

Making an Impact through Innovation

Catawba County Social Services
Annual Report 2010-2011



To strengthen, with dignity and respect, the quality of life for all citizens through supportive services and advocacy.

A Message From Our Director

It is with great pride that I present our Fiscal Year 2010-2011 Annual Report. As you read it, I hope you will see how our staff is working to improve our efficiency and service through innovation.

We know the last year was a difficult one for many residents as the economic recession continues to cast a long shadow over Catawba County. The number of people receiving Food Assistance has grown from 7,929 in 2001-02 to 27,264 in 2010-11 due to increased need and expanded eligibility rules. Likewise, the number of county residents receiving Medicaid has grown from 23,117 a decade ago to 36,675 in 2010-11.

Our staff understands the importance of being good stewards of public funds. Our local county share of the budget is 3.9% compared to 4.39% in Fiscal Year 2009-2010. We continue to strive for excellence and continue to receive many national, state, and local awards for our innovative practices.

Additional information about our programs is now available on our website through a new informational tool, the Balanced Scorecard. This resource provides details on the many programs we administer, how many people we serve, our goals and vision. We invite you to take a closer look at what we do by going to <http://www.catawbacountync.gov/dss/doing.asp> and clicking on the Balanced Scorecard link.

In addition to serving the needs of the present, our department has partnered with other community groups to

plan for the future. In 2011, the Children’s Agenda Committee completed its work, outlining the needs of the children in our county.

Likewise, the Catawba County Aging Leadership Planning Team reported on the challenges that lie ahead if we are to become a senior-friendly community.

We recognize that government cannot meet all these needs alone. That is why we continue to seek the input and support of our citizens, businesses and community organizations. This year, our department partnered with other agencies and non-profits to draw attention to our most severe human needs.

We especially thank our Social Services Board members, shown below, for their guidance and encouragement.

At the back of this document, you will find a list of needs that are not adequately met by government programs. We encourage you to consider how you can help your neighbors in need by volunteering your time or making a donation.



John Eller, Director



Our Social Services Board Members



Michael Blackburn
Frye Regional
Medical Center CEO



Lynn Lail
County Commissioner
and Businesswoman



Chris Johnson
Catawba County Schools
Student Development
Coordinator and Founder of
Young People of Integrity

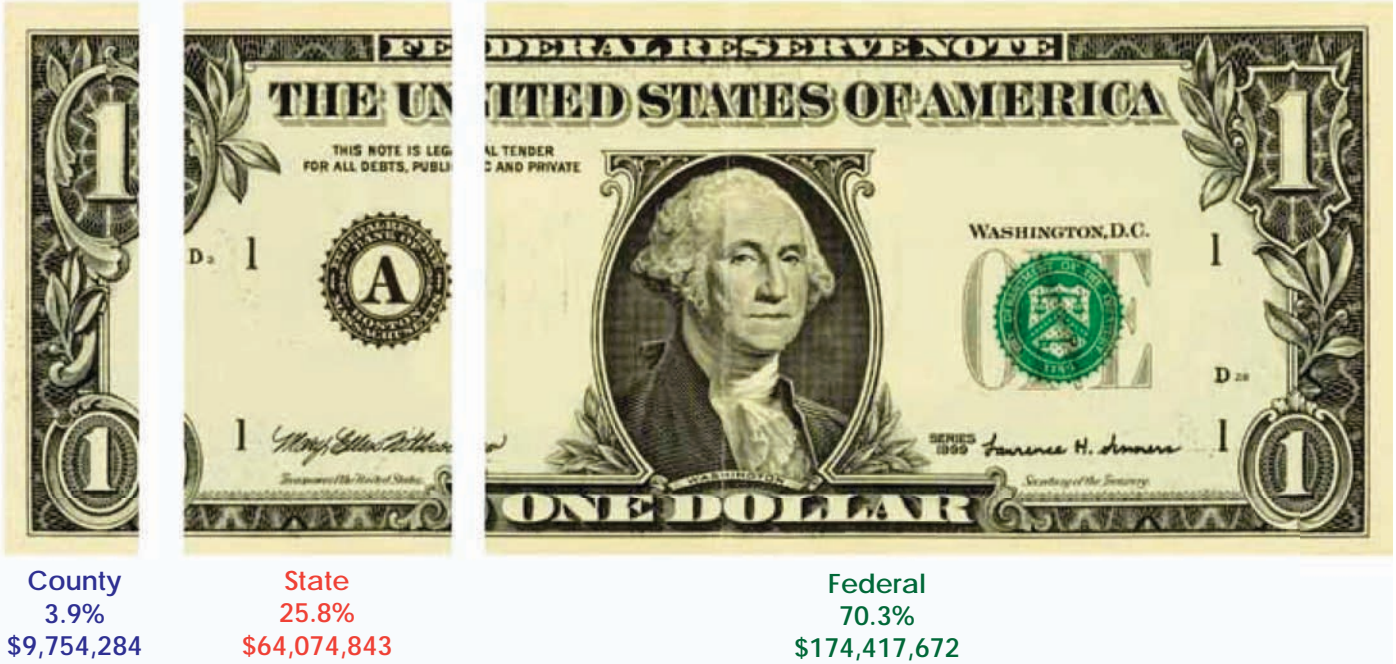


Jennie Connor
Catawba County
United Way
Executive Director

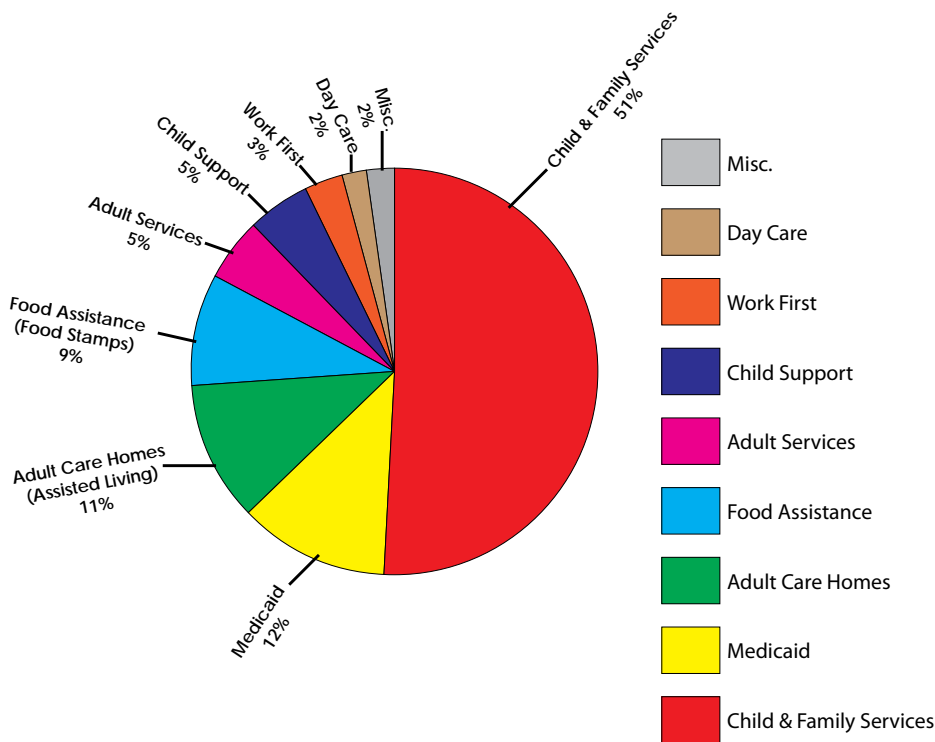


Linda Lutz
Catawba Valley
Community College
Director of Student
Engagement

Total Budget by Source



How Our Budget Is Spent



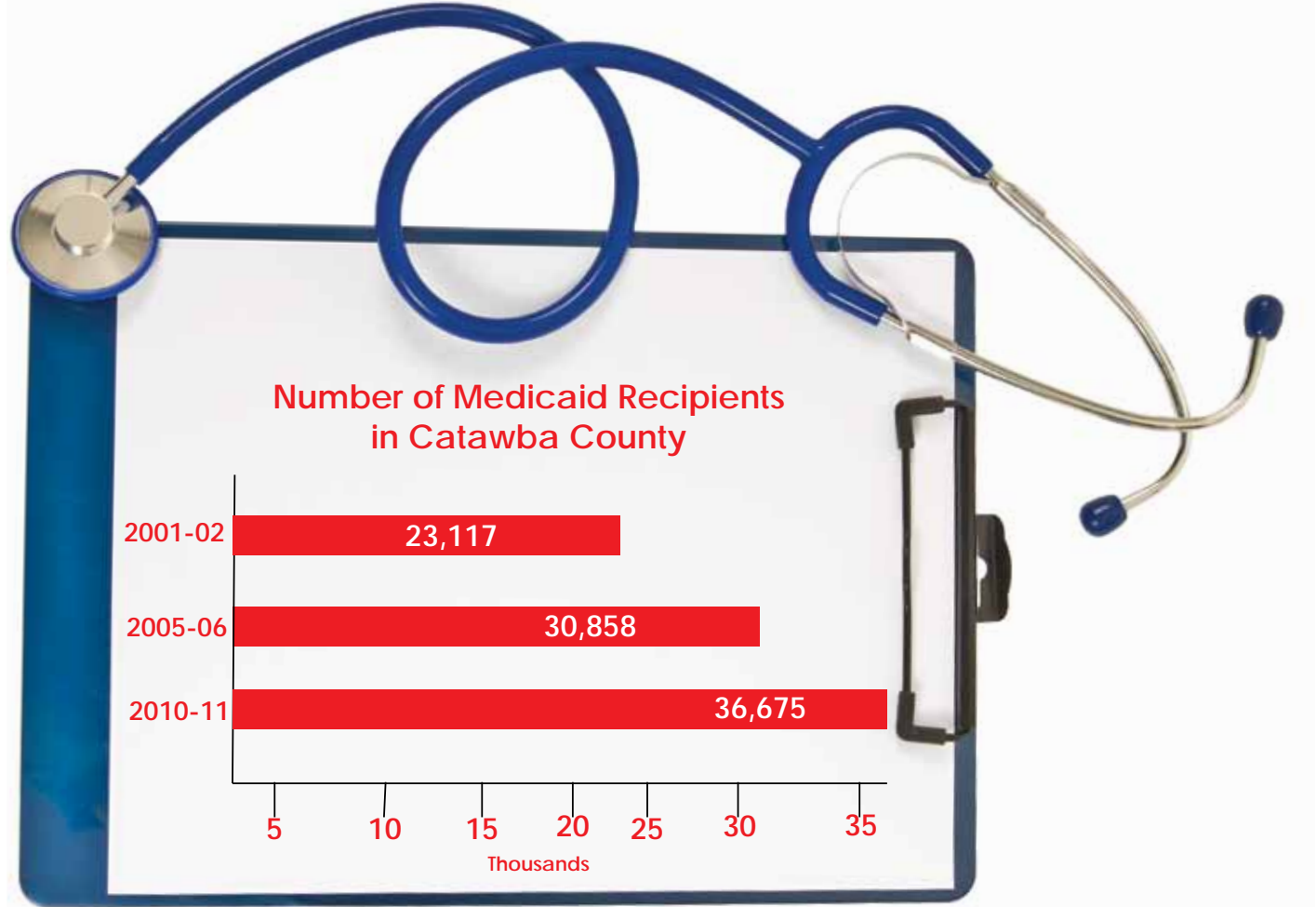
New Access to Information

We have created a new online tool to make our operations more transparent and accessible to the public. It is called the Balanced Scorecard and may be accessed through our website.

Just go to <http://www.catawba-countync.gov/dss/doing.asp>. Click on the “Balanced Scorecard” link to access a variety of data.

For example, the Balanced Scorecard includes the number of reports of suspected child abuse our department receives in a year. It also shows how many people receive **Food Assistance**, and how that number has grown. These facts and many more are available in the Balanced Scorecard.





Access to Services and Supports

36,675 citizens were approved for **Medicaid**, which enhanced their ability to meet their healthcare needs.

19,893 citizens, including children in foster care, received **Medicaid Transportation**, allowing them to access needed immunizations and medical services.

An average of 1,797 children per month were assisted with **Subsidized Child Care Services** to support the education and/or employment of their families.

The mental health needs of 1,215 children and their families were served through **Family NET**.

474 high-risk teens were served through **TEEN UP**, our after school and summer adolescent pregnancy prevention program. This poverty reduction strategy is the cornerstone of our designation as the only public Social Service Community Action Agency in North Carolina.

212 senior and/or disabled adults with nursing home level of care were able to remain in their home and be served through the **Community Alternatives Program (CAP)**, thus saving \$4,623,110 in Medicaid expenditures.

62 adult adoptees/family members received services provided by **Family Builders** to locate their biological families.

Providing Nutritional Services



Photo Illustration

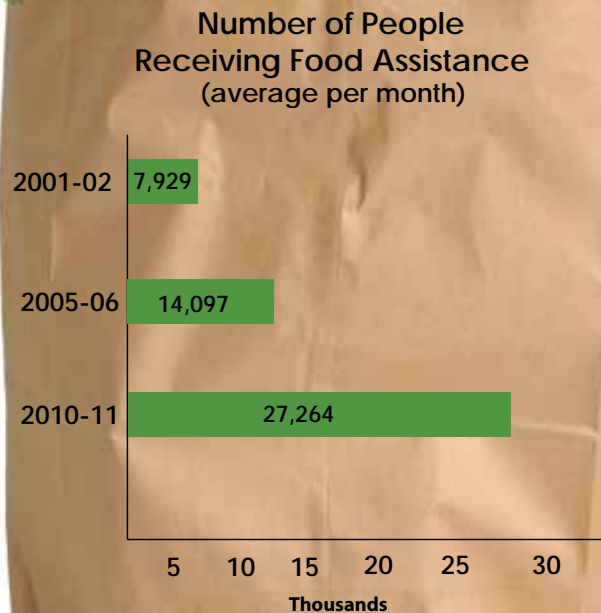
Benefits Help Feed Her Sons

“As a single parent, it has been a challenge to keep food on the table for my rapidly growing boys, who are 2 and soon-to-be 10 years old,” said one **Food Assistance** recipient.

“It was always a constant battle of feeding my boys or choosing to pay a bill, which should not ever be a decision that has to be made in any household.

“So I struggled with balancing the two evenly in an attempt to maintain my children first, then my household obligations. Food Assistance has been a blessing in disguise,” she said.

“I once was too proud to receive Food Assistance because I used to be able to afford anything I wanted with my earnings from my previous employment with an investment firm. I really think if I were not receiving Food Assistance, I would not be able to maintain my daily and monthly obligations.”



An average of 27,264 people per month received **Food Assistance** in 2010-11, compared to 7,929 in 2001-02.

1,275 adults received **Senior Nutrition** services, including Senior’s Morning Out, Meals on Wheels, Frozen Meals and Boost/Ensure supplements.

950 children eligible for free and reduced price school lunches were fed through **The Backpack Program** every weekend during the school year — in collaboration with BB&T, churches, schools, civic and community organizations.



Protecting Our Children

The **Children's Advocacy and Protection Center (CAPC)** was created through a creative merger in 2011 between two non-profits that work closely with our child welfare staff in the prevention of child abuse and the protection of children with serious physical and/or sexual abuse histories.

Catawba County Social Services helped establish the Children's Advocacy Center in 2004, and continues to provide operational support to the new CAPC. Together we are committed to reducing trauma for abused children through partnerships and use of the CAPC. Services include mental health services, as well as non-offending parent support on site.



Learn How You Can Prevent Child Sexual Abuse

Would you spend three hours to stop a sexual predator from abusing a child? A training program being offered in Catawba County can empower you to do just that.

This year, the CAPC began an ambitious plan to train 6,000 adults in Catawba County by 2015 in the Darkness to Light program. This training program

provides adults with the knowledge they need to prevent and recognize child sexual abuse. It is appropriate for all adults, but is especially encouraged for child-serving organizations, such as faith groups, youth recreational leagues, and anyone who regularly comes into contact with children or youth. For more information, visit the CAPC website at <http://www.catawbacountycapc.org>.

Caring for Our Children



For more information about how to report suspected child abuse or neglect, call **828-324-9111**.

Quick Facts

3,002 **Child Protective Services** reports were received involving 5,897 children. 91% of children did not experience repeat maltreatment, as compared to 86% in 08-09, through preventive in-home services that enhanced the parents' ability to care safely for their children.

170 children received **Foster Care** through our network of 70 family foster homes, 12 therapeutic foster homes and four group homes. These providers focus on keeping sibling groups together and keeping children in their home school.

93 children (98%) with high mental health needs remained safely in their own homes, avoiding hospitalization, as a result of **Family NET's Intensive In-Home Services**.

Preparing Children for Success



Laura and Dennis Davis of Conover adopted two sisters this year, bringing their family to five children. It's a busy household, but they say they wouldn't have it any other way. To find out more about adopting or fostering a child, contact Family Builders of Catawba Valley, our adoption and foster care program, at 828-465-8901.

Family Builders finalized 57 adoptions in FY 2010-2011.

88% of school-aged children in **Foster Care** had two or fewer school placement moves since they entered care.

106 children being educated at ACT (Newton Conover), Catawba Rosenwald (CREC) and Hickory Core Academy at the Arts and Magnet School were served with **Developmental Therapies** designed to promote pro-social behaviors and a return to their base school.

91 children (100%) receiving **School Social Work Services** improved school attendance and graduated to the next level.

Protecting Our Most Vulnerable Adults

92% of adults receiving **Adult Protective Services** (APS) cases did not experience a repeat incident of abuse, neglect or exploitation.

20 Adult Day Care/Day Health Centers and Adult Care Homes (Assisted Living facilities) demonstrated increased quality as evidenced by the fact that 100% of all concerns identified by Social Services did not escalate to a deficiency or violation.



For more information about how to report suspected abuse, neglect or exploitation of disabled adults, call 828-695-5609.



Succeeding through Innovation: Awards and Recognition

Family NET, Therapeutic Foster Care and Residential Services were noted for exemplary policies, procedures and quality work and received reaccreditation from the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF).

The Community Based Crisis Intervention Program received the National Association of Counties Achievement Award and the NC Association of County Commissioners Outstanding County Program Award for providing funds to low-income families in heating and cooling crises at three helping agencies located in different areas of the county to provide a more efficient and customer-friendly system.

The North Carolina Association of County Directors of Social Services presented its Best Practice Award for Cost Savings Measures and Improvements in Efficiency for our **Transportation Referral Information Program**. This program was developed in-house and is utilized by **Medicaid Transportation** staff to schedule client appointments. Creation of this automated system resulted in savings of county resources, including reduction of staff time and paper utilization.

The Educational Advocacy Program promotes school stability and achievement for children in foster care and received two major awards from the National Association of County Officials and an Outstanding County Program award from the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners.



The **Child Support Unit** and **TEEN UP** program received a joint National Association of County Officials Award for an innovative program to help prevent teen pregnancy. The program sparked discussion among teens and their peers regarding responsibilities of

providing financial support for children, and dispelled myths about government benefit programs.

The educational program helps change the culture of those most at risk for making potentially negative life decisions.

Other Evidence-Based Models of Care

Child Welfare staff engaged families in ongoing protection of their children, with new practical plans and heightened accountability, using the *Signs of Safety* model developed by Dr. Andrew Turnell.

Catawba County is participating in research by the Center for Adoption Support and Education to strengthen therapy and support to adopted children and their families.

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy Training is utilized in our Family NET mental health program to assist caregivers with solving problems with children regarding emotions and dysfunctional behaviors.

Our Award-Winning Meals on Wheels Volunteer



Congratulations to Winnie Hovey, winner of the Volunteer of the Year Award from the Meals on Wheels Association of America. Ms. Hovey, 92, is the oldest volunteer in Catawba County's **Meals on Wheels Program**.

Social Services made a video about her unquenchable desire to help others, which received the most votes in a Facebook contest. Thanks to Ms. Hovey, and the many other volunteers who make this service possible.



Meals on Wheels is now on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/MealsOnWheelsOfCatawbaCounty>.

For more information about how you can become a Meals on Wheels volunteer, call 828-695-6598.

Long Term Strategic Planning is Recognized



Holding the Best Practice Award for the Strategic Plan for Aging Citizens and the Action Plan for Children are (left to right): Rick Pilato, Beth Brandes, Dawn Wilson, Tami Hefner and John Eller.

Catawba County Social Services played a key role in 2010-11, in convening citizens and partner agencies to address the long-term needs of our community:

These plans were recognized with a Best Practice Award from the N.C. Association of County Directors of Social Services.

A Strategic Plan for Aging Citizens: Building a Livable and Senior-Friendly Community

With input from over 1000 surveys and in conjunction with 114 community citizens representing 65 organizations, a

strategic plan addressing eight key areas was completed. To see this plan, go to <http://www.catawbacountync.gov/dss/Adult/AgingPlan.pdf>.

An Action Plan for Children: Catawba County Children's Agenda and Data Snapshot

With input from 600 citizens, six key areas were identified, with strategies to address local concerns.

To see a copy of this plan, go to <http://www.catawba-countync.gov/dss/childagendareport.pdf>.



Innovating Through Community Partnerships

Early Childhood

The Sweetwater Early Childhood Center houses our **Early Childhood Support Team** of clinicians and educational therapists who provide support to 90 child care centers in the county and all Smart Start programs to promote early childhood education.

Child Wellbeing & Schools

The Child Wellbeing Project for reunified, guardianship and adoptive families is a partnership with The Duke Endowment. It includes **Success Coaches** (enhanced case management service for families) and **Educational Advocate** services. Located in all 44 schools in the county, Educational Advocates promote school stability and improved educational achievement for children in foster care and post-care.

School-Based Services are a long-standing collaboration with our three school systems to provide three Day Treatment sites.

Out-patient therapists from **Family NET** in area middle and high schools provide individual therapy and crisis services.

TEEN UP staff provide teen pregnancy prevention programs in 13 middle schools as well as community sites.

Child Abuse Protection

A multi-disciplinary team of child protection staff and local law enforcement officers meet to strengthen investigations of alleged criminal child abuse in partnership with the CAPC.

Social Services participates on various community taskforces, including the Community Domestic Violence Protocol and Review Team, Children's Protection and



Last summer, members of the TEEN UP Summer Camp and Senior Nutrition employees volunteered to help harvest vegetables at the HOPE (Help Our People Eat) community garden. The vegetables they harvested were distributed to Meals on Wheels recipients.

Fatality Review Team, and the Children's Advocacy and Protection Center Multi-Disciplinary Team.

An Enhanced Child Physical Abuse Protocol was adopted to provide screening and triage beyond state requirements. This change was implemented through a collaboration between law enforcement and **Child Protective Services**.

Social Services teamed with Young People of Integrity, Catawba County Champions of Education, Catawba County United Way, the three school systems in the county, and Catawba Valley Community College to create a **Lunch Buddy** mentoring program in our middle schools. The goals of this program are to improve grades and self-esteem, promote success in the classroom, and build accountability and responsibility, while at the same time decreasing the dropout rate, absenteeism, and suspensions.

Poverty Reduction

Social Services and other human service organizations participate in **Housing Visions: A Continuum of Care**, which organized a number of public events for Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week.

Your Turn: Helping Your Neighbors in Need

You can help us serve Catawba County's most vulnerable citizens by making a donation to one of these programs, or by volunteering your time. For more information, go to www.catawbacountync.gov/dss/HowYouCanHelp.asp or call one of the numbers below.

Grace McLeod Adult Services Fund

828-695-5609

Help our senior citizens and persons with disabilities in emergency situations by donating to this fund.

The Backpack Program

828-695-5648

Donate or volunteer to provide weekend meals during the school year for children who may be facing food insecurity.

Children's Book Station

828-695-5651

Donate new or gently used children's books to help children develop a love of reading. These books are placed in the Food Assistance (Food Stamps) lobby. Children are invited to read the books, and take a book home with them.

Erlene Sigmon Fund

828-465-9297

Help children involved with Child Protective Services who are facing an emergency situation by donating to this fund.

Family Builders of Catawba Valley

828-465-8901

Open your home and your heart to a child in need. Become a resource family and choose to foster, adopt, provide respite care or be a visiting resource for waiting children.

Foster Children's Expense Fund

828-695-4536

Help provide children in foster care with the extras that

make life memorable, such as school pictures, band instruments, piano lessons and Christmas gifts. Your donation makes it possible!

Gretchen Peed Scholarship Fund

828-695-4536

Help a child in foster care attain their dream of attending college by donating to this fund.

Meals on Wheels

828-695-6510

Make a donation to provide nutritious meals for homebound senior citizens, or volunteer to deliver meals.

LINKS

828-695-4546

Become a mentor with LINKS of Catawba County, an independent living skills development program for teens.

Nurturing Programs

828-695-4431

Support parent education efforts through group facilitation, childcare assistance or meal donations.

Seniors Morning Out

828-695-6510

Can you sing, play a musical instrument, or lead a craft activity? Share your talents with senior citizens. This program offers a nutritious meal and social activities.

TEEN UP

828-695-4418

Volunteer or donate to this program, which helps teenagers cope with the challenges of adolescence through fun and service-oriented activities.

Children's Advocacy and Protection Center

828-465-9296

Donate to help prevent and end child sexual abuse. You can also learn how to prevent or respond to suspected abuse by enrolling in the Darkness to Light training program.





Help Us Help Your Neighbors

You can now donate securely online to help your neighbors in need. Just go to <http://www.catawba-countync.gov/dss/HowYouCanHelp.asp> and click the “Donate Now” button. Your donation helps meet needs not covered by government funding.

You may also donate by writing a check to Catawba County Social Services and putting the fund name in the memo line. Checks may be mailed to Catawba County Social Services, P.O. Box 669, Newton, NC 28658.

