


DOUGLAS-CHEROKEE
ECONOMIC AUTHORITY, INC.

Success Stories

2018-2019



Today's a good day to start making a difference.



As our fiscal year ends, we are reminded of the milestones of our participants.

With our help, students have gained confidence as well as improved grades. They have been given a glimpse into the future and provided with the tools to shape their future. Many people have seized the opportunity and gone back to school to finish their education.

With our help, people have felt loved and cared for. A hot meal every day, a phone call to check in, a warm place to lay their head, and there are countless other ways our Agency improves daily lives.

Douglas-Cherokee's mission is to provide resources, tools, and opportunities that help low-income families and individuals of all ages achieve personal, economic, and social stability. The many programs of our Agency, along with other agencies, work together every day to improve the lives of people within our communities. This report showcases just a few success stories from the past year.



Education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world.– Nelson Mandela

The Afterschool Programs provide intensive afterschool tutoring, counseling and academic enrichment activities to underachieving students. Each site is staffed with at least one bilingual tutor, fluent in both English and Spanish. Parents and family members of the students are offered computer classes, English language instruction, and parent involvement programs. With over 500 students, there are many successes to be shared. Below are a few.

A kindergartner just could not grasp his letters/sounds or writing and was well behind the entire year. We worked with him every day, and every day seemed to make no difference in his comprehension. We were certain that the school staff would decide to hold him back and have him repeat kindergarten. However, right at the end - probably the last month of school - something clicked. He suddenly had an interest in making sense of the things he was supposed to be learning all year, as opposed to just going through the motions because he was told to. Amazingly, by the end of the year, he learned all the letters and sounds. This year, he has started off the year excited to read to us and do his homework and he needs much less one-on-one time to get things completed! **Luttrell Elementary, Site Coordinator**

We had a student who when she arrived was pretty much failing the third grade. Her struggles were not due to intelligence. She worked very slowly, and when it came to getting homework done, she wouldn't do it. With the help of her teachers and us working together she was able to work and get all of her work done each day and study for tests, as well. Her grades improved dramatically. On top of her grades, she was also very shy and didn't talk much to anyone - including staff. By the end of the year, she was joking with staff, made good friends, and was able to communicate effectively with us and her teachers. She really was an amazing child to watch grow. **John Hay, Site Coordinator**

We had a young lady who came to the program and would not say a word. If you spoke to her or asked her a question, she kept her eyes focused on the floor, and if she did answer you, you could barely hear her. However, the more she came to Afterschool the more she blossomed. She even joined the Drama Club and had a speaking role. The transformation was amazing. Even the principal at the time, Mr. Ely, commented on the change. Today, she is back in the program and still doing well. It's wonderful to see. **Lincoln Heights Middle School, Site Coordinator**

We had a girl who struggled with self-confidence and academics. She was very quiet, did not take initiative in any situation, and kept to herself as much as possible. A quote from last year's Parent/Family survey is as follows: "Gabriela has shown much improvement overall. Her IEP was downgraded as a result of improvement. Thank you all so very, very much!!!" This year, she is always smiling and asking if she can tutor the younger children. Although we are not the only positive influence in her life, we feel proud that we could be a small part of her success. **Union Heights Elementary School, Site Coordinator**



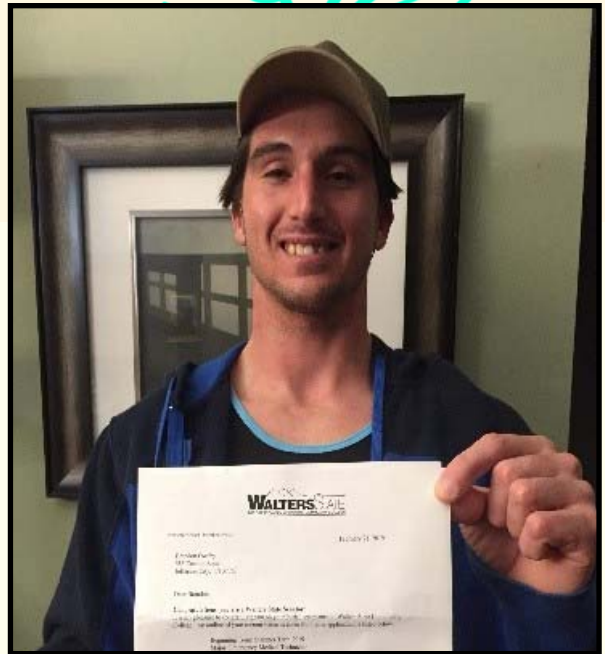
A little progress each day adds up to big results.



Brandon Ownby entered the EOC program May 29, 2018. Brandon's life has had its moments of pain and loss, he has admitted to making some wrong choices, and although he feared change, he knew a change needed to take place in his life.

He began drug use at age 15, which led him down a path of destruction and to eventually becoming a convicted felon. It is in this setting that he came to meet Pete Higgs. Pete is the Executive Director of Renovatus Recovery Community. Renovatus helps to restore families from drug/alcohol addiction to Christ centered living. Pete was familiar with the EOC program, and our desire to see those who wish to continue their education succeed.

With the help of Renovatus and EOC, some positive changes have been made in Brandon's life. He has gotten his driver's license back, obtained a job working at Tarr Chevrolet, he also works on the farm at Renovatus, and he is just about 3 months away from completing his probation. He has also developed a relationship with the Lord.



EOC was able to assist Brandon with his financial aid as well as loaning him a study guide to prepare for the HiSet which he has passed. Brandon is expected to begin classes at WSCC this Fall as he recently received his acceptance letter.

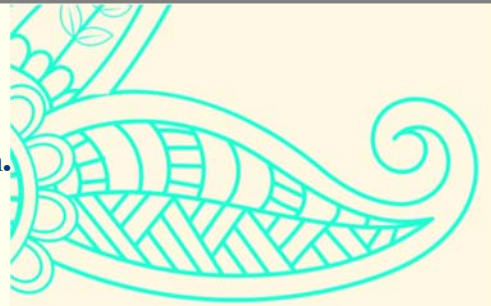
Brandon is very thankful for Pete Higgs and Renovatus. He refers to them as a Godsend, in helping to equip him with the tools needed to be a functioning member of society as well as the amazing power there is in being a follower of Jesus Christ. He is also very thankful, as well as Pete, that there are programs available like EOC that can assist in making a dream become a reality.

He quotes this scripture in helping him to become the man he is today, as well as an overcomer. Romans 5:3-4, "Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope."

EOC provides assistance in completing admissions and financial aid applications. The project also provides additional services including HiSet pre-testing, tutoring, career assessment, college loan default help, referrals for basic computer skills and other pertinent educational topics.



Helping one person might not change the whole world, but it could change the world for one person.



During the middle of winter, Tim Carter with the Jefferson County Sheriff's Department found Horton Davis living in his car. Mr. Carter introduced Horton to Sandra Norton, the Director of Strawberry Plains Senior Center. Ms. Norton immediately began trying to find other agencies, other programs, or individuals that could help Horton. He needed food, housing and transportation which is how DCEA was able to help. Ms. Norton contacted Shannon Collins, Director of RSVP, for transportation, which she was able to help coordinate. Ms. Norton then contacted me, Kate Luker, Director of Senior Nutrition, in order to help with food. After speaking to Ms. Norton and Ms. Collins and realizing the severity of Horton's situation, I decided to take him meals that same afternoon. By this time, they had found Horton a temporary place to stay. When we arrived, this 5'7" 90-pound man stepped outside on the porch in his freshly washed khaki pants, button up shirt and sweater vest. A volunteer from RSVP had just dropped him off from their trip to the laundromat and you could tell he loved having clean clothes to wear again. Sandra introduced me and told him what I had brought for him. I will never forget how he began to get tears in his eyes. Not because of the food I brought but because suddenly he had so many people coming to help him.

Sandra then began looking for a place for Horton to live, and I told her I would find out if DCEA had any available apartments in Jefferson County.



Fortunately, there were a couple open at Douglas-Residences, so she began the process of helping him fill out the application and gathering all the necessary documents that he would need. When the day came that he was going to be able to move into his new apartment at Douglas-Residences, Jecca, the former Community Outreach Advocate for DCEA's Senior Nutrition Program, and I decided we needed to go see him and find out if there was anything we could do to help him with moving. We arrived as they were signing the lease agreement and Horton was so excited. He took Jecca and I upstairs to show us his new apartment which consisted of two rooms, the bathroom and the other room which had a small kitchen and a larger area where someone could have a small living room and bedroom. But the way he explained it to us, you would have thought he was moving into a mansion. It was clear he was determined to stay in his apartment that night, however, he did not have one piece of furniture to sit on or anywhere to sleep. So, Jecca, Sandra, Horton, and I set off trying to get him the necessities he needed in order for him to be able to stay there that night. We started by going to Appalachian Outreach. They did not have any furniture but he was able to get some food, clothing, and other household items like bath towels and washrags. Jecca and I decided to go to Central Services to see if they could help, while Sandra and Horton went a couple other places to pick up some of his personal

things. Thankfully, Central Services had a brand-new mattress that he could use, a used loveseat, and a toaster oven for

him to be able to heat up any cold meals that we delivered to him. We met back at Horton's new apartment and started moving in all his new things. Others came by to bring him sheets, blankets, more food, a TV, shower curtain, and anything else he needed in order to stay there overnight. You could tell he was so happy and at one point while we were all talking, he said that he couldn't believe it but he was actually hot. He said that this was the first time that he could remember that he was not cold since he spent those nights in his car while it was near freezing temperatures. Once again, he thanked us many times before we left and said that he couldn't believe we were doing all this for him.

Unfortunately, Horton's health started to decline and he kept refusing to go to a doctor or hospital. After a couple days, he seemed to be doing some better. He even asked Tonya for a Big Mac and a Coke when she went to deliver his meal. However, not long after that I found out he had been admitted to the ICU. Tonya and I decided to go visit him and I am so glad we did. Tonya spoke up and said, "Hi, Horton". Just from hearing her voice, he knew exactly who she was. He tried to open his eyes to look at her and responded, "Tonya? What are you doing here? Did you bring me food?". We all laughed. He seemed to be in a good mood and was even joking that "He couldn't believe that there had been so many women coming in and out of his room to see him." After visiting him for a few minutes, we started to leave and he asked if we could come over to shake his hand. He grabbed my left hand with his and told me thank you for everything that we had done for him. He said that he didn't understand why everyone had been so nice to him but that he was so grateful for everything. Tonya then came over and he took her hand and he thanked her for being there for him and helping him. He then began telling the story of how Tim saved his life back in February, and how much Sandra had done for him over the past few months. As he was talking, he began to mumble and fall back to sleep, our cue to go. We thanked his nurse Laura for taking such good care of him and left, not knowing that this would be the last time we would be able to see Horton.

During these brief encounters I had with Horton, he taught me so much and he proved to be a wonderful example of what we can accomplish when different agencies, programs, and individuals come together with the same goal of helping someone in a time of need. For me, it was amazing to see the moment when Tonya said hi to Horton and he knew without a doubt who she was. It was a reminder of how the clients of the Senior Nutrition Program and the staff truly create a bond with each other and become family. Tonya went above and beyond what she had to do for her job, and became a friend to Horton that he could depend on and trust, as did so many others over the last few months. Being part of Douglas-Cherokee and the Senior Nutrition Program is not just a job. It's an opportunity to make a difference in someone's life when they need it the most.



**“A hero is
someone who
understands the
responsibility
that comes with
his freedom”-
Bob Dylan**



Douglas-Cherokee RSVP hopes to build a stronger senior community in the Lakeway area by connecting seniors to one another and to the community-at-large. Pairing volunteers with homebound seniors for telephone reassurance calls helps to decrease the isolation that many homebound seniors experience and also builds new friendships. This truly does make a world of difference in the lives of our homebound seniors, just to know that someone in the community cares enough to call and check in on them a few times a week. Volunteers providing transportation services to homebound seniors help to keep our seniors healthy and allow them to stay in their homes as long as possible while still receiving medical care and access to basic needs.

Bobbie Nelson is an RSVP client who receives both telephone reassurance calls and transportation services through our program. Bobbie is a United States Marine Corps Veteran, who has spent most of her life helping others. Due to the loss of her eye sight from macular degeneration, she has lost the ability to drive herself. Other transportation services in the area were not an option for her because she requires more assistance getting into doctor's offices than a curb-to-curb service could provide. She contacted RSVP after hearing about our program on the radio. In addition to receiving transportation services she also signed up for the telephone reassurance program through RSVP and has been receiving phone calls from a volunteer. She said of the program, "It's extremely comforting to know that I can call on RSVP to help me get to my doctor's appointments and Terri, my RSVP volunteer, has been a real blessing. I really look forward to her calls and we just really hit it off." Bobbie has since asked

about ways she can give back to the community. She is planning on volunteering for the telephone reassurance program with RSVP to help others feel the same comfort and support she has received from the program.

From July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019, RSVP Volunteers spent 557.5 hours serving homebound seniors. Transportation volunteers spent 456 hours, traveling 7,032 miles, to transport 37 clients across our four county area: Hamblen, Grainger, Jefferson, and Cocke Counties. Telephone Reassurance Volunteers spent 101.5 hours checking in on 37 homebound seniors across our service area.



Wyman's Teen Outreach Program is a comprehensive, evidence based youth development strategy that promotes the positive development of adolescents through a combination of curriculum-guided group discussion and volunteer service learning. As a TOP provider, our heart is that we believe by empowering teens in Hamblen and Hancock counties to identify better choices they will have brighter futures. TOP empowers teens with the tools and opportunities needed to avoid risky behaviors- like teen pregnancy- and become leaders with a powerful vision for their future. TOP Changing Scenes curriculum helps teens build a foundation of healthy behaviors, life skills and a sense of purpose.

TOP Facilitators guide students through goal setting lessons. The life plans that students create, and the conversations about how risky behaviors, such as getting pregnant before marriage and alcohol/ drug use, can affect their success in accomplishing goals.

After students completed their life plans, we held a coffee and conversation meeting for parents to attend. During this meeting, students presented their life plans and the parents who attended were amazed at how much thought their kids had put into thinking about their future. One parent thanked TOP staff for what the program had done for her daughter. She explained how much her daughter had calmed down, matured, and how their mother/daughter relationship had gotten so much better. She said she is grateful to have someone who her daughter can trust and feels comfortable to talk to about how decisions made in life have consequences and how risky behaviors could affect her life. The mother shared that her stepdaughter became pregnant in high school and it has been hard on the whole family. Therefore, this parent feels the TOP Program is exactly what her daughter needs to reinforce the same messages and advice that she gets at home. As a TOP facilitator, I am so glad to provide a safe environment where students have fun while learning. The topics we cover help students feel more comfortable in refusing peer pressures that could negatively affect their lives. I also feel that building relationships with my students has had a big impact on how they open up and discuss situations that they are facing. These youth are dealing with some heavy things in life and I am so glad that I can be here to help as much as possible.



**“May your choices reflect
your hopes not your fears.”**

Nelson Mandela



Home is not a place...it's a feeling.

When you hear about an Affordable Housing Program, you might think, "Oh, that's just another place that rents apartments at a lower cost." However, DCEA's Affordable Housing Program does much more than that.



Beginning with the move-in process, the on-site management and maintenance staff work

hard to get any vacant units ready to rent. This can include painting, floor replacement, appliance replacements and cleaning. Once the apartments are inspected and determined to be turn-key ready, management works diligently to advertise the unit, not only by running ads, but by setting up at local events, conducting "open houses", or handing out flyers and brochures locally until the apartment is rented. While other housing programs might only focus on renting

their apartments, DCEA's Affordable Housing Program goes the extra mile.

In many cases, individuals seeking low-income housing at our apartments are going through a rough patch and need help with different aspects of their life to reach a better situation. Once tenants are moved in, our Service Coordinators and On-Site staff step in to assess any other need the tenant might have. Depending on their need and whether that need can be addressed by another one of DCEA's program, our staff links them to the appropriate representative within Douglas-Cherokee. When the need goes beyond the scope of what our agency can do, housing staff links the tenants to the appropriate agency in that area who might be able to help. Some of the many needs addressed might be reaching out for donated furniture or items the tenant might need to furnish their new apartment, as sometimes people moving in have nothing but the clothes on their back. Service Coordinators might also help with trying to make sure they have appropriate nutrition, which can include getting them signed up for home delivered meals, meals at local congregate sites, or signed up for food boxes or commodities in their area. Some other things that Service Coordinators and Apartment Managers might help with includes filling out applications for Safelink phones, scheduling social gatherings to help with depression, organizing health events, scheduling nutritional cooking classes, linking them with transportation agencies to get them to their doctor's appointments, and an occasional Bingo or Birthday Bash to add to all the fun!

This extra help and events are offered to our tenants the entire time they live in our apartments. That is where DCEA's Affordable Housing differs from most housing programs. Our service and commitment doesn't end once we rent our apartments, it continues and is on-going the entire time they reside in our apartments, a place where we hope they grow comfortable enough to call "home".





The goal of the LIHEAP program is to aid low-income households with the high cost of home heating or cooling. Clients may apply at designated times each year for a one-time payment to their utility provider. The program has two components. Crisis assistance is available throughout the year until funds are exhausted. Some of the requirements include: households must meet poverty guidelines, have a disconnect notice for their utilities or have less than a 30-day supply of home heating fuel. Energy assistance is the largest component and receives applications year round. Specific program eligibility requirements apply to each component.

Angela Ruth is a single mom of three boys. Angela had worked so many jobs in which she just couldn't make ends meet and successfully support her family. She worked full-time but only made \$9.00 an hour. She received food stamps and no child support. She made it work by living in public housing and paying rent that was based on her small amount of income. She was still responsible for the electric, gas and water bill for her housing apartment. Angela decided that she would have to return to school and get a degree to be able to make enough money to support her family of four on her own. Angela enrolled in school and just graduated as an LPN in Nursing. Angela has used LIHEAP for the past 2 years and received \$1,500.00 in help with the extra bonus from THDA in the 2019 fiscal year. This \$1,500.00 has helped Angela in being able to pay some on her light bill and let the credit help her with her monthly budget and reduce the heavy load of having those cold winter and hot summer bills dipping into her food, gas or other bills budget. Angela is now studying for her State Boards and working through the AmeriCorps Program to be certified and is utilizing programs such as LIHEAP and recently signed up for the Partners for Success Program to help with rent and keep her afloat until she finally will no longer require any assistance. Angela is on her path to self-sufficiency with the help of LIHEAP and other important programs at the Hamblen Neighborhood Service Center.

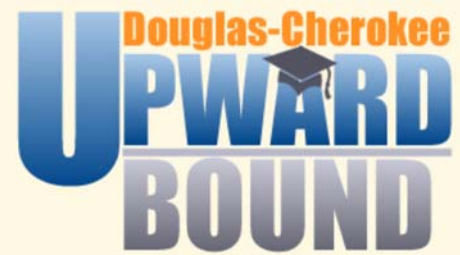


**“Create the highest,
grandest vision possible
for your life, because you
can become what you
believe.” Oprah Winfrey**



Douglas-Cherokee Economic Authority, Inc.
Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program

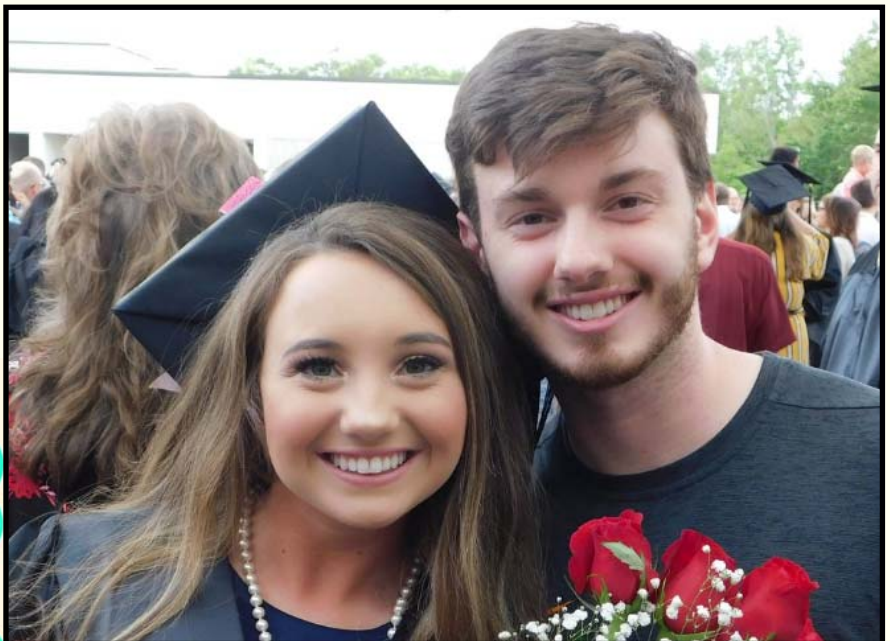
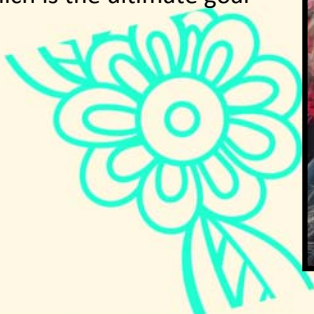
Upward Bound provides fundamental support to area high school students by providing them the skills they need to succeed in and graduate from high school and college. The program has helped thousands of students over the years to realize their educational dreams and achieve their goals. It helps them to not only graduate from high school, but also college. By also providing support aimed towards career exploration and future job growth, the program helps students choose a career in which they can succeed and better their lives.

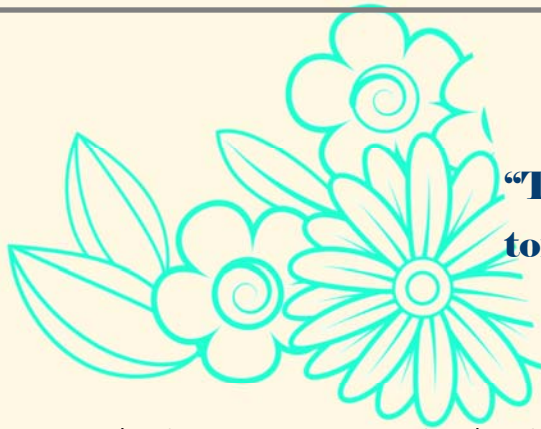


In fall of 2014, Upward Bound integrated Find the Fit material into the program's already intensive curriculum. Find the Fit is designed to enable students to select the right college based on a number of factors. These factors force the student to look at the college's overall graduation rates, graduation rates of students seeking their specific majors at the college, as well as the student's financial situation along with the financial aid award packages given to them. Students are also required to apply to at least 4 colleges or universities. Doing so enables them to compare the financial aid award packages, and if they choose to do so, select the college that offers them the most generous aid award package.

Cade Botts, from Scott County, joined Upward Bound in the fall of 2014. His sister Jolie joined the program in the fall of 2015. They were both part of our first cohorts using Find the Fit curriculum. Cade & Jolie were both first-generation students and both qualified based on federal income guidelines. Cade said "The Upward Bound program helped me the most by getting me adjusted to daily college life. The summer program allowed me to experience college life in a way that was not too overwhelming and helped me to develop time management skills and durability for a long, hectic school day. Find the Fit helped me because I was having a difficult time trying to determine what my major and future occupation was going to be. Looking at what other colleges had to offer, facilitation and program wise, allowed me to get a broader view of my options, and also allowed me to see where I would be most comfortable attending. I was extremely close to going to Carson-Newman, but when I decided my major, I found that it was not the school that was going to best fulfill my needs as a student. Find the Fit is most effective because it forces Upward Bound students to pursue information on other universities, and allows them to consider all the options and major(s) they want to pursue." Cade & Jolie, graduated Scott High in 2017. Cade enrolled at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville, where he is a junior, pursuing a degree in music. He also works for Douglas-Cherokee as a facilitator during summer programs. Jolie enrolled at Roane State Community College where she graduated in May 2019 with an Associate's degree.

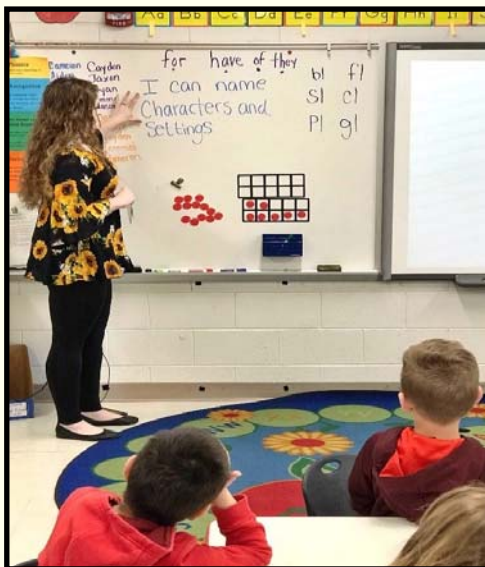
Cade & Jolie are two examples example of the thousands of students the program has helped over the years. By not being afraid of change, and implementing various new techniques such as Find the Fit and thinking outside the box, the program has been able to continually improve the services we offer. The programs' college enrollment rates have increased and college graduation rates have doubled. By getting a college degree, these students are bettering their lives, the lives of their family members, and improving their communities, which is the ultimate goal of the agency.





“Today is your opportunity to build the tomorrow you want.” Ken Poirot

When it comes to success stories, the DCEA Talent Search program has seen our share of student successes. We try to reach out to our graduates during our tracking process to see where they are in their educational journeys and sometimes ask if we can share a little about them and their success. While our students don't mind us telling their stories, it is rare that a student will feel compelled to share their story of success and the part Talent Search played in that success in their own words, but that is just what Shyla Carr has done. It is important to note that Shyla wrote this without being asked and before any of us knew we would be looking for just such a story from one of our former students.



Shyla is a first-generation college student and was eligible for Talent Search services as a potential first-generation, low-income student while attending Harlan County High School. Shyla participated in the DCEA Talent Search program from her 10th grade year in high school through graduation from Harlan County High. Below is Shyla's story of success in her own words...

“My name is Shyla Carr (Baker) and I graduated from Harlan County High School in 2017. I am now a part of Union College's graduating class of Fall 2020, studying P-5 education. I was an active member of Talent Search at Harlan County High School and I cannot begin to express how it prompted me for success in every aspect. I have applied the skills and knowledge I acquired through the program daily during my collegiate journey. Each decision regarding my future was guided and encouraged by our Talent Search counselor, Daylon Wynn. Having the support of a well-versed mentor alone was an incredible contributor to my success.

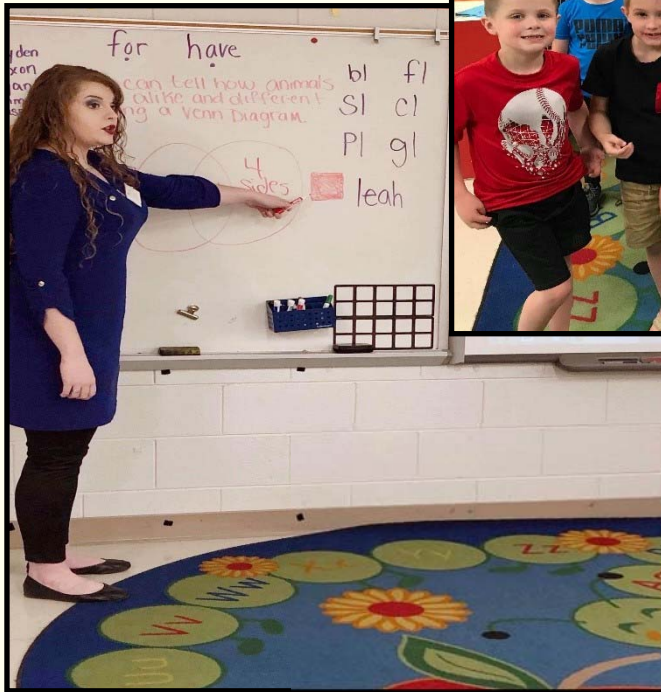
I took a very unusual college pathway. After receiving over one dozen scholarships, both institutional and local, I decided to commute from Kenvir, Kentucky to Barbourville, Kentucky. I have made the continual hour-and-fifteen-minute journey to school for three years now. For the first year and a half of college, I resided by myself; that is, until I married my husband in January of this year. I knew early on that the typical “college scene” wasn't exactly for me and had to make the decision to put myself in the best place for success. A sense of independence and confidence that I can accredit to Talent Search. I learned all about balance, organization, and management skills through the program and, trust me, they have been put to the test while being an active undergraduate student, maintaining a household, and moving forward in the work force.

I worked retail for the first two years of college. Recently, though, I have secured a job in the field of my dreams: education. Until the date of my graduation, I will be working at a local elementary school tutoring and mentoring. This is the same school at which I will perform my student teaching at next fall and have already been guaranteed a

position upon completing my undergrad. Having the privilege of transitioning with ease into the school system and landing a job that will guide me directly into my career is something I do not take lightly. I am eternally appreciative.

Another unusual trait of mine among my age group is my intense love and passion for Appalachia. I have always known that I was meant to stay in the realms of the mountain people and create pathways of opportunity, growth, and prosperity for the youth of our region. Another characteristic that, yet again, Talent Search inspired. I realized that the possibilities within oneself are endless, and that every student has the power and authority to break ground in whichever field they pursue. I have been given a great opportunity, and thanks to the enlightenment that Talent Search shed on my life gave me the power to grasp it, earn it, and one day, live it."

Talent Search is especially proud to present Shyla's story as our DCEA success story of the year for 2018-2019. Shyla used the skills that she honed in Talent Search to carve out her own success and reach her goals through her own unique path. It has been our honor and privilege to have played a part in helping Shyla reach her educational and career goals through mentorship, advising and encouragement.





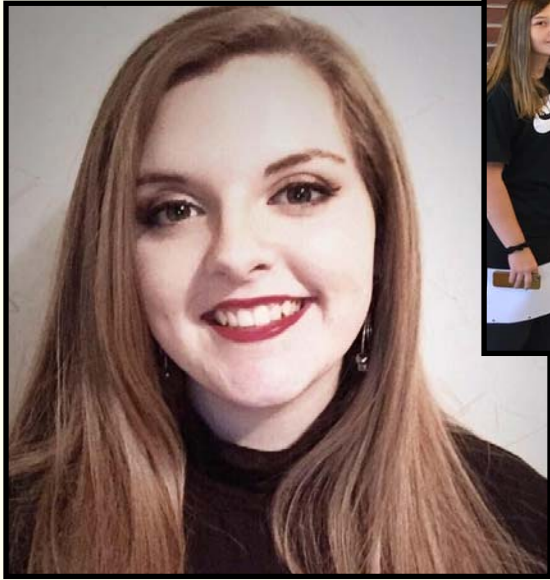
Douglas-Cherokee Economic Authority conducts a comprehensive community needs assessment every three years. While several areas of need change with each new assessment conducted, there is one area that has remained a constant need: transportation. Transportation is needed specifically for elderly who no longer drive to be able to get to doctor's appointments, the grocery store, the pharmacy, and to their local DCEA Neighborhood Service Center to seek services with utility bills, garden seed, food, prescription costs, etc. There is also a need for those that are seeking jobs to be able to get to job interviews and then be able to get to work after finding a job. There is also a constant need for those who do not have reliable transportation that wish to get to classes or appointments for furthering their education, etc.

The lack of reliable transportation in rural counties is a major need and thanks to additional funding through the Community Services Block Grant Special Projects, DCEA was able to hire a driver and create a small, yet effective, transportation service for any current DCEA program participant that lives in Cocke, Grainger, Hamblen, Jefferson, or Sevier counties.

While this service was only started in May 2019, the hard work put in by all has proven and continues to prove that DCEA is meeting a major need for its program participants with this transportation service. The month of May began with four requests and all four individuals receiving a transportation service. June saw a major increase with 19 transportation requests in which 18 transports were provided for a total of 11 different individuals served. If it wasn't for the dedication of the lead driver and the NSC data specialist in making this service very easy and efficient for all other DCEA program staff to assist their participants with finding transportation, then it wouldn't be continuing to grow with each month it is provided.

"We can't help everyone, but everyone can help someone." Ronald Reagan







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