



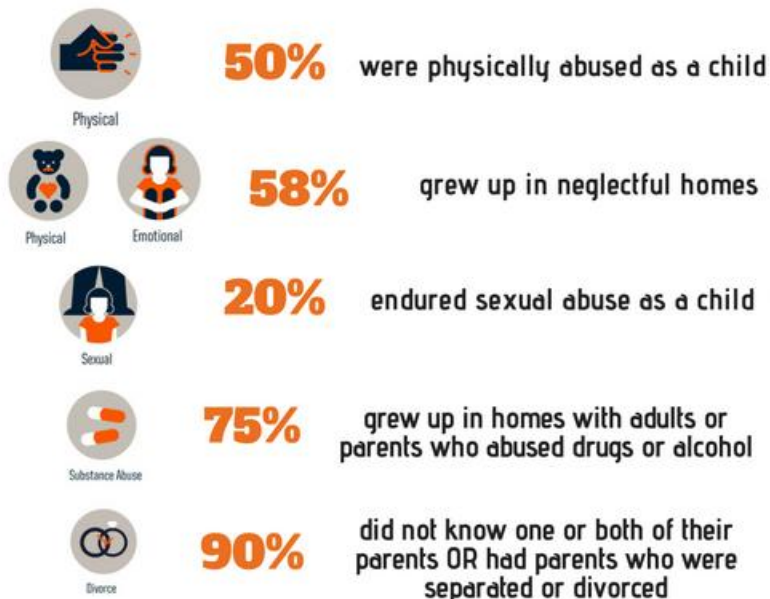
New Local Prison Research Tells Important Story

WYNNER Newsletter June 2018

In an incredible new study to better understand the root causes of recidivism (repeated incarceration), Appalachian State graduate Mollie Mellishrencken, in partnership with the Watauga County Sheriff's Office, interviewed inmates who had entered Watauga County Jail three or more times. Her findings were astounding.

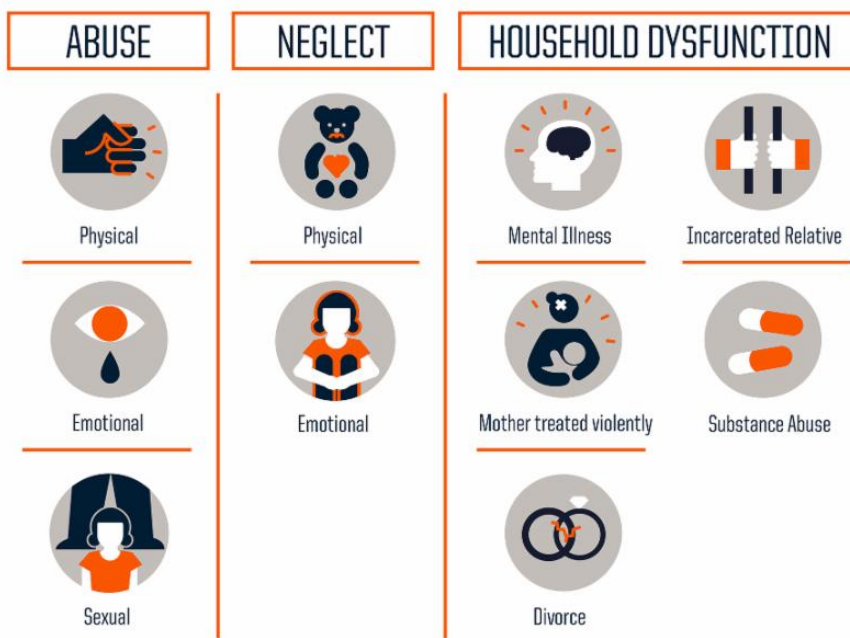
Inmates who struggled with repeated detentions were significantly more likely to have experienced trauma in their childhood than the average person. During their formative years, those who would become inmates faced abusive, neglectful and/or dysfunctional homes. Consider the numbers below.

Of the inmates interviewed:



The roots of harmful and criminal behavior in Watauga County are found at an early age.

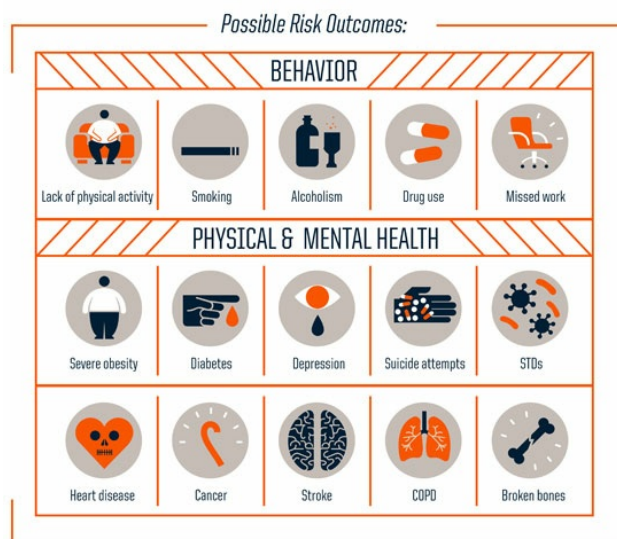
These findings reflect a new national awareness of the life-long consequences of early trauma. Gaining increasing national attention has been the push to identify and address **Adverse Childhood Experiences**, or ACEs. There are 10 primary ACEs (captured below) and experiencing even one of them at an early age can negatively impact an individual's development and long-term outcomes.



Research shows that ACEs have tremendous influence on an individual's life-long mental and physical health and substance use/abuse. Criminal behavior is intimately connected to substance abuse.

WHAT IMPACT DO ACEs HAVE?

As the number of ACEs increases, so does the risk for negative health outcomes



So where does WYN fit in all this?

The most incredible part of this problem is its solution. According to the Harvard Center on the Developing Child, **children who develop resilience are most likely to escape the cycle of ACEs.** So how do we ensure that every child who has experienced childhood trauma develops resilience? Harvard's Center has an answer for that too.

The **single most powerful factor in developing resilience (and thus overcoming an abusive, neglectful and/or dsfunctional childhood) is a safe, stable and nurturing caregiver and environment.** Even just one supportive and loving caregiver can make a difference!

WYN's mentoring, after school and summer camp programs are carefully designed to connect at-risk children and youth (identified by school counselors, social workers, the juvenile court system and more) to the stability and support they need to build resilience and to thrive. Mentoring connects children to a single adult who can care for and encourage them. After school and summer camp immerses children in a new world where they can feel safe and cared for- the only place where some of the kids we serve ever feel this way. In tandem with these programs, the prevention team works to cut off access points to substances so at-risk youth never get the chance to misuse substances.

The new prison data reveals the power of early experiences to shape life outcomes. **Together, WYN's four programs are building more resilient youth and a stronger High Country community, thus changing our youths' entire lives!**

Thank **you** for being a part of this truly life-changing work.

Sonny Sweet Scholarship Fund Sends Record Number to WYN Summer Camp

This summer, six students have the chance to go to WYN summer camp without paying a single penny thanks to the compassion and vision of the Sweet Family.

Four years ago, Sonny and Bricca Sweet decided to leave a legacy by investing in an endowment fund that would provide scholarships to low-income and high-achieving youth so they could attend WYN's six week summer adventure and leadership camp. This year marks a milestone in the realization of their vision and the growth in their endowment fund with a record of six deserving youth (four pictured below) receiving the scholarship. To the Sweet Family and everyone who has supported the Sonny Sweet Scholarship Fund, the youth and staff at WYN say "thank you!!!"



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 Woman Making Her Mark on the High Country

We are so proud to share that Wysteria White, WYN Board Member since 2014, was featured in March-April edition of the *All About Women* magazine as one of the "10 Women Making Their Mark on the High Country." Check out the inspiring article [here](#).



"With a name like Wysteria, how could you do anything except bloom where you're planted?"

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 Administration, Digital STB/Cases (Grant# 147970100057) and 5HF-FX (Grant # 11795020087)

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

