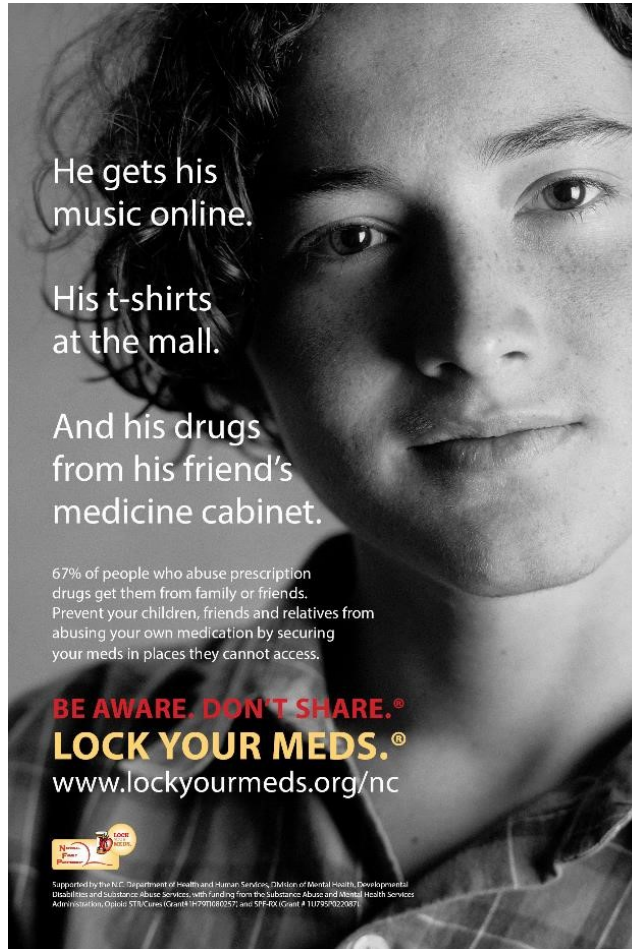
The last day of summer camp is July 26th when these comical kiddos will put on a little talent show to celebrate a great season.

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




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 Substance Abuse Services, with funding from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services
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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

