

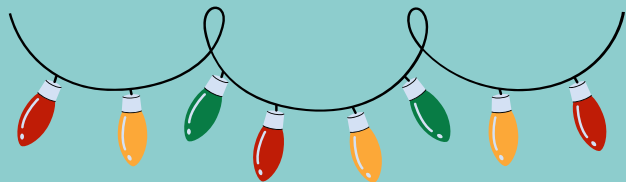
# *Watauga DSS Foster Care*

## *Winter 2024-2025 Newsletter*



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## *Celebrate Christmas with Watauga DSS!*

All Foster & Adoptive families are  
welcome to join the Christmas festivities

**December 10 at 6pm**  
**Alliance Bible Fellowship**  
**Church Gym**



**Santa**



Cookie Decorating

**ORNAMENT  
MAKING**

Games

Face painting



**Shopping**



# Foster Connections

Foster Connection was organized this past spring by a group that understands what it feels like to walk through the highs and lows of new placements, unexpected changes, reunifications and adoptions, and we desire to help these families feel seen and cared for as they also walk that journey.



Foster Connection exists to support and encourage local foster, adoptive, and kinship families and partner with local organizations and churches to advocate for vulnerable children and the families that care for them. In the spring of 2024, we started our work by asking CPS if we could partner with families when children come into custody by providing a "GoBag" of essential items (diapers, pajamas, etc.), a few meals, and a list of local resources that will help families along their journey. We have had a tremendous response to this and have been able to expand by including birthday boxes, Christmas stockings, and a monthly breakfast for CPS staff. We've assisted with CPS supported events such as Mother's Day Tea and providing babysitters for a foster parent night out at Daniel Boone Inn and the annual Christmas Party. Through a variety of fundraisers, we were able to provide "Back to School Gift Cards" to help alleviate the stress of starting back to school. We've also provided a few families with Tweetsie Passes and Rec Center memberships.

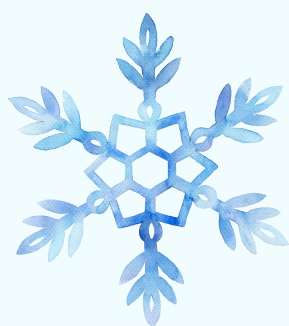
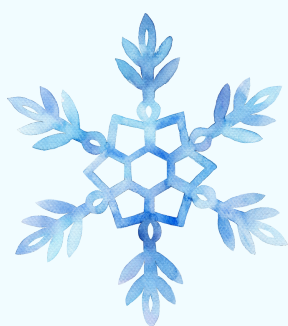
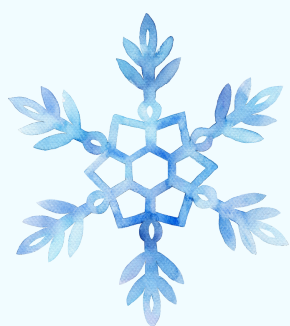
Through the generosity of donors, churches, and volunteers, we have been able to support many foster, kinship, and adoptive families throughout 2024. We are so thankful to be a part of this amazing community and are excited for what 2025 holds!





## *Introducing ~ Sophia Simmons, Foster Care ~*

I am originally from Wake Forest NC, which is around the Raleigh area. I moved to Boone for undergraduate school in 2020 and graduated with my BSW in 2023 from App State. I worked previously at the Children's Council of Watauga teaching for the DUAL school as well as working with community support specialist. I fell in love with the Boone community and decided to stay post graduate to continue working with families and children going through turbulent times. I am passionate about change and growth only fueling my love for my job every day. When I am not working I love to hike, read and enjoy the river during the summer. I have a dog (Bailey) who loves to tag along with me on hikes, walks, and the occasional run. I am so grateful for the support and love this community shows as the seasons of life change.



# *A Child's Perspective*

*written by a Watauga DSS foster child*

I think the hardest parts about being a foster care child is the constant moving and how easy it is for a foster parent to decide they do not want to be the placement anymore. In the past, foster parents have let me go very quickly for little to no reason. I feel this is very stressful wondering whether or not I will have to pack up and move my stuff the next day. When consistently unpacking and packing my stuff, it can leave a feeling of abandonment. When being moved into short-term or respite placements, it can be also difficult to have to live out of bags. This is what I feel is the hardest part of being a teen in foster care.



## *Reminder*



### **Court dates 2025**

January 23 & 24  
February 6 & 7  
March 3 & 4

### **Payments 2025**

November	12.13.2024
December	01.10.2025
January	02.14.2025
February	03.14.2025
March	04.11.2025



# Foster Parent Shoutout

~ Heather Canipe ~



This month we would like to recognize Heather Canipe for her tremendous work as a foster mom. She has been a foster parent with us for four years taking in foster children in emergency situations and helping them until a permanent foster home becomes available. She has gone above and beyond for many of our kiddos in some of their most difficult moments. Recently, she selflessly took on the role as a full time foster mom for one of our teenage girls, and I could not be more impressed with her commitment and patience with her. She is doing such a great job parenting and working closely with the biological parent to ensure that this child is loved and cared for.

Thank you for all you do, Heather!

Thank  
you

~ Gina Cantando

## Shared Parenting

by Jennifer Cockman, foster parent

Six years ago we got a newborn girl from the hospital. We fostered her for six weeks and in that time, we interacted a lot with her parents. The baby had a good transition back to her parents and we kept in touch, helping with babysitting and other needs as the parents faced hard obstacles. As more children were born, we encouraged the parents toward stability and offered assistance, if needed. Six years later, the mother asked us to foster her girls, as she continued to struggle. She loves her daughters and we are working toward reunification.