

PLATEAU

December/January 2022

MOUNTAIN LIFE IN HIGHLANDS-CASHIERS NORTH CAROLINA

Checking it Twice

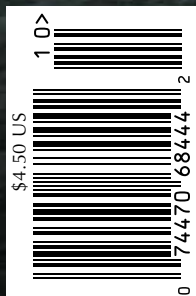
Our Nonprofit Nice List

Summit Salud

Toast of the Town

Escape Room

Asheville for the Holidays



Tom Neal of
Highlands-Cashiers
Hospital

Holiday
Gift Guide

Fashion



Give the gift
that lasts
all year long...
a subscription to

PLATEAU
MOUNTAIN LIFE IN HIGHLANDS-CASHIERS NORTH CAROLINA
MAGAZINE

Subscribe Online
Today at
ThePlateauMag.com

from the editor



Phantom Thread

Want to know a secret? Since we began, each issue of Plateau Magazine has always had a theme. It's a little bit like Christmas morning when all the stories show up in my inbox; I rarely know the theme before then. Sure, our leadership team creates an editorial calendar a year in advance. Yes, I research and confirm every story early. But there is always a phantom thread that only reveals itself at the end. Sometimes I have a hunch about what will present itself; other times, I'm caught entirely by surprise.

It took me a few issues to understand the importance of the phantom thread. At first, I would be riddled with anxiety and stress if a story didn't pan out or a writer had to back out. More than once, there was an eleventh-hour pivot. Not fun when you are racing a publishing clock. But time and time again, those changes make a difference. A writer with a different voice or experiential empathy might make all the difference in exposing the phantom thread. Things I did not know, could not know when assigning a story and writer, end up working their way to the surface.

What I have decided about this phenomenon is that when a large group of people focuses on a single platform, something special happens. Call it the Holy Spirit, collective consciousness, quantum mechanics' observer effect or whatever your set of thoughts and beliefs align with.

It happens. Every. Single. Issue. Somehow, 20 different authors and a handful of photographers go out and come back in with 20 or so unique stories that create a larger narrative when read as a whole.

I didn't know what this issue's story would be. I almost wondered if the thread would be so small it wasn't identifiable. But, instead, it hit me in a tender place: creativity. This thread was incredibly potent because it presented itself just days after a friend to our community, ceramic artist Justin Allman, passed away.

I had many conversations with Justin about creativity. Most were about the artistic struggle to make what brings you joy, find value in your work, feel comfortable pricing it accordingly, and not spend time or talent on making anything that didn't meet those three criteria. If you knew Justin, I encourage you to think back on your conversations. If you didn't, I encourage you to contemplate creativity and how it pulls at your heartstrings. What is this phantom thread trying to mend or unravel in your life? Where is creativity demanding more observation? Think about it, sit with it and like a child on Christmas morning, open a box of new possibilities.

Kat Ford
Managing Editor
editor@theplateaumag.com

We welcome your comments. Please send us your feedback or story ideas by emailing us at editor@theplateaumag.com

Find Us Online!



Visit us on our website at
theplateaumag.com



facebook.com/plateaumag
instagram.com/plateaumag



Cashiers Festival of Trees co-chairs Sarah Palisi Chapin and Sarah Jennings toast to the fundraiser's success.

Photos by Chelsea Cronkrite » Holiday décor and styling: Oakleaf Flower & Garden » Location: Lonesome Valley Farmhouse

Toasty

Leadership for the inaugural Festival of Trees invited us to an intimate holiday dining event, bringing good tidings to the plateau

By KAT FORD

THE SUMMIT CHARTER SCHOOL FOUNDATION HAS BEEN CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS since the spring. If you follow @CashiersFestivalofTrees on Instagram and Facebook, you might have noticed a few unseasonably early Christmas-inspired posts pop up in your feed. A picture of piles of wrapping paper rolls being carted across the gym floor with a thank you to American Greetings and Cashiers Valley Pharmacy for their donation. A shot of ornaments and Christmas décor-filled showrooms from the AmericasMart Atlanta. How could you possibly have missed the twinkle light-covered Orchard Restaurant's Harvest Barn, complete with wreaths and trees during the Moët & Chandon Toast of the Trees in July?

It has been a long-running social media joke to drop a Mariah Carey-inspired meme in the comment section for friends who put their tree up the day after Halloween. A little side-eye judgment from those of us that adhere to strict “Christmas after Thanksgiving” protocol. But what are we supposed to do with an event destined to get the melody to “All I Want for Christmas Is You” stuck in our heads when we would much rather be having hot fun in the summertime? The Festival of Trees co-chairs Sarah Chapin and Sarah Jennings, along with the Summit Charter School Foundation, encourage the entire community to get in the holiday, and by that they mean school, spirit, year-round.

The build-up took over twelve months, but the payoffs were significant. Scheduled during Thanksgiving weekend, the Festival of Trees offered a multi-day, family-friendly event lineup. Guests were encouraged to get in the holiday spirit by viewing and bidding on decorated trees and holiday décor, enjoying a wide variety of holiday performances, creating personalized children’s crafts, celebrating literacy on the Dolly Parton Imagination Library Storytime Stage, enjoying a Build-a-Bear Experience, and shopping one-of-a-kind gifts in the Gift Zone.

Though the event was hosted by the Summit Charter School Foundation and benefited the school, the team found a way to spread the holiday cheer to participating nonprofits.

“We were blown away by the tremendous support of our fellow charities and schools. While raising money for the school is the event's primary focus, we decided to spread the holiday spirit of giving. When a nonprofit or school decorates a tree or wreath, 20% of the item's sale will go back to the participating nonprofit, creating a collaborative initiative to benefit our fellow charities and their worthy causes. Supporting our entire community is very important to our cause and the school’s overall mission. Some of the organizations participating include The Bascom, Blue Ridge Free Dental Clinic, Blue Ridge School, Four Seasons Compassion for Life, Camp Merrie-Woode Foundation, Highlands Cashiers Health Foundation and many more. We also had a wide variety of businesses decorating trees, wreaths and gift baskets, such as Zoller Hardware, Gracewear Boutique, Cedar Creek Club, Spruce Interiors, and Acorns Boutique. We even had a NASA tree, including an all-inclusive trip for two students to space camp in Texas!” said Melissa Hudson, development director at Summit Charter School. Her excitement is well-placed; a similar charity-based gift from Tennessee inspired this inaugural fundraising event.



Kirk Moore of Oakleaf Flower & Garden in Highlands lent his talents to the dining event, combining botanical charm with refined holiday whimsy.



Moët Hennessy was an avid supporter of the events, sponsoring July's Toast of the Trees dinner, the VIP Breakfast with the Grinch, and this dining event, which was paired with Cloudy Bay's sauvignon blanc and pinot noir from Marlborough, as well as Cloudy Bay's Te Wahi, a red wine from Central Otago, South Island, New Zealand.



(Left to right) Richard Jennings, Sarah Jennings, Andrew Hudson, Melissa Hudson, Rob Hunter, Carol Hunter, Sarah Chapin, Jud Chapin, Jason Guerra

“The event was inspired by Melissa Hudson and a gift she received from someone who'd attended the Knoxville Fantasy of Trees. The gift was in honor of Melissa's late mother. She brought the idea to the school's Foundation as they were looking for a signature event,” says Sarah Chapin, who was recruited with Sarah Jennings by Melissa Hudson as co-chairs. What inspired these women to take on the year-long task? “Any opportunity to support what Melissa Hudson believes in; she drives change in our community for the betterment of others,” beams Chapin. “We

have two boys that attend Summit, and we couldn't be more proud of the education that they receive at this very special school. I wanted to participate in the Festival of Trees to give back to a place that has given so much to our family. I wanted to be a part of a new community tradition that benefits more than just our local children,” explains Jennings.

The Summit Center transformed into a winter wonderland with trees devoted to specific causes within the plateau community and programs at Summit Charter School. Those previously mentioned rolls of wrapping paper and ornaments? They were stored under the gym's stage, waiting for businesses and nonprofits to pick them up for tree-trimming and a DIY Gift Wrapping Station at Hampton Realty during event days, managed by students and merry volunteers. “Personally, I am volunteering as a Foundation board member; from a business perspective, Hampton Realty hosted the gift-wrapping station on Friday and Saturday,” said Andrew Hudson. “My son Warren is a first-grader at Summit, and this is an exciting new idea for a fundraiser in this community. Historically families come to this area for Thanksgiving and to get a Christmas tree for their homes off the mountain, so it just makes sense to me to combine the two.”

A long list of charities and businesses joined in as Festival of Trees elves this year. Kirk Moore of Oakleaf Flower & Garden in Highlands donated potted conifer tabletop trees wrapped in burlap bags for the Foundation to sell and participated in the Gift Zone. They also displayed a booth with their famous locally made plateau wreaths and introduced to Cashiers their wonderful,



(Left to right) Summit Charter School Development Director Melissa Hudson with Festival of Trees co-chairs Sarah Jennings and Sarah Chapin



Oakleaf styling has a recognizable aesthetic, reflecting a sense of place. Using botanicals, mosses, twigs and other discoveries from the forest floor mixed with floral specimens grown locally, a composition is born that tells a story. For Kirk Moore, the creativity transfused into Oakleaf's style is incredibly personal, he and his sister Leith learned the art from their mother.



Plateau Magazine donated a tabletop Christmas tree titled "Bountiful Blessings" made of locally-sourced hydrangeas, wood, grapevine, hand-sculpted porcelain flowers, feathers, twine and natural stone beads. In the spirit of giving, we asked guests what nonprofits they support on the plateau.

We support a variety of nonprofits across the plateau, with Summit Charter School and the Fire Department at the top of our list.
-Josh Crawford

Melissa serves as secretary for the Cashiers Community Fund and Andrew is a board member of the Summit Charter School Foundation. Other organizations we support on the plateau include the Cashiers Historical Society, The Village Green, The Boys & Girls Club of the Plateau, Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust, Blue Ridge Free Dental Clinic, Highlands Cashiers Health Foundation and the Church of the Good Shepherd.
-Melissa and Andrew Hudson

I am on the board of the Boys & Girls Club of the Plateau, Cashiers Area Chamber of Commerce, Cashiers Valley Preschool and I am a former member of the Jackson County Tourism Development Authority.
-Sarah Jennings

Jud and I support the Highlands-Cashiers Plateau Vaccine Initiative with time and, where invited, community outreach. We also support the Cedar Creek Club Donor Advised Fund in order to reach more organizations than the ones we know personally. We are big fans of the Blue Ridge Free Dental Clinic and the Cashiers-Highlands Humane Society.
-Sarah and Jud Chapin

Rob serves as treasurer of the Summit Charter School Foundation. Carol is chair of the endowment board at the Church of the Good Shepherd and serves on the boards for Four Seasons Compassion for Life, the Community Foundation of Western North Carolina, and the Community Care Clinic of Highlands-Cashiers. Carol is on the charitable fund committee of the Cedar Creek Club, which this year provided support to 22 nonprofits on the plateau.
-Carol and Rob Hunter

lacquered magnolia wreaths in golds, silvers, greens and reds. "Even though my Jack Russell Terrier, Elliot, will never be able to matriculate at Summit Charter School, I am proud to be a loyal supporter of the amazing programs they provide children on the plateau," says Moore.

"I enjoy sewing and crafting, so I created handmade items sold in the Gift Zone. I worked with my team at Lonesome Valley to create the most gorgeous tree that we donated, featuring pressed flowers and fern leaves from our gardens. As a board member of the Boys & Girls Club of the Plateau, I worked with my fellow board members and kid club members in creating our upcycled, construction-themed tree," said Sarah Jennings, event co-chair and special events and marketing director of Lonesome Valley.

"Moët & Chandon sponsored the VIP donor event held over the summer at The Orchard Restaurant. It felt great bringing people together after so many months of staying home and not being able to see friends and family. It was a great way to toast the supporters of this wonderful event," said Jason Guerra, on-off premise manager for Moët Hennessy.

"My family owns the Cashiers Farmers Market and Cashiers Firewood. We sponsored the event, provided a tree and designed a firewood structure for folks to bid on," says Josh Crawford, board chair of the Summit Charter School Foundation, adding, "I

was inspired to support my daughter's school, local education and the community as a whole. I am a team player that enjoys team projects. I want this event to have as wide a community impact as possible."

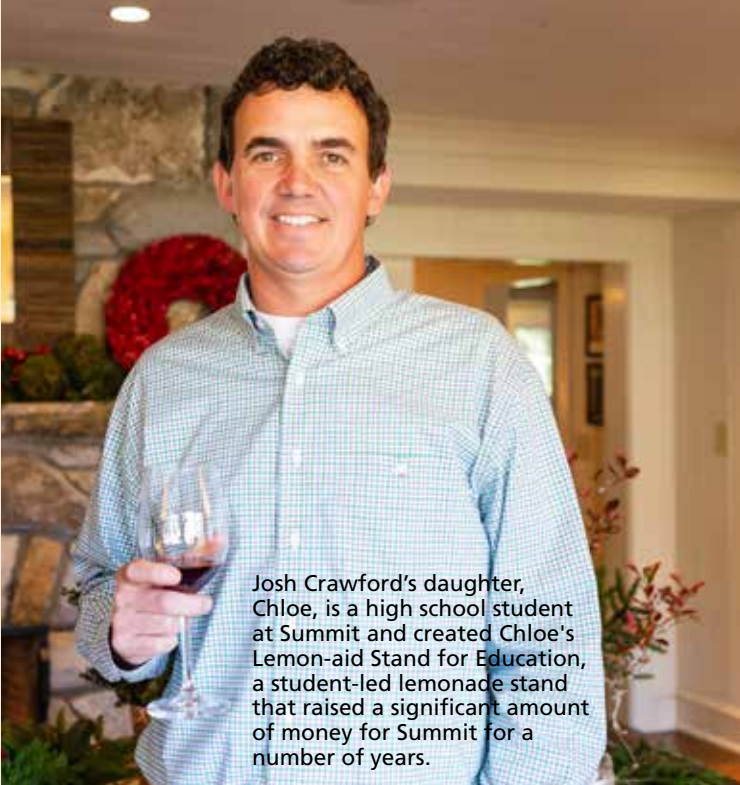
Carol and Rob Hunter were Star Benefactors of the Festival of Trees and hosted the Toast to the Trees event held in July. Carol volunteered to help at the festival and arranged for another non-profit, Four Seasons Compassion for Life, to donate a tree for the event. "This struck us as a way to contribute not only to Summit Charter School but also to our entire community," said Carol.

As those of us who have led any major event in the past know, the end of the event is not the end for a leadership team. This inaugural group is excited for the future. "We will take learnings from this event by speaking with attendees and participants and evaluate how to grow the event even bigger and better. We will also take our learnings and document them to provide a springboard for future leadership," says co-chair Sarah Chapin.

With a community-wide event that focuses on spreading the holiday spirit of giving, the Summit Charter School Foundation might have the whole plateau humming "It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas" next summer. At the very least, a few more of us most certainly will be putting our trees up a little closer to Halloween. ■



Rob Hunter, Carol Hunter,
Sarah Chapin, Jud Chapin



Josh Crawford's daughter, Chloe, is a high school student at Summit and created Chloe's Lemon-aid Stand for Education, a student-led lemonade stand that raised a significant amount of money for Summit for a number of years.



A signature Oakleaf style vignette, bringing enchanting evergreen elements indoors to create a breathtaking foraged holiday look.



Oakleaf Flower & Garden lacquered magnolia wreaths last year-round. Magnolia flowers represent a love for nature, nobility, perseverance and dignity. In the spirit of the magnolia, we asked guests to identify needs on the plateau to raise awareness for those living in and visiting the area, as well as creative solutions for those who want to help.

There are so many wonderful and worthy organizations on the plateau, and they are all looking for help, whether it's through the gift of volunteering, lending your talents or financial commitments. Being an active and informed member of the community results in positive community impact and I find it to be so rewarding. Join us! I would love to talk with anyone who is looking to get involved with the community; we are always looking for help at the school and Foundation!
—Melissa Hudson

Affordable housing for teachers, employees of small businesses and the many clubs in the area. Identify an area you feel passionate about whether it be conservation, education or healthcare, etc. There are several organizations focused on those areas locally that you can support financially or through volunteer work.
—Andrew Hudson

Cashiers thrives because of the people and the community that has been created here over generations. We get to reap the benefits of generous community members from decades ago. Our community needs support to thrive. Our schools aren't fully funded by the state, so any "extras" like music, art, etc., happen because of the generosity of others. Those needs will never go away. Food insecurity continues to also be a major concern for our community. There are so many great organizations on the plateau that need participation. Get involved! Volunteer your time or join a board. It is so rewarding.
—Sarah Jennings

Like so many other places these days, we are dealing with a major labor shortage in this area. It makes providing the cornerstones of this community very difficult to achieve, like good restaurants and well-built homes. We need to find a way to get more people into the workforce. There is something for everyone. Whatever your interests, I am sure you can find a great fit for you.
—Richard Jennings

There are so many employment opportunities on the plateau, which is also rich in education and exposure to avenues for personal growth from relationships formed here, as well as increased access to outdoor living in natural surroundings. There are growing needs to protect our natural resources: our water and our infrastructure. We need affordable quality housing for working families to meet these opportunities. We appreciate the generosity of seasonal homeowners who invest in this community. We invite those seeking involvement to come visit all of our schools. There is so much happening, and supporting all educational providers only elevates opportunities. Come into the classroom, share knowledge and experience. We live in an ever-more connected world. Leverage what you know into classrooms and with those you work with and meet. Ask others how to help, where to help.
—Sarah Chapin

Since we have no municipal government in Cashiers, it falls on individuals, churches and social clubs to meet the charitable needs of our community. Each of us who lives on the plateau, whether full- or part-time, must do our part, or it simply will not be done. More specifically to Summit Charter School, we must assure that Summit continues to provide our community's children with opportunities and the tools to capitalize on those opportunities. Working together to meet the needs of our community is necessary to maintain this wonderful life we enjoy on the plateau.
—Carol and Rob Hunter



THE NICE LIST

We've made our list and checked it twice; here's what a few of our treasured plateau nonprofits have on their Christmas wish list

By KAT FORD

WHEN IT COMES TO EXPERIENCING THE PLATEAU, THERE ARE A HANDFUL OF ADVENTURES, explorations and happenings that we can all agree are paramount in making a winning equation. Breathtaking natural beauty is a constant variable, as is our local nonprofit sector. From cultural enrichment to mental and physical wellness, environmental conservation, to extended learning for all ages, the plateau has a vibrant group of nonprofits that make living and visiting Highlands and Cashiers more fulfilling. These organizations' donors, staff and volunteers work tirelessly as authoritative voices within their realms of expertise. They point to findings in natural sciences, underscore the needs of our neighbors, look for lessons in our history, encourage youth, expose us to art, music and theatre.

Every year, these organizations start anew the race we call "making budget," and come December, those last moments of giving can make or break the ability to fulfill their mission in the future. For most organizations, these funds come from several different sources, including donations, events, grants, memberships, ticket or merchandise sales, and the Hail Mary pass known as the End-of-Year Giving Campaign which normally begins on #GivingTuesday.

The word budget sounds large, a somewhat abstract sum without organizational context to the parts of the whole. Budget is a sort of Schrödinger's cat, a thought experiment that both is and isn't until the end of the year when the box opens. If the number falls short, there are cuts to be made, funds to dip into and extra ground to cover in the next year to recuperate. If the number exceeds, there is growth and added security.

Another way a budget is similar to a cat? There is more than one way to skin one. While some budget items, such as rent, insurance and utilities, cannot be offset, others have room for thinking outside the box. For example, buildings and campuses may require significant repairs, renovation and expansion over time, but if the budget includes labor for smaller projects such as the manpower to clean public trails or build storage shelves, a workday

with skilled volunteers could offset that financial need. Likewise, budgeting needs for tools, office supplies, or a reliable vehicle could be filled by donating boxes of screws left over from home renovation projects, decluttering home offices, or an often-unused family truck.

Budget doesn't only equate to a building and utilities, although those are vital. Budget also includes staff salaries. Staff salaries are much-needed, full-time, year-round jobs on the plateau. Staff salaries, and better yet, staff salaries with room for promotion and growth, bode well for retaining talented and skilled members of our community. Members of our community who eat at restaurants, shop at stores and support the economic thread of our area through the off-season. Retaining staff secures organizational memory. Salaries with room for growth encourage further education and training. This consistency and excellence ensure that the nonprofit working members of our community are empowered to offer their best as thought leaders, creating programming that positively affects learning, creativity, our natural resources, mental, physical and spiritual health. Gifting an organization with the power to pay their staff competitive wages, expanding with the cost of living in a seasonal resort community, creates avenues where employees might one day own a home instead of desperately seeking rentals as real estate prices rise. Further, the ability to hire new staff creates a safety net for thriving nonprofits so current employees, or organizations that operate with full-time volunteers, don't face burnout from overextension, leading to high turnover. While budget helps an organization stay on par, a financial gift exceeding budget can be a game-changer—not just for the nonprofit but for the staff's quality of life.

Financial gifts are the easiest to quantify, but donations of leadership, skill and time are invaluable. Commitments of service by board members who bring an entire career worth of experience in various fields may offset budgetary needs to pay for those same services. Accounting, graphic design, human recourses, law, management, marketing, retail and teaching are all examples of ways dedicated board members can offer time and talents. Similarly, those with less long-term time to give can offer these same services for

short-term projects. Even shorter-term volunteer opportunities include becoming a docent or greeter, helping with social media posts, minor clerical activities or volunteering for fundraising events and workdays. A volunteer task as simple as stuffing envelopes frees a staff member or long-term volunteer to answer emails, something they would otherwise do after hours. Those who excel at reading and grammar can help lessen the stress of volunteer grant writers or assist in press releases for organizations that operate with no paid staff. Finally, a simple and much-valued volunteer effort is to inform friends and family of your favorite organization and amplify their efforts.

wrapped under your tree will be from one of our libraries' used bookstores. Your stocking stuffers might be tickets for the Highlands-Cashiers Chamber Music Festival, Playhouse, or PAC, or note that a charitable contribution was given in your nonprofit-loving family member's name. Consider creating an advent calendar or Chanukah tradition where you choose one favorite nonprofit to share on social media each day as a celebration. To get the good tidings rolling, we've created a list of some of the plateau's treasured nonprofits, their missions, budgets and a few items on their wish lists. With a holiday registry like this, these are most certainly the gifts that keep giving.



There are many ways to help our local nonprofits; all are highly valued. Whether you can help over the long-term or short-term with time, talents or dollars, all efforts are significant. Perhaps you'll buy some of your gifts this year from the gift shops at The Bascom or the Highlands Biological Foundation. Maybe the books

(opposite) "Music in Motion," Full Company; Highlands Playhouse 2021; (above) The Bascom campus in winter

Advance Highlands Education Committee (AHEC)
828.526.9296
advancehighlands@gmail.com

To advance Highlands School education through community involvement.

Annual Budget: Approximately \$200,000

Christmas wish list: Funding for S.T.E.A.M. programs at Highlands School!

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Cashiers & Highlands
828.399.9133
bbbswnc.org

Our mission is to create and support one-to-one mentoring relationships that ignite the power and promise of youth.

Annual Budget: \$60,000

Christmas wish list: Bigs (mentors) and Council Members



Blue Ridge Bartram Trail Conservancy
828.371.0347
blueridgebartram.org

Our mission is to maintain a 110-mile trail through the mountains of northeast Georgia and western North Carolina honoring the 18th century naturalist and artist, William Bartram, who described the area's rich diversity of species and its native inhabitants in his 1791 publication, "Travels of William Bartram."

Annual Budget: \$108,000

Christmas wish list: Funding for our paid summer youth trail corps and a pickup truck!

(above) View from Whiterock Mountain off the Bartram Trail; Serenity Richards, branch librarian for the Albert Carlton-Cashiers Community Library; Diane Stumm, board secretary for Fishes & Loaves Food Pantry, with some of the food donated during the 2021 Empty Bowls Food Drive.

Blue Ridge Free Dental Clinic
828.743.3393
brfdc.org

The Blue Ridge Free Dental Clinic delivers emergency, restorative and preventative dental care to people who cannot otherwise afford these critically needed services. We restore lives, one tooth at a time. We estimate that over 17,000 people in our serviceable counties meet the financial qualifications of the Clinic making them eligible for our services. Since 2005, the Clinic has performed over 69,000 procedures over 20,000 patient visits with a value exceeding \$10 million.

Annual Budget: \$520,000

Christmas wish list: All we want for Christmas is our two front teeth! We wish to maintain our highest capacity to make sure that everyone in need of compassionate dental care is able to be treated at our Clinic. To do this, operating funds for critical dental staff are necessary.

Blue Ridge School Education Foundation Inc.
828.743.3586
www.brsfoundation.com

The Blue Ridge School Education Foundation provides supplemental resources for Blue Ridge School and Early College to expand educational experiences for children and staff in order to achieve and maintain a world-class education environment.

Annual Budget: estimated \$200,000

Christmas wish list: The Blue Ridge School and Early College building is almost 60 years old. We wish the Jackson County Board of Commissioners and the Jackson County Public School System would authorize and provide the funding for a significant architectural update to the front of the building. We continue to be so proud of the teaching faculty and staff and the administrative leadership at the school for the academic and social development of the students enrolled at Blue Ridge School (Prek-6) and Early College Middle and High School (7 - 13).

Boys & Girls Club of the Plateau
www.bgcplateau.org
828.743.2775

The Boys & Girls Club of the Plateau provides after-school activities and programs to enhance the experience of children in



southern Jackson County. Through use of The Boys & Girls Club's nationally proven curriculum, working parents are equipped with affordable daily after-school programming and full-day summer programming for their children.

Annual Budget: \$600,000

Christmas wish list: On the top of our list is funding for a new playground. We are also badly in need of a 15-passenger van, wishing for game tables for our new building (pool, foosball, air hockey) and appliances like a small stackable washer/dryer set.

Community Care Clinic of Highlands-Cashiers, Inc.
828.526.1991
highlandscashiersclinic.org

To provide quality, primary medical care to the low-income, uninsured population of this area.

Annual Budget: \$305,700

Christmas wish list: Monetary donations are the most helpful.

Cashiers Historical Society
828.743.7710
www.cashiershistoricalsociety.org

Through thoughtful educational platforms and preservation of the Zachary-Tolbert House, Colonel John's Cabin, the dependency and the Hampton Schoolhouse, CHS is maintaining the legacy of a historical place.



Annual Budget: \$306,000

Christmas wish list: Volunteers and donations supporting the maintenance and preservation upkeep of our historical buildings, including the Zachary-Tolbert House, which is on the National Register of Historic Places. Historical buildings require constant maintenance; their upkeep is vital to our mission of preserving the history of the Cashiers Valley and providing educational opportunities for learners of all ages.

Cashiers-Highlands Humane Society

828.743.5752

chhumaneociety.org

Our mission is to rescue, offer compassionate care and adoption for abandoned and neglected animals, reuniting lost pets with families, low-cost spay/neuter, pet pantry, summer camps, humane education.

Christmas Wishlist: Adopt. Donate. Volunteer. Be kind to animals. Love each other the same way our pets love us – unconditionally and for a lifetime.



Center for Life Enrichment (CLE)

828.526.8811

clehighlands.com

CLE is a nonprofit organization, serving the Highlands community for nearly 30 years and delivering opportunities for life gratification and enrichment through educational programs presented by well-informed scholars, fine culinary experiences, music, entertainment, travel opportunities and art and hobby workshops.

Christmas wish list: To welcome new members to our CLE family. Generous support to host innovative programs comes through membership and class attendance. For more information, please visit our website.

Circles of Cashiers-Glenville

828.553.5874

circlescashiersglenville.org

The mission of CirclesUSA, a national program with chapters across the country, is to inspire and equip families and communities to thrive and resolve poverty. We believe strongly that responsibility for getting out of poverty starts with the individual in poverty but also rests in engaging people and organizations in the community to help them and to reduce and end poverty. We serve the low-income citizens in Cashiers, Glenville and the surrounding plateau who are motivated to create a change in their lives, from “surviving to thriving,” by committing to Circles Training and partnering with a supportive Ally. Circles also aspires to change the mindset of the community at large regarding poverty. Our vision is that everyone has enough money, friends and sense of purpose to thrive!

Annual Budget: \$60,000

Christmas wish list: We are looking for candidates who are interested and committed to leading their way out of poverty. We are also looking for folks who would be interested in becoming “Allies” (intentional friends). Please contact Mary Jane Lucas at 828.553.5874.

Counseling Center

205.470.9482

counseling-center.org

The Counseling Center strives to strengthen families and individuals by providing access to quality mental health services regardless of financial ability.

Annual Budget: \$50,000

Christmas wish list: Everyone should be able to access mental health care on the plateau, contributions make this possible including adding more clinicians (both English and Spanish-speaking) and community workshops to our offerings. We also need new throw pillows for our office space at the Peggy Crosby Center, two new comfortable wingback or conversation chairs and two locked filing cabinets, contact Leslie at info@counseling-center.org.

Fishes & Loaves Food Pantry, Inc.

828.508.0378

fishesandloavescashiers.org

Our mission is to provide free food to persons in Jackson County and the surrounding area who fall below the federal poverty line.

Annual Budget: \$205,879 (2021)

Christmas wish list: Great turnouts for our annual distribution of complete Thanksgiving dinners on November 18 and 22 and complete Christmas dinners on December 20 and 23.

Friends of the Albert Carlton-Cashiers Community Library

828.743.0215

cashiersfriends.com

Enriching the library through advocacy, fundraising and activities. We work to obtain and provide funds which enable the library to acquire books, periodicals, equipment, digital and other materials, and supplies needed to make the library one of the most important providers of education for the communities of Cashiers, Glenville and Sapphire.

Annual Budget: FY 2021 – 22: \$49,055

Christmas wish list: We hope shoppers will visit our used bookstore for holiday gifts; their purchases will help support fun and educational programs and materials for kids and families.

Friends of Founders Park, Inc.

foundersparkhighlands.org

Founded in 2007 for purchase and construction of a downtown green, our goal is to protect, inform and represent the park. Our mission is to generate and apply financial resources for maintenance and improvement in cooperation with the

town. The park is used as a downtown retreat for workers and visitors as well as supports events such as concerts, ice skating, arts and crafts, market days and nonprofit fundraisers.

Annual Budget: \$27,000

Christmas wish list: We wish for many continuing years of enjoyment of our beautiful and locally beneficial park in downtown Highlands.

Friends of Panthertown

828.269.HIKE (4453)

panthertown.org

Friends of Panthertown serves as stewards of our treasured forest by protecting and maintaining 30 miles of public non-motorized backcountry trails over 6,311 acres on Nantahala National Forest for all to enjoy. The mission of Friends of Panthertown is to work in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service to conserve this outstanding natural resource while improving the quality and experience of recreational opportunities in Panthertown.

Annual Budget: approximately \$130,000

Christmas wish list: We encourage everyone to "Leave No Trace" when visiting Panthertown and please consider becoming a Friend by volunteering or making a donation. Text PANTHERTOWN to 44321 or visit our website to make a tax-deductible gift.

Highlands Biological Foundation

828.526.2221

highlandsbiological.org

Our mission is to foster research and education focused on the rich natural heritage of the Highlands Plateau, while preserving and celebrating the biological crown of the southern Appalachian Mountains. We help all ages connect to nature through programs all year long and educate over 10,000 visitors on Highlands' natural history through the Highlands Nature Center and Botanical Garden. We also invest in the important field research of the Highlands Biological Station.

Annual Budget: \$500,000

Christmas wish list:

- Funds to support the work of the Foundation
- Amazon gift cards to purchase supplies for Nature Center programs
- Gas cards to cover transportation to outreach events

Highlands-Cashiers Chamber Music Festival

828.526.9060

hcmusicfestival.org

The Highlands-Cashiers Chamber Music Festival enhances the cultural life of Western North Carolina by sponsoring performances by acclaimed musicians and promoting education, outreach and audience development programs that foster an appreciation of chamber music. The Festival's regular concert series runs July 1 - August 7, 2022.

Annual Budget: \$400,000

Christmas wish list:

- Sponsors for our "Martinis & Mozart" special event at Old Edward Inn's Orchard House
- Concert underwriters
- Hosts for our Feasts of the Festival and Salon programs

Highlands Cashiers Health Foundation

828.482.6510

hchealthfnd.org

The Highlands Cashiers Health Foundation's (HCHF) mission is to improve the health and well-being of Cashiers, Highlands and surrounding communities.

Christmas wish list: For the plateau, healthcare has become a critical concern, as the area has struggled to retain quality physicians in recent years. Since opening in June, Blue Ridge Health – Highlands Cashiers' two primary care physicians have risen to the care challenge, going above and beyond to meet their patient's needs to live healthy and well. As a fixed-cost health center providing care for all patients, regardless of their ability to pay, HCHF relies on the generosity of our community to help fill the funding gap. Please consider investing in the long-term health of the plateau, gifting a solution to the decades-long issue of a primary care physician shortage on the plateau.

Highlands Emergency Council (HEC)

828.526.4357

Our mission is to assist low-income residents of the Highlands area, senior citizens, young families, single parent families and disaster victims of any age. Help includes food, clothing, household goods, appliances and fuel as they are available.

Annual Budget: \$81,000 (2021)

Christmas wish list: Food and volunteers

Highlands Historical Society

828.787.1050

highlandshistory.com

Highlands Historical Society preserves and promotes the rich heritage of Highlands for present and generations to come. Open to the public free of charge June-October, the Historic Village welcomes visitors, both out-of-town and local residents.

Annual Budget: \$70,000

Christmas wish list: Continuing partnership with Western Carolina University.

Highlands Performing Arts Center

828.526.9047

HighlandsPerformingArts.com

Our mission is to provide high quality venues and performing arts for the Highlands-Cashiers community.

Annual Budget: \$289,000

Christmas wish list: As we emerge from this pandemic, after being shuttered for more than a year, we are still in need of your support for our daily operations. While we continue to raise money for the Capital Campaign, funding our exciting expansion, we need to raise a minimum of \$50K with Year-End-Giving for the 2021 operating budget, which is not supplemented by donations from the Capital Campaign. Our patrons stepped up last year to help; they kept us afloat.

Highlands Plateau Audubon Society

404.295.0663

highlandsaudubonsociety.com

The mission of the Highlands Plateau Audubon Society is to provide opportunities to enjoy and learn about birds and other wildlife and to promote conservation and restoration of the habitats that support them.

Annual Budget: \$6,000

Christmas wish list: Funds to purchase bird boxes, poles and predator guards

(right) Center for Life Enrichment offers a variety of programs including educational lectures, art workshops, guided hikes and fine wine & culinary experiences, such as this guided tour of Lonesome Valley enjoyed by several CLE members.

Highlands Plateau Greenway

highplateaugreenway@gmail.com
highlandsgreenway.com

Our mission is to develop a system of walking and hiking trails that protect and connect the natural settings and historic sites of the Highlands, NC, area.

Annual Budget: \$20,000

Christmas wish list: To expand our trail system to connect more of Highlands beautiful natural settings.

Highlands Playhouse

828.526.2695
highlandsplayhouse.org

As the longest-running operating live theatre in North Carolina with an 83-year legacy, Highlands Playhouse - a nationally recognized professional arts organization, will live up to their founders original dream, by expanding the "summer stock" season to presenting live theatre from June to January!

Annual Budget: \$800,000

Christmas wish list: We hope to expand our patron support and sponsorships as we expand our season. We look forward to the opportunity to enrich and entertain the plateau and our surrounding western North Carolina community with live theatre throughout the year.

Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust

828.526.1111
hicashlt.org

To conserve valuable natural resources on the plateau, including our lush forests,

cool waterways and scenic vistas for all generations.

Annual Budget: \$358,000

Christmas wish list:

- Donors! Join at hicashlt.org. Gifts of stock and other planned gifts are also accepted.
- Trail volunteers
- Land donors - learn how you can conserve your land by contacting info.hitrust@earthlink.net.

Hudson Library of Highlands, NC, Inc.

828.526.3031
fontanalib.org/hudsonboard

Our mission is to make available to everyone the recorded knowledge of civilization and thus promote and encourage the free flow of information, the enjoyment of reading and an appreciation of the challenge of ideas. We accomplish our mission by providing for and maintaining the library's land, building and furniture, as well as supporting the purchase of all books, e-books, books on tape and other media.

Annual Budget: \$160,000

Christmas wish list: That we ensure the Hudson Library remains a center of excellence within the Highlands community. We look forward to completion of the lobby renovation in early 2022.

International Friendship Center – Highlands Food Pantry

828.526.0890
www.internationalfriendshipcenter.org

Our mission is to assist people experiencing hardship and to address concerns and

challenges facing the immigrants in our community by fostering understanding among all people, facilitating social and human services, and providing nutrition to the needy through the Highlands Food Pantry. We serve the immigrant, international and low-income members of Highlands and the surrounding communities.

Annual Budget: \$237,000

Christmas wish list: To keep our food pantry stocked with healthy food for those in our community who are in need.

Literacy Council of Cashiers

828.743.0215
cashiersliteracycouncil.org

The mission of the Literacy Council of Cashiers focuses its efforts to support and promote emergent literacy and literacy throughout the population of the community of Cashiers, NC, from birth through adulthood.

Annual Budget: About \$18,000

Christmas wish list: Donations for our books and other free programs can be mailed to: Literacy Council of Cashiers, PO Box 1398, Cashiers, NC 28717.

Pisgah Legal Services – Plateau Poverty Law Initiative

828.210.3424
pisgahlegal.org

Pisgah Legal Services seeks to pursue justice by providing legal assistance and advocacy to help low-income people in western North Carolina meet their basic needs and improve their lives.

Annual Budget: \$496,000

Christmas wish list: Volunteers for PLS' new Economic Recovery Program, contact megan@pisgahlegal.org for information.

Ruffed Grouse Society

888.564.6747
ruffedgrousesociety.org

RGS & AWS unite conservationists to improve wildlife habitat and forest health. Since 1961, RGS has promoted stewardship for our forests, our wildlife and our future. Our vision is to create landscapes of diverse, functioning forest ecosystems that provide homes for wildlife and opportunities for people to experience them.

Annual Budget: ~\$4,000,000

Christmas wish list: Contributions to



PHOTO ALICE NELSON

address COVID-19 budget shortfall are appreciated as we continue to scale our conservation impact to improve healthy forest conditions in the southern Appalachians for ruffed grouse and American woodcock.

Summit Charter School

828.743.5755

summitschool.org

Summit is a tuition-free K-12 public charter school that engages students in learning experiences that stimulate discovery, inspire excellence and nurture a positive influence in an ever-changing world.

Annual Budget: \$3,600,000

Christmas wish list: The 2021-22 school year is a momentous one at Summit! Now in our 25th school year, Summit's mission and the unique qualities of a Summit education remain as relevant as ever in preparing our students for success in an ever-changing world. As we celebrate our 25th anniversary, we also complete our expansion from a K-8 to a K-12 school, graduate our first-ever high school seniors, and host the inaugural Cashiers Festival of Trees fundraising event. Our Christmas "wish" is to honor Summit's remarkable history while continuing to secure the necessary resources to sustain and strengthen these important qualities in our students' education for the future!

The Bascom: A Center for the Visual Arts

828.526.4949

thebascom.org

The Bascom creates visual art experiences that inspire and empower individuals and communities through seeing, thinking and doing.

Annual Budget: \$1,600,000

Christmas wish list: Support for extensive repair projects to our beautiful campus including terrace, office reconstruction and artist housing that make so much of The Bascom's free programming possible.

The Literacy & Learning Center

828.526.0863

maconncliteracy.org

The mission of The Literacy & Learning Center is to enrich lives and expand the knowledge of children, adults and families through diverse educational programs that advance literacy in its many forms and to promote lifelong learning, which results in

an informed and empowered community. TL&LC currently serves people of all ages with literacy needs in Macon County.

Annual Budget: \$400,000

Christmas wish list: Over 1,000 children ages 0-5 are currently being served through the Dolly Parton Imagination Library program, receiving a book a month until their 5th birthday. TL&LC wishes to receive the \$30,000 in annual funding to continue allowing these books to nourish the youngest minds of Macon County.

The Mountain Retreat and Learning Center

828.526.5838

TheMountainRLC.org

The Mountain enriches lives, fosters an appreciation of the natural world, honors the interconnectedness of all things and inspires people to build inclusive, meaningful, sustainable communities throughout their lives. During the summer we host MountainCamp for children and youth throughout the country. Throughout the year, we offer a variety of programming for youth and adults. Guest experiences are enriched by our on-site farm and natural environment, which includes a temperate rainforest, four ecosystems and an old growth forest at 4,200 feet. Plans are underway to construct an environmental learning center to serve the surrounding area, as well as the wider world. This will extend the service capacity of current and planned workshops with an environmental as well as social justice focus.

Annual Budget: Approx. \$1,200,000

Christmas wish list: The Mountain keeps a running wish list of needed items on their website including farm equipment, housekeeping and maintenance needs, kitchen items, technology and hardware upgrades, and a van for transporting campers and guests. themountainrlc.org/wish-list

The Village Green - The Heart of Cashiers

828.743.3434

villagegreencashiersnc.com

The Village Green was established with the mission to preserve and enhance land for our community's civic, spiritual, academic, recreational and cultural activities in order to maintain the quality of life for all citizens and visitors to the greater Cashiers area.

Annual Budget: \$300,000

Christmas wish list: As The Village Green embarks on their 30th year anniversary in 2022, we will focus on securing donations to restore and improve our pathways throughout the park. Including the Boardwalk in our Marsh, we will also be focusing on wayfaring signs along the pathways to help our visitors navigate and explore all that The Village Green has to offer!

Warrior Survival School

850.814.0694

www.warriorsurvival.org

Warrior Survival School is a situational and mental resiliency training nonprofit. While primarily focusing on veterans and first responders, we also offer corporate, family and small group coaching. Learn how to process, adapt and prevail during both minor and severe situational abnormalities. (Due to COVID, we have expanded our training to the general public in teaching mental health first aid and helping individuals in crisis.)

Annual Budget: \$35,000 (2022)

Christmas wish list: We need volunteers to help pioneer a community project of offering peer support in the Highlands/Cashiers area. Training and resources will be provided. For more information contact Davis@warriorsurvival.org. 📧

