



BLUE RIDGE OPPORTUNITIES

*Serving those in our community with disabilities.
Helping them to achieve feelings of economic self-worth and dignity through work.*

Saying Thank you by Giving a “Hand Up”



Volume 3, Issue 1

April 25, 2008

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If you have a friend or loved one that could benefit from the services we have described please contact Opportunities to schedule a visit.

540-636-4960

Blue Ridge Opportunities strives to make a difference in our Community. We are always seeking opportunities to give our clients an opportunity to participate in outreach activities that support other organizations such as the United Way of Warren County.

During the United Way’s “Day of Caring”, every client and staff member of Opportunities participated by helping clean up our community. With our 4 crews we were able to give back just a portion of what has been given to us in community support. We were able to pick up and dispose of 3,200 lbs of trash and spring clean an elderly lady’s yard. The Day of Caring gave our clients the opportunity to give a **HAND UP** to others, a lesson that we value as an organization and as a community.





Blue Ridge Opportunities
Building Dedication
February 21, 2008

Dedicating the John O. Feehan, Jr. Building

On Thursday, February 21, the friends, clients and staff of Blue Ridge Opportunities dedicated their building as "The John O. Feehan, Jr. Building".

For close to twenty years, John has worked tirelessly in his commitment to our community to help those with special needs.

John began his full commitment to helping those with disabilities some fifteen years ago as a member of the Warren County Educational Advisory Committee and has been its chairman over ten years. During this time, he has been actively involved in Special Olympics and is currently the coordinator for the Front Royal/Warren County chapter of Area 13 Special Olympics. He has also provided leadership as a coach and manager with the Challenger Division of Front Royal Little League Baseball for over ten years.

John has also served in a range of other community activities, as the Community Representative within the Community Policy and Management Team, as authorized under the Federal Community Services Act, to help at-risk youth. He and his wife Suzie volunteer as an emergency foster home, to help children needing an immediate home during a crisis.

John joined the Board of the then Warren County Workshop in 2005, becoming Chair that year, helping direct the recovery of the Workshop and its transition to the new Blue Ridge Opportunities.

His interests as a community volunteer have gone beyond working for those with disabilities to include being an active member of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks for over nine years, where he held various leadership and committee roles directed at helping the youth of the community.

John received the 2005 Virginia Governor's Community Services & Volunteerism Award, receiving recognition with the Outstanding Individual Volunteer Award.



Blue Ridge Opportunities is now filling 3 positions on the new Cooperate Board of Directors. If you would like to use your talents to assist us in fulfilling our renewed vision please contact:
Dick Braatz at
540-636-4960



On March, 24th, Blue Ridge Opportunities moved into the Cyber World! To learn more about our services and programs please

Visit our new WEBSITE:
www.BROpportunities.org

Thank you to Global Technology Services for their Great site work!

We would like to thank all those who have contributed to our

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 Rotary Club of Front Royal
 Calvary Episcopal Church
 KOVAR
 The ARC of Warren



Remember, if you ever need a helping hand, it's at the end of your arm, as you get older, remember you have another hand: The first is to help yourself, the second is to help others.
 —Audrey Hepburn

Blue Ridge Opportunities receives a much needed \$20,000 KOVAR grant to assist in replacing the roof on the 37 Water Street facility. The \$30,000 project was completed in January.

Opportunities is currently fundraising the remaining \$10,000. To contribute please contact Kathleen Pantano @ 636-4960.



Blue Ridge Opportunity Services, Inc.



SERVING THOSE IN OUR
COMMUNITY WITH
DISABILITIES.

“Working with Pride”

37 Water Street
Front Royal, Virginia 22630

Phone: 540-636-4960
Fax: 540-636-4961
www. BROpportunities.org



TO: A Friend of Blue Ridge Opportunities



Blue Ridge Opportunities

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Director Business Admin.
Claudia Jones
Kandi Lamb
Beth Pinner
Bonnie Kirkland
Frankie Kuykendall
Nikki Bialecki

Spring Plant Sale and Chicken B-B-Q

Saturday, May 10, 2008

8:00am-2:00pm

Location: 37 Water Street

The clients at Opportunities have been busy since January growing and nurturing plants to offer for sale.



Chicken ready at 11:00am

All proceeds benefit program supports at
Blue Ridge Opportunities



Helping Hand's Poker Run

Saturday, June 21, 2008

(rain date :June 22,2008)

Drive your Motorcycle, Car, or Truck

Poker Run begins at

Blue Ridge Opportunities

37 Water Street

\$15.00 per hand/\$5.00 each additional card

First Bike out @ 11:00am- Last Bike out @ 12:00 noon

Last Bike back in @ 5:00pm

(Directions and stop's will be handed out at Registration)

Pancake Breakfast will begin @ 9:00am for \$5.00.



For more information please call 540-636-4960

All proceeds benefit program supports at Blue Ridge Opportunities

Blue Ridge Opportunities has begun a new business venture!

“CLEAN SWEEPS”

Outdoor Clean Up and Landscaping Service

With the vision to integrate more individuals into the community and adding a variety of work offered to our clients, A Master Gardner on staff is teaching our clients landscaping skills. Opportunities’ Clean Sweeps offers:

- Light Push Mowing
- Weed eating
- Sweeping
- Picking up and disposing of trash
- Smoking areas clean up
- Raking leaves
- Mulching
- Plantings
- and other light landscaping tasks at your request.



Our clients take pride in the quality of their work and look forward to having the opportunity to serve you!

For more information on this service please contact Claudia Jones at 540-636-4960.



“It makes me feel good to make something pretty!”

-Gary, Blue Ridge Opportunities client

A Special Thank you to our foundational customers:

South Town Shopping Center

Holly Hill Professional Center

Chester Street Properties

The Southerlands

and Five Rings Arts and Education Center.

Upper Right- Amanda and Pammy raking and bagging leaves.

Bottom Left- Angie carefully giving lorapi a “haircut” at The Southerlands.

Delegate “Clay” Athey supports Blue Ridge Job Readiness Academy



An important priority identified and set by the Chamber, has been Business Workforce Development. Similarly the Front Royal-Warren County Economic Development Authority through the Future Community Roadmap has found future Workforce Development essential if we are to move into the future with a balanced and sustainable economy.

Recently our Delegate to the Virginia General Assembly Clifford L. “Clay” Athey, Jr. in an open letter dated March 31 recognizes our community work and the importance of workforce development on the local and state level. He states, if workforce development across the Commonwealth is to be a success, community acceptance and involvement is critically important. He commends the many community leaders for their work and attention to these long-standing educational needs.

State Government has also recognized the need for Virginia to continue to improve its standing in education and training if we are to compete in a worldwide economy. This is reflected in recent actions taken by the Virginia General Assembly to support and expand workforce-training programs culminating in the development of a State, Workforce Development Strategic Plan.



Here in the Front Royal-Warren County area, we have been fortunate that our local School Administration, together with our Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development Authority and Lord Fairfax Community College have been taking steps to identify and meet specific community workforce development needs. We have set as our goal to ensure that every segment of our community is given the opportunity to develop the education and training needed to be successful in the workplace. This has required the full participation of many organizations and agencies.



One need that has been consistently identified is providing Job Readiness Skills to those entering the workforce to fill many of the entry level or foundational positions.

As our Delegate to the Virginia General Assembly, Delegate Athey has been delighted to see our community taking action to provide workforce development skills throughout the community. One example is the initiative to establish the Blue Ridge Job Readiness Academy by Blue Ridge Opportunities.

Blue Ridge Opportunities is working to develop and implement this needed learning institution. Delegate Athey encourages both individuals and businesses to become more aware of this important effort, and lend their support to it. The Academy is being developed through the cooperation of our local School Administration, Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development Authority and Lord Fairfax Community College, and is intended to meet a very important need in helping to provide entry level jobs for our most vulnerable citizens.



As our Delegate, Clay Athey promises that he will continue to work for strong Workforce Development programs. In his experience, he feels most people would prefer a hand up the ladder of success as opposed to a handout. He states he is committed to supporting organizations like Blue Ridge Opportunities who give individuals in need of job skills a hand up the ladder toward earning a living wage and by extension a better life.

Filling in the Cracks- A New Job Readiness Academy

Many individuals fall through the cracks of services as they exit High School and enter the workforce. We have been working diligently with the Public School System to serve individuals with special needs to ease the transition to the workforce upon graduation. The Student Transition Program is now in its second year. This program targets individuals with disabilities currently in High School, however there are still individuals who are falling through the cracks and have difficulty crossing their barriers to employment.

Opportunities has been listening to the needs of the community and placing agencies. In attempt to meet the needs of the developing workforce in Warren County, Blue Ridge Opportunities is developing The Blue Ridge Job Readiness Academy. This program is anticipated to begin in early fall 2008. Students may enroll in this program to develop much needed work readiness skills, and pre-requisites for state programs and educational facilities.



We are currently seeking qualified educators to volunteer and assist us in launching this program into reality. If you would like to assist us in meeting this critical need in Warren County please contact: Dick Braatz at 540-636-4960.

Important Academy Endorsements continued on page 4



We are in need of the following items to assist our clients in learning important job skills.

Gardening Tools

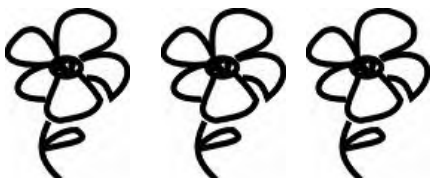
Work Gloves

Safety Glasses

Flower Pots

Potting Soil

Gravel



Warren County Farm Bureau Sponsors Cooking Program

Many thanks to the Warren County Farm Bureau for sponsoring a much needed independent living skill. Blue Ridge Opportunities has developed a cooking program that serves individuals who are well on their way to independent living.

Individuals in this program learn valuable skills in shopping, planning, preparing meals, and safe food storage.

During the last several months they have learned to make apple pie, chili, shepherd's pie, tuna melts, eggs and pancakes.



Coming Fall of 2008!

Blue Ridge Opportunities Cook Book.

To reserve your copy please contact Kandi Lamb at 540-636-4960