Wayne Brothers, Inc. – “Building Together in Pursuit of Excellence” – is a recognized and prominent leader in the construction industry that has provided concrete solutions throughout the Southeast for over 31 years. As their motto states, they are “Pioneering Proactive Solutions” by developing an opportunity for a successful Innovative Partnership with the NextGen Youth Services of Centralina Workforce Development Board and Kannapolis City Schools to expose students to new career opportunities that will lead to full time employment while increasing workforce diversity. Their partnership is known as W.I.N. Partnership: Workforce Innovation Nextgeneration.

In 2016, Wayne Brothers was highlighted by the NC Chamber of Commerce as having a leading apprenticeship program which offers education and advancement opportunities. This allows each employee to achieve long-term career goals. Apprentices in their program earn 15 credit hours that can be applied to a college degree. Additionally, Wayne Brothers developed a pre-apprenticeship program to provide school-aged students the chance to learn in the classroom and gain on-the-job experience to better prepare them for their education and career.

NCWorks-Centralina NextGen services is a resource for eligible youth ages 16 – 24 that was leveraged, providing paid work experience, soft skills, and on-the-job training. NextGen services has a goal to ensure that our next generation of youth have the tools and skills they need to be adequate in the workforce. Career Development Specialists provide individualized mentoring, leadership and financial literacy guidance.

Kannapolis City Schools hosted a college and career signing day for high school seniors to help determine if they will attend college or enter the workforce after graduation. A representative from area businesses like Centralina Workforce Development Board, Rowan Cabarrus Community College, NC Manufacturing Institute, Cabarrus Regional Chamber of Commerce and other community leaders attended the event to extend their support.

The partnership has several goals: meet the needs of local industry, provide a diverse workforce, and respond to changes in economic conditions, skills and employment opportunities. Through the innovative partnership of a school system, a workforce development organization, and a private employer, these goals were accomplished with over thirty students that have entered the Wayne Brothers Pre-apprenticeship program, twenty-two successfully completing the program and another twenty-eight interested in the next academic calendar year.
Outstanding Young Adult

Amy Bryan

Swansea, SC
Oconaluftee Job Corps
Southwestern Workforce Development Board

This impressive, humble, young woman has already accomplished much in life to enable her to reach her long-term personal goals as well as contribute to her family. Amy left high school prior to graduating to better assist her family, but knew that she would need to continue her education to be able to earn a living for herself and family. Amy researched Job Corps and enrolled at the Oconaluftee Job Corps in Cherokee, NC.

With courage, hard work, and tenacity she has pursued her education and career goals. While at Oconaluftee, she excelled in the forestry/fire vocational training program and, while out on detail, she completed her high school education. Her days were spent fighting fires, marking timber, and clearing trails; then walking to gain access to a computer to do her school work. She gained training in wilderness area management, tree climbing, timber marking, recreation campground maintenance, trail construction, and the National Incident Command System. Additionally, she trained in non-wilderness area recreation management and became a Fire Fighter Type 2.

Training she received at Allegheny National Forest in Northwestern Pennsylvania and Uwharrie National Forest in Montgomery County, NC resulted in her being accepted into the Savannah River program in New Ellenton, SC. Her excellent performance during her time at Savannah River resulted in the offer of a G-5/6/7 Forestry Technician position where she currently works.

Amy leads by example and shows everyone what is possible when you step out of your comfort zone. She successfully graduated from Oconaluftee Job Corps and is well on track with her career which offers her opportunities for continued growth.
Jordan Shoffner is the definition of perseverance, gratitude, graciousness, servant leadership, and grit with a smile. He has proven to himself and others that he can and does accomplish anything he puts his mind to.

Jordan provided valuable service to the community, demonstrated leadership, has been an exceptional student progressing and earning his high school GED, and excelled at his work. Jordan is consistently responsible, motivated, grounded, mature, socially attuned to the concerns and needs of other people, all while himself, a 17-year old homeless youth.

Jordan was enrolled in the NextGen youth program while attending the Jordan Matthews Online High School with the goal of earning his high school diploma. After enrolling in the Randolph Community College HiSet/GED program, he met his goal in less than two months and is college and career ready.

While enrolled in the HiSet/GED program, he also completed a work experience with the Habitat for Humanity ReStore where he was the ReStore Retail Assistant. Jordan worked up to 34 hours per week and was known as a dedicated employee, where every evaluation submitted by his supervisor described him as hard-working and excellent at following directions.

Jordan continues to be actively involved with leadership activities hosted by the NextGen program and participates in community service events, especially ones focusing on partnering with Habitat for Humanity to assist with building homes. Jordan continues to extend himself and offers other participants rides to job sites and community service projects.

Jordan is an extremely giving and caring person who visibly wants what's best for anyone he encounters needing assistance. He always makes himself available and is willing to help.

He now plans to continue his education and obtain a certification to find stable full-time employment. His plans are to attend Forsyth Technical Community College in October for the Electrical Lineman program, with the hope of employment in this field immediately after completion of the program. Currently, Jordan is working part-time at Heritage Housing.

Jordan is an outstanding young man always willing to help others. Even when times are challenging for Jordan, his compassion and kindness outshine everyone around him. Through his perseverance, service, scholarship, and work, Jordan has demonstrated he is a deserving recipient of this Outstanding Teen Award.
Regina Durham has demonstrated extraordinary strength and resolve to overcome tremendous challenges and to achieve life-changing goals. Despite her workforce journey requiring her to confront financial struggle along with serious health issues, she completed training that increased her marketability and employability, and she persevered to secure full-time employment. While many people in similar circumstances might have given up, her motivation, drive, and faith were too strong to allow these obstacles to deny her opportunity.

When Regina connected with NCWorks, she had exhausted her unemployment insurance and other financial resources, but had not been successful in obtaining reemployment in her field. She recognized that the employment opportunities in which she was interested required additional training. She also needed to obtain employment to support herself, while pursuing this training. Regina would have to complete training and obtain employment, while enduring exhausting medical treatments.

Regina and her case manager identified AutoCAD as the training that would be necessary to update her skills and lead to reemployment in her field of interior design. They also outlined a plan to obtain an immediate position that would support her during training. Regina was always receptive to advice regarding her resume and employment search, even adjusting her treatment schedule to go to interviews.

Regina became a participant in July 2018, and completed her training (AutoCad level 1, 2 and 3) by November. She also secured full-time employment as a Therapeutic Coach with Easter Seals that same month, providing the immediate financial support needed.

Regina was determined not to let her challenges dictate her life. She would often say, “This is my life and I’m going to make the best out of it”. Regina continues to work full-time in the position she obtained while in training, and will sit for the AutoCad licensing exam once all her treatments and hospital stays are behind her. She is well on her way to her dream job in interior design.
Outstanding Employer
Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians
Tribal Employment Rights Office
Cherokee, NC
Oconaluftee Job Corps
Southwestern Workforce Development Board

With over 20 million Americans battling addictions and 2.6 million fighting addictions to both alcohol and drugs, the recent opioids crisis has placed a spotlight on the many barriers of those currently in the battle. Western North Carolina has been hit particularly hard by opioids. The Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians - Tribal Employment Rights Office (TERO) works with tribal members who are battling drug and alcohol addictions or have been involved with the justice system. The Qualla Boundary, the Cherokee reservation home to roughly 8,000 people in the Great Smoky Mountains of western North Carolina, was one of 10 locations across the country identified last year as a “high intensity drug trafficking area” by the Office of National Drug Control Policy.

TERO assists clients with employability skills, mentoring, mental health services, and job placement with the possibility of a one year internship. Clients can obtain their GED through TERO and continue on to Southwestern Community College for educational and vocational training. They are provided with different avenues to reintegrate into society and must be enrolled in a recovery program and sober for 90 days in order to be considered for the services that are provided. Clients are randomly drug screened to maintain compliance with the program, with repercussions of termination of services upon the third positive screen.

TERO Director Terri Henry says, “Our goal is to provide a support system to our people and to let them know that they can be part of society. So many of our clients feel that because of their past that society has thrown them away, and that’s simply not true.”

TERO contracts with several businesses to provide employment opportunities for our clients and we ensure that their workforce is at a minimum of 30% with penalties to those that do not comply with the contract. TERO has implemented a Job Bank with those vendors that can be accessed by clients. The staff at TERO are also implementing an internet portal to link both skilled & unskilled professionals to opportunities that may not have been available or considered prior to the partnerships with local employers. TERO serves Graham, Cherokee, and Swain counties with an outreach goal of serving all of Western North Carolina. TERO provides their clients with a stipend of $500 biweekly which ensures a quality of life that they would not otherwise have and it gives them motivation to reclaim their life and achieve their fullest potential. To date, TERO has a success rate of 75%.

Continued
TERO is a certified Work Smart Training Provider through Southeastern Community College. Visiting at risk youth in local high schools throughout the counties they serve has been a vital route for TERO to reach youth throughout the targeted area. For clients that may have legal issues stemming from driver's license revocation, TERO will assist with other alternative transportation that will make them work ready. TERO hosts Job Fairs that facilitate the employment needs of the community in which they reside. TERO also collaborates with the local health care facilities to bring healthcare awareness and provide services that are needed.

TERO contributes to the community and public relations by holding 5K runs, promoting good health by constructing a large 1.5 acre community garden with most of the produce being donated to Tsali Care. TERO is continuing the community stakeholder mentality by organizing community beautification events, where clients are encouraged to participate.
Karen Rowe is a Talent Engagement Career Advisor at the NCWorks Career Center in Clayton. Karen believes in serving customers holistically, literally meeting them where they are and going beyond the NCWorks Career Center doors to provide services. No matter where the customer is physically, emotionally, socially, or economically, Karen will meet them where they are. Karen has challenged herself and colleagues to think outside the box to deliver services to customers. She is instrumental in so many initiatives that it is not possible to list them all.

Karen has implemented strategies and built strong community partnerships including with the Cambridge House which serves women in recovery. She has also volunteered to work with the domestic violence shelter and as the reentry subject matter expert. Karen is always the first to volunteer to do anything and the team can always count on her assistance.

Karen consistently provides feedback regarding innovation in the career center. She suggested the use of tablets in the Resource Area to better assist customers in real time and the Capital Area Workforce Development agreed to try it, with Karen spearheading this project. Karen championed the cause. The board has now implemented this technology throughout its NCWorks Career Center System. This has been an effective strategy which has positively impacted the overall customer experience and flow, and has improved staff’s ability to record and provide services. In addition, Karen remains current on workforce trends including the use of info graphic resumes and interviewing techniques, which she shares with her team. Karen researches current workforce trends and implements them into improving and tailoring her workshops for her target audiences.

Karen provides outstanding customer service, and it is apparent that she genuinely cares about the customers and their struggles. She has faced tremendous personal challenges this year, yet serves customers with the same positivity and energy every single day. Karen makes it her personal goal to brighten staff and customers’ days. Whether she shares a funny story, tells a joke, or just starts a conversation with someone, by the time Karen is finished with you your frown has turned into a smile.