



Helping People, Changing Lives



2021-2022 ANNUAL REPORT





"Helping People, Changing Lives"

is realized by providing services, advocacy, and support for persons so they can become self-sufficient, improve the quality of their lives, and better provide opportunities for their families.

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We are pleased to share our 2021-2022 Annual Report. The effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic continued to cause challenges for us as well as other Community Action Agencies. Those challenges help us to rise to high levels of flexibility, adaptability, and safety. We strengthened our commitment to remain on the frontlines and help our communities, families, and individuals who were in need.

We made the concerted decision to remain open/on-site but only the staff, children in our Head Start/childcare centers and our customers in our Adult Day Care were allowed in our centers. In an attempt to reduce the COVID footprint, we closely followed the guidance on mitigating and preventing the spread of COVID in the workplace. We continued to provide services and support to persons who were in need virtually, drive-up curbside, home delivery, or safely in person.

In 2021-2022, we saw great loss not only globally but locally. Several staff members lost loved ones but their resourcefulness and resiliency were astounding. They continued to work and helped our most vulnerable. Although there was division in our communities over the COVID-19 vaccination, 84% of our staff was vaccinated by the end of November in comparison to the state of NC at 52%.

Our staffing level did not change but the additional funding we received helped the immediate needs of families who were in crisis because of the pandemic. The pandemic showcased the gap in basic needs for housing, food, health care, and technology but widened the gap for families with limited income. We were able to provide emergency services such as rental payments, utility payments, meals for our waitlist home delivery clients, additional shelf stable meals for our home delivery clients, health center repairs, to assist with childcare fees/payments, and regularly disinfecting our centers through electrostatic cleaning.

The impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the world has been catastrophic but the consistency and dedication of the staff, Board, and our partners are remarkable. Our internal and external controls have strengthened and we have become more vocal about the needs we have in our communities for our most vulnerable families.



We thank each and every one of our team members for your hard work and willingness to help others. We thank our Board members and partners who have supported BRCA. We will continue to break down barriers that prevent people from thriving and becoming self-sufficient.

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephanie Ashley". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Stephanie Ashley, CCAP, Executive Director

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "C. Inita Smith". The signature is fluid and cursive.

C. Inita Smith, Board Chair

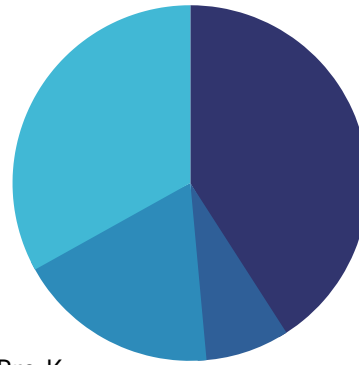
CHILD CARE IN ACTION

Quaker Meadows
Generations
Morganton

Northside Learning
Center
Lenoir

Circle of Friends
Rutherford College

Day Care
182 children



Head Start
225 children

NC Pre-K
101 children

Early Head Start
42 children

It was another successful year for the BRCA Child Development Department!

All programs operated in-person while still maintaining safety measures. Staff and children over 2 continue to wear masks and visitors and parents are not allowed in the buildings, and enhanced CDC recommended cleaning of all buildings was scheduled regularly.

In addition to face-to-face learning, teachers connected with parents through phone calls, Zoom, WebEx, Class Dojo, Ready Rosie, and Facebook Live. Parent meetings and most Policy Council meetings were held virtually.

The tireless efforts of staff resulted in very limited classroom closures. As we move ahead into 2023, we will continue to follow all health and safety recommendations from the CDC, health departments, the Division of Child Development, and Head Start.

The goal of the child development program is to provide a safe, loving and nurturing environment for children and to ensure that all children are healthy and ready to learn when they enter kindergarten.

All centers maintain a superior sanitation rating and are rated at a five star level.



HEAD START, EARLY HEAD START



Head Start and Early Head Start are federal programs for income-eligible children, special needs children and other children that qualify under Head Start/Early Head Start guidelines.

Children and families receive a variety of educational services, nutritious meals and snacks, free medical/dental screenings and treatment, and parent involvement opportunities.

CHILD SERVICES HAD A TOTAL OF 286 VOLUNTEERS.



105 WERE CURRENT OR FORMER HEAD START OR EARLY HEAD START PARENTS.

BRCA HAS OPERATED THE HEAD START PROGRAM FOR OVER 55 YEARS IN BURKE AND CALDWELL COUNTIES



"Our family loves our circle of friends in Valdese, North Carolina. Our three children have been thriving since they started the program. Last school year our four-year-old excelled in the NC Pre-k program, she is ready to start kindergarten. My son will start Head Start this year. Our other daughter will be in first grade this coming year, but she did amazing last year in kindergarten and it's thanks to the staff at Circle of Friends "



BRCA IS AN
AMAZING
PLACE FOR
CHILDREN TO
LEARN AND
GROW.

The North Carolina Pre-Kindergarten program (NCPK) is offered at all sites. The state-funded North Carolina Pre-Kindergarten Program (NCPK) is offered at all BRCA childcare sites. This program's focus is to provide essential school readiness instruction by licensed/qualified staff to 4yr old children that will transition to kindergarten the following year.

Most children in NCPK are dually-enrolled in Head Start and receive an additional 30 minutes of daily instruction and 20 extra school days. During program year 2021-2022, **101 children were enrolled in NCPK.**



"The center has been a big part of our lives since both of my children were tiny babies.

The Staff has always gone above and beyond to help me with any concerns I may have with my children. My son is about to graduate from Head Start and I'm confident that he is ready for Kindergarten. My daughter attended Early Head Start and Head Start. Next year, she returns to Head Start but will be in the NCPK classroom. They also provide speech therapy services. Both of my children receive this service, and it has helped them tremendously. I always recommend BRCA to any family or friends seeking early education for their children."



ADULT DAY CARE PROGRAM



The Adult Day Care program operated in-person for the entire program year. Staff assisted clients with masks and encouraged social distancing. Rigorous cleaning and other safety measures kept the clients safe and healthy.

A nurse is on site for a portion of each day to administer medication, monitor vital signs and interact with the clients. The adult day care services assist both the participant and the primary caregiver by providing respite services and the ability to remain employed.

Activities at the center include;

Improving fine/gross motor skills through cooking, crafts and exercise.

Improving cognitive function through daily activities such as reading current events and completing puzzles

Participating in coordinated group filed trips and special celebrations

Special services are provided as needed.



Several payment options are available to assist clients with the cost of the program; private pay, Medicaid, Veterans Affairs, and the Home and Community Care Block Grant.



During program year 2021-2022

43 clients benefited from the services of the Adult Day Care program.

FOSTER GRANDPARENT PROGRAM



Until October 1, 2021, the Foster Grandparent Program operated on a "temporary allowance" status, allowing volunteers to be paid if work sites would not allow them to work in person. Some volunteers worked remotely through the BRCA "Virtual Volunteer" program.

All volunteers were excited to start their regular work schedules at 3 BRCA centers, The Enola Group, J Iverson Riddle Development Center, 6 public schools, and 1 charter school. The program provides social, educational, and emotional support to children with special needs and residents at JIRDC.

The Foster Grandparent Program provides one-on-one mentoring, nurturing, and support to children with special or exceptional needs, or who are academically, socially, or financially disadvantaged.



44 senior citizens participated in the program and received an hourly stipend, daily meal stipend, training, and mileage reimbursement.



SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICE EMPLOYMENT



Center for
Workforce Inclusion
powering opportunity for older adults

The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) is a community service and work-based job training program for older Americans operated under a U.S. Department of Labor grant. We thank the Center for Workforce Inclusion, Inc. for selecting our organization to operate SCSEP in our community.

BRCA's SCSEP program **served 85 participants** by assisting with developing skills and experience that led to employment in Alexander, Burke, Caldwell, Catawba, Cleveland, and Rutherford counties.



I was able to find job placement and learn new skills. My current job experience has helped me increase my resume. Now, I am working part-time and enjoying life without the stress and worries that I once had. SCSEP has helped me in so many ways, and I just want to say **THANK YOU** from the bottom of my heart.

I pray this program is always a success, so many seniors can benefit from the Senior Community Service Employment Program.



CIRCLES

The Burke County CIRCLES program pairs people who want to move out of poverty with mentors who support and encourage them along their journey.

Participants (CIRCLE Leaders) attend a weekly meeting where they build friendships with volunteers (ALLYs) and over time, these relationships help participants move out of poverty and achieve financial success. BRCA's CIRCLES program provided services to over **9 participants** during the fiscal year.

Information and Referral

The information and referral program informs and educates low-income families about local human service assistance programs. Case Managers assist families with applying for services as well as follow up to assure services are received.

BRCA provided information and referred over 300 Burke, Caldwell and Rutherford County families for services.

185 families received those services.



Self-Sufficiency

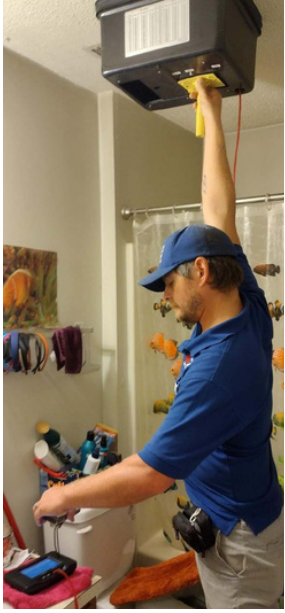
The Self-Sufficiency program provides intensive Case Management and direct provision of services to low-income families. The program is funded primarily through the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG). The program helps determined, hard-working families, individuals achieve their educational and vocational goals, earn a living wage, and move away from poverty and public assistance to financial self-sufficiency. BRCA Case Managers provided services to over **40 families/individuals** in Burke, Caldwell and Rutherford Counties.

CARES Program

BRCA implemented the CARES program in July 2020 as a direct response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Families/individuals lost employment due to businesses being mandated to shut down causing extreme financial hardships to families. As a result of funding from the CARES Act, BRCA has **assisted 287 families/individuals** in Burke, Caldwell, and Rutherford Counties with rent, utility, and food assistance allowing families to maintain their housing as well as keep their utilities connected.



WEATHERIZATION SERVICES IN ACTION



Weatherization Assistance Program

Reduces energy costs by improving the energy efficiency of a home. These services reduce the average annual energy costs by \$300 per home.

182 Homes Benefited
376 Persons Assisted

Duke Energy Helping Home Fund

This program is designed to assist low-income customers with managing their energy costs by making energy-efficient improvements at the customer's residence.

143 Homes Benefited

Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES)

3 Homes Benefitted
4 Persons Assisted

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

24 Homes Benefited
37 Persons Assisted

Heating Appliance Repair & Replacement Program (HARRP)

HARRP provides services for those persons with inadequate or no heating system or air conditioning.

138 Homes Benefited
247 Persons Assisted

Blue Cross Blue Shield Healthy Home Initiative Program

Provides funding for health-centered repairs for families to increase overall health outcomes.

9 Homes Benefited
18 Persons Assisted

My experience with Blue Ridge Community Action has been nothing short of amazing. I'm extremely grateful that this program exists for people in need. It has truly been a blessing to my household. I was able to get a brand new HVAC system. I've seen a decrease in my electric bill due to my home becoming more energy efficient. From the housing specialist to the contractors, everyone that I came into contact with had an upbeat & positive attitude. The contractors were very knowledgeable and answered any questions I had for them. I'm constantly praising Blue Ridge for helping me so much. No amount of words can express how grateful I am to have been a part of this program.

Thank you so much!

Rashelle Newby



VOLUNTEER INCOME TAX ASSISTANCE



BRCA offered a drop-off service or "Virtual VITA" to tax clients for the 2022 tax season. BRCA prepared tax returns on-site from January 31, 2022, until April 13, 2022. With specially designated parking, clipboards, one-time use pens, and personal protective equipment like masks, gloves, and sanitizing products, BRCA staff met clients in the parking lot of Quaker Meadows Generations, completed intake information, and returned to their desks to prepare the tax return while the client waited outside in their car.

Once completed, BRCA staff returned to the client, obtained the appropriate signatures, and delivered the completed tax return. BRCA completed 805 tax returns for families offering free tax help to people who generally make \$57,000 or less, persons with disabilities and limited English-speaking taxpayers who need assistance in preparing their own tax returns. This was a 13% increase over the previous year.

BRCA had 5 staff certified in Income Tax Return preparation along with 1 Western Piedmont Community College Accounting major student who volunteered for the tax season.

\$1,125,346 Income Tax Refunds



CHDO RENTAL UNITS

Affordable Rental Units Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO) is a special status provided to nonprofit, community based organizations whose purpose is to provide affordable housing for the community it serves.

43 Units Owned 87 Persons Served

CONGREGATE NUTRITION & HOME DELIVERED MEALS

Home-delivered meal participants continuously received a nutritious meal Monday - Friday. Eight community volunteers assured meals were delivered using a pandemic-modified delivery process, protecting the participant and the volunteer.

Participants also received shelf-stable and frozen meals in addition to their daily meals the Supplemental Nutrition Funding HDC5 provided 3,398 to 102 seniors and the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) provided 3,314 meals to the people.

Congregate nutrition sites remained open for the fiscal year 2021-2022. In addition to supplemental nutrition funding (CARES) provided funding for 770 meals to 52 seniors, and CARES funded 655 meals to 40 seniors.

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) provided 3,100 shelf stable meals to 162 seniors at a community event in March.

Food insecurity is a growing problem among the older adult population, and these extra meals helped during an unprecedented time. Several of our home delivered meal clients appreciated not only the meals but also the "check in" it provides



Congregate Nutrition
8,418 Meals and 98 seniors were served.

Home Delivered Meals
16,494 meals and 110 seniors serviced

660 total seniors for Caldwell County

1,528 volunteer hours



BRCA provided 11,234 additional meals in 2021-2022

CLIENT SATISFACTION SURVEY RESULTS

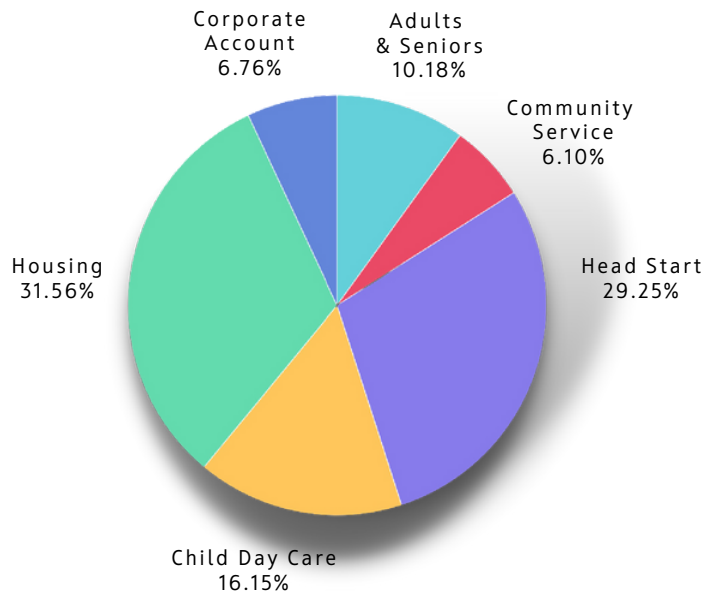
Program	# of Recipient Responses
Adult Day Care	16
Congregate Nutrition	29
Day Care	36
Early Head Start	7
Foster Grandparent Program	1
Head Start	27
Home Delivered Meals	67
Weatherization	357



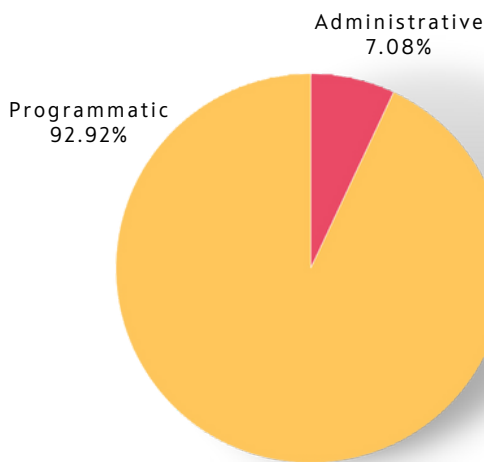
REVENUE FOR FISCAL YEAR END 6/30/2022

Revenue by Service Area

Service Area	Revenue	%
Adults & Seniors	\$1,287,645	10.18%
Community Service	\$771,479	6.10%
Head Start	\$3,700,227	29.25%
Child Day Care	\$2,042,819	16.15%
Housing	\$3,992,602	31.56%
Corporate Account	\$855,027	6.76%



Administrative vs Program Expense



FYE 6-30-2022	Revenue	%
Programmatic	\$13,271,713	92.92%
Administrative	1,011,248	7.08%

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2021-2022

Inita Smith
Chairperson

Head Start
Policy Council

James Al Smith
Vice Chair

Burke County
Commissioners

Barbara Myers
Secretary / Treasurer

Burke County
Commissioners

Mary Johnson
Planning Committee Chairperson

East Drexel
Community

Annie Logan
Personnel/EO Committee
Chairperson

Freedman
Community

Michael Cloy

Burke County
Commissioners

David Martin

First Horizon Bank

Hannah Romero

Caldwell County
Commissioners

Adrainne Roberts

Legal Aid of Burke
County

Lauri Stilwell

CCC&TI

Kandi Bridges

Rutherford County
Commissioners

JoAnn Woods

Forest City
Community

Madelyn Russ

Open Hearts

HEAD START POLICY COUNCIL MEMBERS 2021-2022

Parents are essential partners in educating young children and are an important part in deciding what Head Start services can most benefit their family and other families in the community.

Through the Policy Council, parents have a voice in the decisions about how the program spends money, what children do in their classroom, and how the program works with community partners.

Trish Cordero
Chairperson

Northside Learning
Center

Amber Miller
Vice Chair

Northside Learning
Center

Inita Smith

Community & Board
Representative

Dawn Ayers

Northside Learning
Center

Jessica Osgood

Community
Representative

Lindsay Vazquez

Quaker Meadows
Generations

Lizmary Fontanez

Quaker Meadows
Generations

Jailan Dula

Quaker Meadows
Generations

Angela Berry

Circle of Friends



Community Action Promise

Community Action changes people's lives, embodies the spirit of hope, improves communities, and makes America a better place to live. We care about the entire community, and we are dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other