

# Catawba County Social Services

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



2009 Annual Report

# A Word from the Director

At almost all levels, the subject of economic instability has dominated news headlines during 2009. This year, the citizens of Catawba County have been especially hard-hit, with the unemployment rate increasing to unprecedented levels. More people need assistance and more families are hurting. Not only has the financial strain put pressure on citizens, but also on the Department of Social Services. Despite financial difficulties resulting from limited funding, we have achieved some remarkable outcomes.



This report, which marks the completion of my first year with the Department, is characterized by growth and change. We are fortunate to have a wonderful staff that places a priority on their work so the lives of citizens in this community might be enhanced.

Our guiding mission is to strengthen, with dignity and respect, the quality of life for all citizens through supportive services and advocacy. We strive to continue to be a model of excellence focused on achieving positive results, ensuring effective communication with internal and external partners, engaging our staff in seeking solutions through teamwork, innovation, and inclusive decision-making, all while remaining a responsive and respectful place to work and for clients to seek help.

The Social Services Board has set the following goals for the agency:

- Vulnerable children are in safe, nurturing, financially stable environments.
- Citizens will become or remain economically independent.
- Vulnerable citizens and disabled adults are safe and have opportunities to remain in their own homes.
- Citizens will be knowledgeable of and satisfied with Social Services.
- Social Services will operate with the highest standards of effectiveness and efficiency.
- Children and families will have access to nurturing, education, support and treatment services to maximize family functioning.

From these goals, departmental outcomes are developed annually by working with Staff, the Board of Social Services, Commissioners, and County Management to determine specific directions and focus for the Department. I am pleased to report that for the 2008-2009 fiscal year, our staff realized an achievement rate of 96.7 percent of the Department's outcomes, and I praise them for their work.

Karyn Yaussy completed her term on the Social Services Board as our chair, and I would be remiss if I did not thank her for her outstanding leadership during her tenure on the Board. With this, we welcomed a new board member, Linda Lutz with CVCC, who will join the remaining four board members: Glenn Barger, Chris Johnson, Dan McEachran, and Jennie Connor, our new board chair. I would like to thank each board member for their dedication to and support of the Department, our staff, and our community.

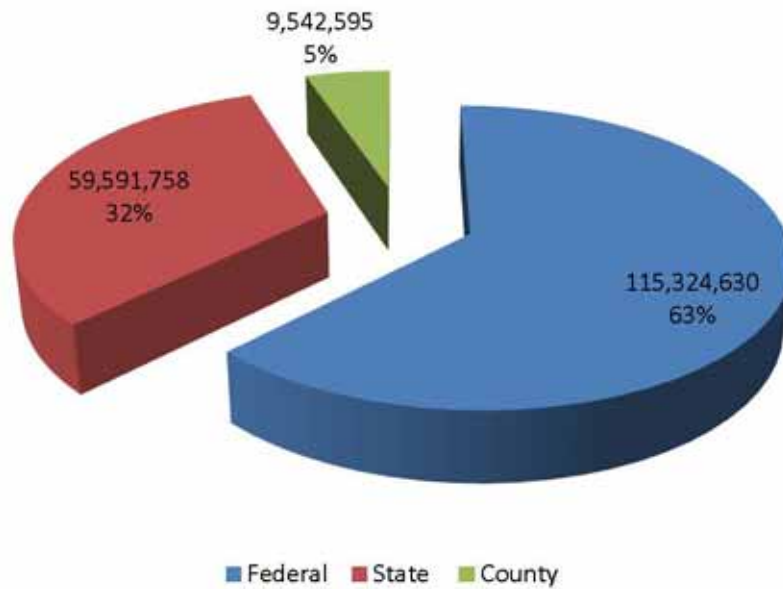
As I come to the end of my first year of service, I am grateful to be a part of such a wonderful Department, County, and community. Thank you for making Catawba County such an outstanding place to work, serve, and live.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "John Eller". The signature is fluid and cursive.

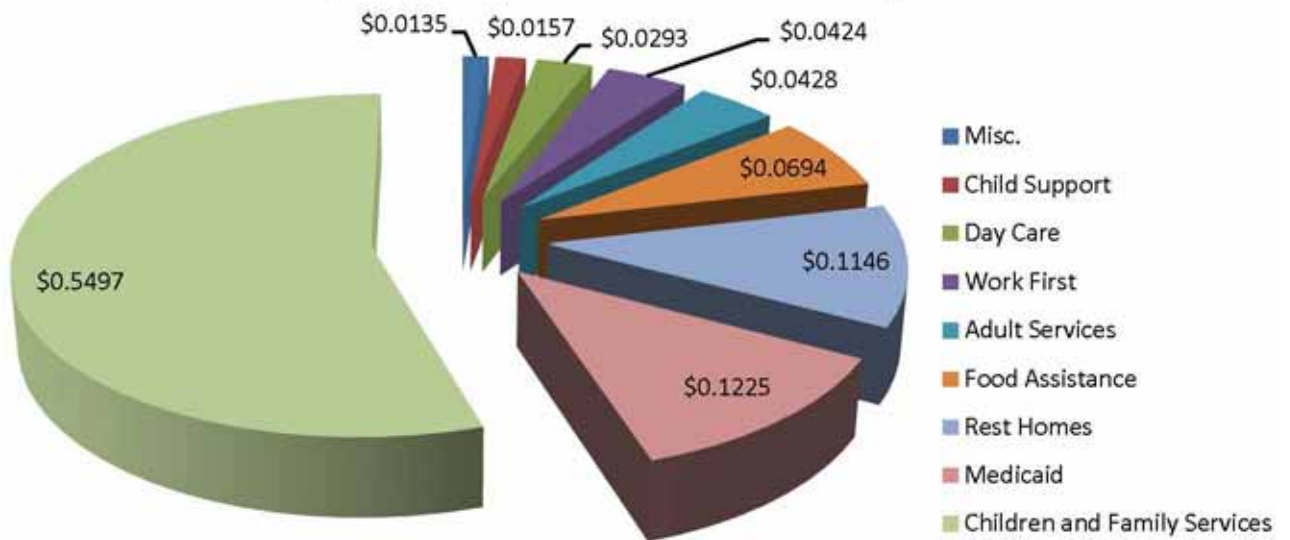
John Eller, Director

# Efficiently Utilizing Resources

## Total Appropriations by Source



## How \$1 dollar of Tax Revenue is Spent



# Adult Services and Family Support

***Protecting the elderly and disabled and giving them a choice to remain in their home.***

***Maintaining those unable to care for themselves and helping the able become self-sufficient.***

## **Access to Medical Care**

Provides access to medical attention for Medicaid customers. Assists families and children in getting access to medical and dental coverage.

- Assisted 7,960 elderly and disabled individuals in accessing and paying for medical care.
- Citizens received \$94.2 million in medical services, with the largest portion going to pay for nursing home care.
- 81% of Catawba County's elderly and disabled population who qualify for Medicaid have been identified and are being served.
- Over \$3.4 million in Medicaid expenditures were avoided by providing opportunities for senior and disabled citizens to remain at home through the provision of Community Alternatives Program Services as opposed to entering a nursing home
- 23,880 children and their caretakers were assisted in FY2009 in the various Family Medicaid programs.
- 94% of Catawba County's uninsured children have been identified and assisted under the various Medicaid programs for children.
- 3,706 children were provided medical coverage under the NC Health Choice program.
- 17,292 citizens receiving Medicaid were linked with a primary care physician to coordinate their medical care.
- Transportation to medical services was provided and/or arranged for 17,689 Medicaid eligible citizens.

## **In-Home Services and Adult Day Care**

Provides elderly and disabled adults the option to stay in their homes rather than seek out-of-home placement.

- 618 senior, disabled and/or visually impaired citizens were able to remain safely at home through the provision of needed services including case management, in-home aide, supplies, equipment and adult day care services.

## **Protection**

Ensures that elderly and disabled adults are able to live healthy, independent, and productive lives, free from abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

- Provided emergency and/or essential services to 221 adults who were abused, neglected and/or exploited and in need of protection.
- Provided information and referral, educational services and social work assistance to 140 older/disabled individuals who were vulnerable to prevent abuse, neglect or exploitation.



### **Did you know...**

North Carolina Health Choice is a health insurance program that serves children from working families. These families earn too much money to qualify for Medicaid, but cannot afford private health insurance. The families must meet specific guidelines and the children must be under age 19. The program is free to most. Some families, with higher incomes, must pay an annual premium, which can never exceed \$100 (regardless of number of children enrolled from the family).

North Carolina has limited funds available for N.C. Health Choice. Because of the capped funding, a waiting list may be instituted at any time when the program reaches or exceeds its funding limits.

# Adult Services and Family Support, cont.

## Senior Nutrition

Offers nutritious meals, education, socialization, and health and wellness services to meet needs of seniors so that they can remain in their own homes.

- A total of 157,337 meals were provided to 1700 older adults participating in Senior's Morning Out, Home Delivered Meals, Frozen Meals and Nutritional Supplements to reduce isolation and increase independence.

### By the Numbers: How You Can Help Meals on Wheels

\$2.75 = Cost per Meal

\$19.25 = Cost for one week, one meal/day

\$85.25 = Cost for one month, one meal/day

1,777 volunteers provided assistance with the nutrition programs.

*A small investment, which yields a high reward.*

## Financial Assistance, Child Support, Day Care, Work First, and Food Assistance

Ensures that non-custodial parents acknowledge and accept financial responsibility for supporting their children. Ensures safe, quality, accessible and affordable childcare for children. Helps citizens become or remain self-sufficient and to take responsibility for themselves and their families by linking them with resources, skills, and training. Prevents dependency on public assistance by providing short-term crisis assistance to eligible citizens.

- \$14,229,515 in Child Support payments was collected for local children.
- The lives of 2,953 children were enriched by the provision of Day Care Scholarships.
- \$6,488,062 was paid to over 130 local day care providers for the care provided to these children.
- 603 families (1,346 persons) received cash assistance to support their families while they trained for employment or applied for Social Security Disability.

- 5,441 families in crisis situations were assisted by Work First staff (through collaboration with ECCCM, CCM, and Salvation Army) avoiding eviction, loss of utilities, etc.
- 267 families were diverted from ongoing public assistance payments by the provision of one-time emergency assistance.
- \$26,497,757 in Food Assistance benefits were provided to 27,461 local citizens to alleviate hunger and malnutrition.
- 12,043 Food Assistance applications were processed—with an average processing time of 6.9 days
- Identified and investigated over 366 cases of Public Assistance fraud; generating \$243,750 in savings and collections.

### By the Numbers: Food Assistance

8,959 Monthly Households (Avg)

19,578 Monthly Individuals (Avg)

\$284 Monthly Payment per Household (Avg)

\$26,497,757 Total Value of Food Assistance issued



# Family and Children's Services

*Preventing family problems and helping children have a safe, permanent home.*

## Child Protective Services (CPS)/Family Preservation

Ensures that children in Catawba County will reach their full potential by having safe, permanent and nurturing families who will provide for their child's physical, medical, emotional and educational needs.

- 88% of families served did not experience a recurrence of child maltreatment within a twelve month period.
- Family Reunification Program and Intensive Family Preservation provided in-home services to 23 families in need. All 23 families (100%) maintained their children in the home.

### By the Numbers: Child Protective Services FY2009

2801	Number of Reports Received
5618	Number of Children Involved
1954	Number of Reports Assessed/Accepted
3928	Number of Children Involved
10%	Reports of Abuse (Includes instances of burns, fractures, internal injuries, and sexual abuse)
90%	Reports of Neglect (Includes instances of injurious environment, lack of supervision, and parental substance use)

## Residential Treatment

Provides high quality therapeutic interventions for abused, neglected, dependent, and/or court involved youth needing family reunification and/or residential treatment in 5 county owned group homes.

- 51 youths served in FY08-09.

## Permanency Planning

Ensures safe, permanent, nurturing families for children.

- As of July 1, 2009, 82% of all children in foster care were living in a family-like setting rather than facility placement.
- 85% of school-aged children in foster care demonstrated academic progress in FY08-09.
- 149 children left foster care in FY08-09:
  - 52% were reunified with a parent or other relative. (88% were reunified within one year.)
  - 39% were adopted (19% by relatives)
- 83 licensed regular foster homes
- 9 licensed therapeutic foster homes
- A total of 58 children were adopted in FY08-09. (Nearly double the national and state average.)



# Family and Children's Services, cont.

## Making a Difference in Young Lives

Steven Parker entered foster care at the age of thirteen. He lived in three different placements until being adopted by his final foster family at age 16.



In May 2009, one hundred young people who had been in foster care were named Outstanding Young Leaders of 2009 in celebration of National Foster Care Month. The recipients from all across the U.S. were honored by FosterClub, the national network for youth in foster care, for their leadership, accomplishments, educational achievement, and community service. Steven was among those who received this distinguished honor.

Steven served as the youth representative on the Catawba County DSS team that participated in the National Casey Breakthrough Series Collaborative on Safety and Risk. He helped the agency gain a better understanding of the child protective services and foster care experience from the youth perspective. Steven worked closely with the team to develop tools and strategies that social workers can use to better engage with youth and families. Steven is a leader among his peers and an advocate for children in foster care.

## Early Childhood Support Team

Provided educational, behavioral, and health consultative services to 2,749 children ages birth to 5 years enrolled in child care programs.

Consultative services were provided to 63 licensed programs to maintain/improve quality:

- 1 program improved their quality star rating
- 56 programs maintained their quality star rating
- 6 programs moved from a temporary license to a 4 or 5 star rating.

### Did you know...

The Early Childhood Support Team (ECST) received a Best Practice Award for Profiles in Community Collaboration from the NC Association of County Directors of Social Services.

ECST, funded by Smart Start, brings together professionals from different agencies and disciplines to provide educational, clinical, and health and safety services to childcare programs, children ages birth to five years old, and families.

## Prevention Services

Teen Up Social Workers equip youth with accurate, current information to prevent risky behavior. Teen Up provides weekly or bi-weekly psycho-educational groups to 400 youth throughout Catawba County, preparing them to make informed, healthy decisions.

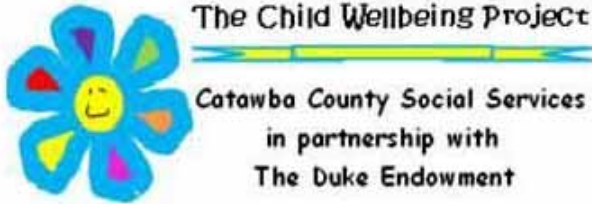
Department of Human Resources (DHR) Social Workers reduce barriers that impact student academic success. DHR provides individual work with students, parent and school consultation, and case management services to the family. Because of the DHR Team's work with close to 250 children and their families, students improved academics, families strengthened connections to the schools, and referrals were made to needed resources.



# Family and Children's Services, cont.

## Therapeutic Foster Care

Provides specialized treatment for youth in foster care with high emotional and/or behavioral needs. Licensed foster parents receive additional training and supervision in order to maintain and provide treatment services in their homes. Youth remain connected to their families and the community and are provided the opportunity to return to their families more quickly. The number of licensed families doubled this past year, but the need is even greater. The program is nationally accredited through the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF).



## Child Wellbeing Project

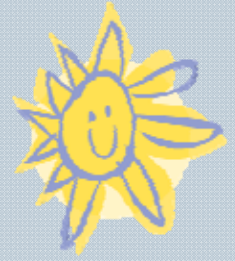
Catawba County Social Services is serving as the site for a long-term research project, "The Child Wellbeing Project," in partnership with The Duke Endowment. This project will provide an array of evidence-based and informed services to children who exit foster care to a permanent placement and their families, with the goal of improving outcomes as they reach adulthood through recommended interventions in services.

Because there is little research on post-care services this project has attracted the attention of nationally recognized child welfare experts as consultants and evaluators. The National Implementation Research Network (NIRN), based at the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute at UNC Chapel Hill, is providing technical assistance around implementation of the service array and Independent Living Resources, Inc. in Durham, N.C. is serving as project evaluator.

## By the Numbers:

### The Children's Advocacy Center

Catawba County's Children's Advocacy Center responds to sexual and severe physical abuse of children in Catawba County.



CHILDREN'S  
ADVOCACY CENTER

In the past year...

- 263 Children were interviewed by using a multi-disciplinary approach to investigation, treatment and case resolution
- 122 Children received on-site medical exams
  - Child friendly environment reduces anxiety associated with a medical examination
  - More accurate history when making a medical diagnosis and determining appropriate treatment
- 407 Hours of on-site mental health assessments and treatment
  - Address and reduce any negative effects on behavior and development
- 795 Hours of professional development training to 18 team members, involving 5 disciplines
  - Team members stay current on best practice methods and research
- 34 Non-offending parents/caretakers received education and support
  - Non-offending parents/caretakers able to provide crucial support to child's healing
- 100 Adults trained in an evidenced based sexual abuse primary prevention program (Darkness to Light)
  - Positive changes in adult's child-protective behaviors over the long-term

# Family N.E.T.

*Empowering each individual to achieve within the limits of his or her own capabilities.*



Family N.E.T. provides a comprehensive network of nurturing, educational, and treatment services to enhance the emotional, behavioral, and interpersonal functioning of children, youth, and their families in Catawba County.

## Adolescents and Children in Treatment (A.C.T. and CREC)

The Day Treatment Programs in Catawba County, ACT (Adolescents and Children in Treatment) and the Life Coach Program at Catawba Rosenwald Educational Center both work cooperatively with the county school districts. ACT is a day treatment program assisting families and children (grades K-12) in learning appropriate behavior skills in order to be successful in a regular school setting, home and the community.

- 73 children/adolescents served

## Outpatient Services

The services provided by Outpatient Services staff include individual, family and group therapy to children and teens residing in Catawba County. These services are divided into two components: Traditional Outpatient Services and Post Adoption Services.

**Children and Adolescent Services** provides standard outpatient services, including medication management and psychotherapy, to children and youth with serious mental and emotional problems.

Therapists are co-located in schools throughout Catawba County.

- 1,176 children/adolescents served

**Post Adoptions Services** are designed to enhance the emotional, behavioral and interpersonal functioning of adoptive families, prevent adoption disruptions, and ensure the stability of the family. The unit was established to ensure the wellbeing of children who have been adopted. Many of the services are provided in the homes of the children and families served. Support groups and parent education are vital components of this service.

- 93 children and families served



## The Power of Persistence

Jordan came to ACT due to having been expelled after 1 1/4 hours of kindergarten his first day of school. This is a young child who had been severely neglected as well as abused physically, sexually and emotionally. He was removed from his biological parents at 2 years of age and subsequently adopted. Upon initially arriving at ACT, he was unable to follow simple directions, had severe sensory issues, did not want to be touched, exhibited symptoms of attachment disorder and frequently urinated or defecated in his pants. Several times per day, when confused or frustrated, he would have tantrums in which he would throw himself on the ground, scream, hit, spit, kick and try to run away.

After intensive treatment at ACT over a two year period, Jordan has progressed developmentally from a 2 1/2 year old to a 7 year old. In addition, he has developed a positive self-esteem and a strong sense of self as well as being highly motivated to learn despite a learning disability. Socially, he has developed healthy positive relations with both peers and adults. He is not only able to receive affection but give it as well. Upon reaching adulthood, it is Jordan's intention to become President of the United States as well as have a college named after him. His adoptive mother recently wrote, "Thank you from every inch of my body and soul for giving Jordan that belief in himself and his happiness."

# Family N.E.T., cont.

## Adolescent & Substance Abuse Services

Services for juvenile court involved and substance abusing youth as well as women with substance abuse problems.

**Department of Juvenile Justice Outpatient Services** is a program supported by our local Juvenile Crime Prevention Council (JCPC), to provide psychological evaluations, outpatient psychotherapy services, and outpatient substance abuse treatment to youth.

- 209 consumers served

**Substance Abuse Intensive Outpatient Services (SAIOP)**, located at Catawba Valley High School, is a service provided in collaboration with Hickory Public Schools, and provides intensive treatment services three days per week to youth who have significant substance abuse problems.

- 27 adolescents served

**Catawba Valley High School (CVHS) Outpatient Services** is partially funded by a contract with Hickory Public Schools. Staff work with youth at CVHS to deal with factors that prevent them from being able to complete their education and participate fully in their communities.

- 42 adolescents served

**Substance Abuse Treatment** services include individual and group counseling, evaluation and case management to individuals who have a substance abuse disorder and are either pregnant, have custody of minor children, are actively seeking custody of minor children, or applying for Work First Public Assistance.

- 41 consumers served



## Community Based Services

Services designed to assist families with children and youth that have significant mental and emotional disorders. Assists parents in dealing with the mental disorders of their children.

**Intensive In-Home Services** is a team-based service working with families of children with severe and persistent mental and emotional disorders. The purpose of this service is to maintain youth in the least restrictive, most normative environment with services provided to the family in the home, school and community.

- 36 families served

**Community Support Services** provides comprehensive treatment services to high needs children and adolescents to prevent disruption in the home and improve functioning in the school, home, and/or community. These are Medicaid-defined services. Community Support is required for children who are in Enhanced services, such as residential, day treatment, and therapeutic care.

- 184 consumers served

## The Positive Influence of Intervention

Tom\* came into services with Family NET following 30+ days in juvenile detention. Tom was in middle school at the time, was a polysubstance abuser, spent more time suspended from school than in, and was pending charges as a juvenile sex offender. Tom became involved in basic outpatient services including such interventions as individual and family therapy, psychiatric services, substance abuse treatment, and the Sex Abuse Intervention Program (SAIP). In the beginning phases of his treatment, Tom was resistant and continued to cause problems in the school and community; however, small gains were being seen. Within 18 months of services, Tom was drug free, and having been moved to an alternative school setting, was attending school regularly with passing grades. Within 24 months of beginning services, Tom remained drug free, was on the A-B honor roll at school, and was near completion of the SAIP. Over the past 18 months, Tom completed the SAIP program, successfully completed his probation with the Department of Juvenile Justice, and in June of this year was the first member of his immediate family to graduate high school. He has plans to enter the U.S. Army in the near future.

*\*Name changed to protect confidentiality*

# Lend Your Support...Volunteer!

## *The opportunity of a lifetime...*

We're blessed with many volunteers...each with a heart of gold and a warm story to tell, but never enough to reach all of those in need in our community. It is said, "Every passing day is one that is gone forever. Make sure it is one in which you have done something for others, especially those who cannot do for themselves." Volunteers epitomize this admirable lifestyle.

Social Services shares a mission with its volunteers. Together we serve the public to improve social problems in a spirit of generosity and mutual respect.

Last year, over 1100 volunteers partnered with Social Services to help improve the quality of life in Catawba County. Men, women, and children just like YOU are the links connecting people, organizations and resources to build a world where all people can live free and dignified lives. It wouldn't—and couldn't—be done without you.

## **Become a Volunteer!**

Volunteer for or support one of the many opportunities provided by Social Services to serve our neighbors and be involved in our communities.

**Grace McLeod Adult Services Fund** 828-695-5609  
Helping senior citizens and the disabled in emergency situations.

**Children's Advocacy Center** 828-465-9296  
Donations help support efforts to prevent and end child sexual abuse.

**Children's Book Station** 828-695-5651  
Thousands of families with young children visit the Food Assistance office each month requesting assistance. The lobby has a small book station that the children may enjoy, and they may take the book home with them if they do not finish it during their visit. Donated children's books are greatly appreciated.

**Earlene Sigmon Fund** 828-465-9297  
Taking donations for children in need. Coordinated by the Children's Protection Council.

**Family and Children's Services** 828-695-5602  
Internships opportunities for BSW and MSW students.

**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  
Donations help provide children in foster care with the extras that make life memorable, such as school pictures, band instruments, piano lessons, field trips, ballet lessons, and Christmas gifts.

**Gretchen Peed Scholarship Fund** 828-695-4536  
You can help a child in foster care attend college through this scholarship fund.

**Home Delivered Meals** 828-695-4435  
Deliver nutritious meals to the home bound disabled and elderly. Donations help to expand this service to more seniors.

**LINKS** 828-695-4546  
If you love working with teenagers, witnessing personal growth in others, and having fun working in a group atmosphere, consider volunteering as a mentor with LINKS of Catawba County, an independent living skills development program.

**Nurturing Programs** 828-695-4431  
Opportunities to support parent education efforts through group facilitation, childcare assistance or product donations.

**Seniors Morning Out** 828-695-5617  
Help serve senior citizens during this program's activities, socials and nutritious meals.

**TEEN UP and Upward Connection** 828-695-4418  
Parent volunteers and other adults help teenagers cope with the challenges of adolescence through fun and service-oriented activities.

# Catawba County Social Services

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



## **Catawba County Social Services**

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