

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Community Meal Fights Watauga County Hunger**

Western Watauga Food Outreach, a new non-profit charity that is trying to combat poverty and hunger in Western Watauga County, is going to have its Grand Opening Community Meal on September 10th at the Western Watauga Community Center on 1081 Old US Hwy 421, Sugar Grove, NC 28679. The event will run from 4:00-6:30pm.

The WWFO was founded to combat the startling reality of poverty and food insecurity in Watauga county. In 2011, the Appalachian District Health Report measured the number of school children enrolled in free or reduced lunch programs at 41.3%, and the situation hasn't noticeably improved since then. Many of these students are not sufficiently well fed at home because they live too far away from a food distribution center for existing outreach programs to help them. The WWFO's distribution model will make food resources more locally accessible in an effort to relieve this problem.

The WWFO began distributing food boxes, offering tastings, and serving community meals in March of this year. Their accomplishments so far are due to the commitment of the Hunger and Health Coalition, the Hospitality House, Quiet Givers, Henson's Chapel, and Valle Crucis Methodist Church to take care of the hungry people in the Western Watauga area . Additionally, financial support and generous grant funding from The Duke Endowment and Women's Fund of the Blue Ridge have sustainably funded this Outreach Project for the next 3 years.

The Grand Opening meal is open to anyone who would like to come out and support the cause. Attendees in need may take a food box home with them. Local gardeners are encouraged to participate by sharing the bounty from their late summer harvests.

According to the US Census Bureau, 26.3% of people in Watauga County live below the federal poverty level. With the community's support, the Western Watauga Food Outreach program hopes to put an end to hunger in Watauga County.

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